

Coaching Practices for Facilitating Reflection Toward Transformative Insight:

A Constructive-Developmental Perspective

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Abstract

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Responding to gaps in the executive coaching literature, this study's purpose was to identify coaching practices for facilitating growth in leaders' developmental capacity to help them more successfully navigate the demands of their increasingly complex contexts.

Through the lenses of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000) and constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994), this study aimed to identify and understand coaching practices for facilitating reflection (at content, process, and premise levels) toward transformative insight, conceptualized as an insight occurring at the heart of Mezirow's perspective transformation and Kegan's subject-object move. Also, using constructive-developmental theory, this study explored how a select sample of executive coaches with various developmental capacities or forms of mind differ in their understanding of these practices.

This exploratory multiple-person case study investigated the experiences of 21 executive coaches via semi-structured interviews. Thematic data analysis revealed 16 coaching practice themes across all three levels of reflection. Given the importance of premise reflection in the literature, an unexpected finding was that these practices were used less than 10% of the time. An overarching process and coaching practices model for facilitating transformative insight emerged, describing the movement from a client's current way of knowing (experienced as limiting) to a new way of knowing (seen as more desirable and effective).

Using constructive-developmental theory's methodology, the Subject-Object Interview (Lahey, et al., 1988), participants' forms of mind were identified. A comparative developmental

analysis revealed that coaches with different forms of mind used reflective practices (from all themes and levels of reflection) to a similar extent and with similar intent. However, the qualitative differences that emerged followed the “transcend and include” principle, meaning that coaches, with each subsequent (and more complex) form of mind, expanded upon the ways in which these practices were used by coaches with a less complex form of mind.

Findings confirmed and expanded upon the coaching processes and practices related to transformative learning and the constructive-developmental literature, uniting them in similarities and differences and integrating them into an overall system for facilitating transformative insight. Implications for scholars, practitioners, and coach educators interested in transformative coaching with developmental impact are discussed.

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And finally, to my high school sweetheart Wouter, who listened earnestly to the seventeen-year-old me tell him that I had dreams for myself. You not only heard me, you have helped me find my way to those dreams. Next to the heavy responsibilities you shoulder in your work and during a demanding time in our lives, you have increasingly cleared the hurdles in front of you to be there for us. Your humor, sensitivity, energy, and principled ways are authentic and incredible gifts of who you are, and we are so grateful to you. It’s time for you to relax a bit more now, too. And to dream. Another journey of ours is about to begin, and I am listening.

JEH

This dissertation is dedicated to my family.

To my beautiful son Max and my beautiful daughter Sophie

who have opened my eyes

engaged and inspired me with their voices, perspectives, and dreams

and bestowed upon me the forever gifts of their love and the exquisite love I feel for them

Voor mijn lieve echtgenoot Wouter

die nooit ophoudt in mij te geloven

Prologue

FEMALE VOICE: So in a way maybe what you were talking about -- I-- I think -- you know -- there is the -- the classes and -- and sort of talking together as a group. And then there's reading your work. And then there's reading people who talked about your work. And so it gets -- for me when I try and think about -- how am I actually gonna use this in my life?

JACK MEZIROW: I think that's one of my problems. I don't think I've been terribly successful in answering that specific question. And I think I have to do a lot more work on it.

FEMALE VOICE: Well, I think -- (OVERTALK) Well, I guess what I'm -- what I'm hearing you say now in a way is that perhaps this thing that we call perspective transformation is like a large thing is actually something of a natural process.

JACK MEZIROW: Yeah, of course.

FEMALE VOICE: And that what we can do as adult educators is hook up to that...

JACK MEZIROW: Is to answer it and learn how to facilitate it.

Bloom (1999). Conversation at Home with Jack Mezirow.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This exploratory multiple-person case study addresses a need to identify new coaching practices for facilitating leadership development within the field of executive coaching—the kinds of practices that would help leaders learn to navigate their increasingly complex contexts more successfully. To do so, this research looks through two powerful theoretical lenses for adult learning and adult development: transformative learning (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000) and constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994). Seen individually and together, these theories bring new light to the understanding, practices, and experiences of executive coaches as facilitators of reflection toward transformative insight. Drawing on these two theoretical lenses, transformative insight is defined for the purposes of this dissertation as those moments in coaching where a client experiences a “turning point” and has a profound change in their understanding of how they view themselves or their relationships with others, how they understand or view the world around them, thereby changing their deeply held beliefs, developing a greater sense of responsibility and perspective-taking, changing their goals for the future, or making major life changes. (the details behind the conceptualization of transformative insight is explained in detail in Chapter 2).

Both theories and their unique vantage points will be used to better understand the reflective practices coaches use and find helpful in facilitating transformative insight with their clients. First, from transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000), I will look at various levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise reflection) as an anchor for exploring transformative learning, both theoretical and methodological in the process of understanding and identifying reflective coaching practices for transformative insight. With reflection, I am referring to “the process of critically assessing the content, process, or premise(s) of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to an experience” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 104). Mezirow (1991) explains how we engage in

reflection “only when we require guidance in negotiating a step in a series of actions or run into difficulty in understanding a new experience” (p. 107)—precisely the kinds of moments of stuckness or dilemma in which clients are most often inclined to seek coaching (Fisher-Yoshida & Yoshida, 2022; O’Neill, 2007).

Second, using the lens of constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994), this study sought to understand how, if at all, there are differences in how certified executive coaches with various developmental capacities or forms of mind understand and describe coaching practices for facilitating transformative insights with their clients. “Forms of mind” refers to the qualitatively different meaning systems or inner logic individuals use to construct their reality and make meaning of their experience, with each subsequent form of mind expanding on the previous one and building more complex capacities for making sense of the world, giving us new ways to deal with our challenges (Berger, 2012; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Popp & Portnow, 2001). In a way, one’s form of mind serves as a filter through which we look at and understand ourselves and the world around us and determines our “capacity to deal with complexity, multiple perspectives, and abstractions” (Berger, 2012, p. 10). As such, it is reasonable to assume that those filters might influence what one pays attention to in coaching as well as the choices and reasoning behind the practices for supporting and facilitating the learning and development of others.

Third, both Mezirow’s transformative learning theory (1978, 1991, 2000) and Kegan’s constructive-developmental theory (1982, 1994) provide anchors for understanding the process and the outcomes of learning and development toward growth in capacity, or form of mind, and as such provide an inviting space for understanding the kind of coach practices for learning and development I am looking to investigate. The learning process behind this form of development can be understood by looking at Mezirow’s (2009) transformative learning, which he defined as “the process by which we transform problematic frames of reference (mindsets, habits of mind, meaning

perspectives)—sets of assumptions and expectations—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change” (p. 92). The process of perspective transformation involves “a structural change in the way we see ourselves and our relationships” and “reformulates the criteria for valuing and for taking action” (Mezirow, 1978b, p. 100). Similar to Mezirow’s description of transformative learning and the idea of perspective transformation, but now from an adult development perspective, Kegan (1994) describes a particular movement or a shift in how we make sense of the world through the subject-object move. This move delineates the very process of adult development, the process of evolving increasingly complex capacities (i.e., forms of mind) for understanding and organizing our experience. Specifically, the subject-object move is the process wherein we gradually move from being *subject* to those elements of our knowing we are fused with—and hence cannot yet “be responsible for, in control of, or reflect upon” (Kegan, 1994, p. 32)—to be able to separate from them and hold them as an *object* of reflection, and as such “having them” versus “them having us” (Kegan & Lahey, 2001, p. 74). As elements of our knowing move from *subject* (hidden) to *object* (seen), the way we see and understand the world becomes more complex (Berger, 2012, p. 18). Kegan and Lahey (2001) see this movement as being “at the heart of our long-held view of the inner architecture of mental development and transformational learning” (p. 149). Both Mezirow’s (2009) perspective transformation and Kegan’s (1982, 1994, 2000) subject-object move refer to the kinds of learning and development processes that lead to “changes not only in what we know but changes in how we know” (Kegan, 2000, p. 49).

In this way, this study attempted to provide a specific methodological understanding of the process of facilitating reflection toward transformative insight based on the experience and forms of mind of a select sample of executive coaches. This study aimed to provide a pragmatic and developmental view on the influence of the leadership development facilitator, the executive coach,

in such a way that literally and figuratively puts “development into professional development” (Helsing, Howell, Kegan & Lahey 2008, p. 437).

Context: The Demand for Leadership Development

Today’s leaders face an increasingly complex society and workplace, a learning context for the kind of challenges requiring expansion and growth in perspective and problem-solving. Heifetz (1998) describes these challenges as being “adaptive” in nature, meaning that they require a different kind of response than the more known, day-to-day technical challenges do because resolving them lies not in the realm of new or expanded knowledge or skill, but instead in new perspectives, attitude, values, and behaviors, as well as innovative solutions that come from within the individual. As such, this kind of challenge provides an interesting and useful background for researching “best-case” scenarios in the facilitation of transformative insight. More than 20 years ago, Taylor (2001) summarized the consequences today’s complex environment has for leadership and the demands its reality places on the field of leadership development: “We are living in a moment of unprecedented complexity when things are changing faster than our ability to comprehend them” (p. 3). Not only is insight critical for comprehending and navigating the complexity of the present moment, but so is the ability to take action and make strategic choices that positively influence the cultivation of future-oriented “possibilities” (Yorks & Nicolaides, 2012, p. 4). The role of leadership in resolving the challenges of the day and creating future possibilities is to identify current problems and facilitate movement toward successfully navigating those problems (Northouse, 2013). Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) write about how this demand on today’s organizational leadership cannot be reduced by placing a “firewall” around it, and executives cannot adequately address it by “hunkering down” through short-term fixes or old strategies. Putting this prognostication in some real-time context, four years later, a review of the need for a new direction and constructive change in the Leadership Development industry’s ability to meet the demands of leadership learning that are entrusted to it

(Kaiser & Curphy, 2013) reflected on a lack of evidence for advances in leadership effectiveness, as well as general discontent and lack of confidence in public and private sector leadership at that time, also coming from key stakeholders within the organizations themselves. Leadership today and going forward will increasingly take place within a context of non-routine, complex situations, ones in which a problem cannot be clarified or for which others must be mobilized to resolve it as they leverage the “inevitable conflict, chaos, and confusion of change” to resolve challenges while achieving new organizational adaptability (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009, p. 5). Uhl-Bien (2021) distinguishes leadership during COVID-19 as an essential illustration of differing responses to complexity, where some leaders could respond adaptively to the need for change, and others, preferring stability, denied the reality of what was happening.

A critical perspective on the leadership context and the demands it, therefore, places on the learning and development of leaders who deal with complex situations and their challenges was first epitomized in the early 1990s by the United States Army War College to describe the global environment at the end of the Cold War. The acronym “VUCA” was coined to describe situations known for their “Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity.” VUCA situations are those characterized by their magnitude and rate of change (Volatile), subjectivity and unpredictability (Uncertainty), the interdependence of systems (Complexity), as well as a need to understand the deeper meaning (Ambiguity) behind indeterminacy of what initially might look practical and concrete. More than 25 years on, complexity has not lost its presence and force, however watered down its subsequent interpretation as a buzzword has often become. The Complexity Science field’s interdisciplinary focus, research, and practices have helped us realize our responsibilities and limitations as problem-solvers, leaders, and followers in (co)-creating, exacerbating, and responding to it. Uhl-Bien and Arena (2017), for example, define complexity in the characteristics of adaptive challenges, representing problems for which there is no solution known, where there are conflicting

views about approaches to take, where people must work together in new ways and partnerships, and where the interdependence of systems is high, bringing more risks, and difficult-to-discern opportunities, with every move taken to navigate it.

Pietersen (2010) discussed rapid globalization and changing technology as overarching realities leadership must navigate with adaptability and resilience—but without having all the information to frame “the” answer. The factors and dynamics in these complex situations and other environmental factors related to political instability, societal change, and environmental challenges produce a “transformative impact in their own right” (p. xiv). These situations challenge leaders to question the assumptions they are making, rethink the strategies and approaches they have been taking, and transform their organizations to survive and thrive. Peters (2017) highlights that in addition to these contextual complexities, leaders need to be able to recognize and navigate challenges characterized by “post-truth” discourse, where subjective beliefs and emotions are privileged over objective facts and evidence. People develop relationships of trust with “authorities” and “information” through their (subjective) emotions and opinions, not objective reasoning. When the subordination of truth to personal beliefs grows, it inevitably degrades conceptual perception and engagement in fact and solution-finding consensus about our shared realities. Post-truth discourse’s focus on subjective knowing is, *sui generis*, at odds with the process, conditions, and conversations of rational discourse that are known to support transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991). Howell (2017) outlines the impossible demand that a post-truth world places on the process of adult development—relating it to the skills of sound reasoning and critical analysis of others’ reasoning and [the process] that enculturates, or socializes, the values of which responsible inquiry is comprised. As for what is at stake in the (rational) discourse vs. post-truth discourse divide, Howell speaks of values that discourse otherwise would strengthen, such as open-mindedness—being prepared to open up one’s own beliefs to scrutiny, to relinquish or put them to one side if it is

shown that one lacks a good reason to hold them, to take on entirely different beliefs if one has good reason to do so—and epistemic humility—treating others as equally entitled to having their views heard and taken seriously, whatever their socio-economic or personal “status” is (p. 584).

The consequences of complexity in the socio-economic context are also only expected to increase (Yorks & Nicolaidis, 2012). Growing awareness is emerging about the risk that social media could remain, as is now, a principal source of (mis)information about what is happening in the world (Bowell, 2017), not to mention how the combined forces of artificial intelligence and social media are feared to magnify the illusions of greater trustworthiness (Lewis & Moorkens, 2020) without merit as they continue to evolve. For leaders—and the rest of us—it seems that, as attractive and seemingly possible going back in time to “how things were” may feel, learning how to operate in the context of yesterday’s less complex environment will not be sufficient when dealing with the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous personal and professional fact-based—and post-truth—worlds of today and tomorrow.

To support leaders operating in the global environment and its increasingly complex contexts, the field of leadership development must be able to facilitate growth not only in the leadership knowledge or competencies related to solving a problem but, more importantly, in restructuring and expanding the capacities necessary for taking a more critical and sophisticated view on the eco-system of challenges faced by leaders and organizations. This includes attention, reflection, and learning about contexts operating outside—and inside—of the problem-solver, the perspective-taker, and the leader himself or herself. To do this, facilitators of these leaders’ challenges, objectives, and questions will need to be able to respond in the systems, process, and dialogues of executive coaching with appropriate forms of support for learning and development.

Executive Coaches as Facilitators of Leadership Development

Although there are many different definitions of coaching, perhaps coaching is best defined generally by the International Coach Federation (ICF), which described it in its Code of Ethics (2020b) as “partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential” (p. 3). That said, Maltbia, Marsick, and Ghosh (2014) remark that the definitions of coaching are as varied and voluminous as individual coaches, keenly exposing and relating the impact of these coach-related differences to how “one’s assumptions about coaching influence what one pays attention to, and therefore, the practice options that are included or excluded, as well as the results that the coach and his or her clients realize” (p. 163).

In terms of adult learning and development, coaching is an “emerging cross-disciplinary occupation, its primary purpose being to enhance well-being, improve performance, and facilitate individual and organizational change” (Grant, 2005, p. 7). Coaching as an individual or organizational intervention for professional development is increasing worldwide, and the coaching profession shows steady growth. A 2020 global coaching study from the International Coach Federation (2020a) estimated that 71,300 trained coaches were operating worldwide in 2019, an increase of 33% compared to the ICF’s 2016 study results. The 2020 study reported an increase of 21% in total revenue since 2016, with the total estimated global revenue now valued at USD 2.849 billion. Of interest to this research, 30% of coaches considered Leadership Coaching their primary specialty, up 5% since the 2016 survey. Overall, the 2020 ICF study indicates, based on the recent experience and context of coaches themselves, that there is continued demand for and growth within the profession. This is evident in the ever-growing demand for coaching services, the increased pursuit of professional certification or credentialing, and the awareness and explicit support for coaching as successfully targeting challenges related to the executive role, leadership, and

context. For coaching to serve the learning demands of current leadership and for the sake of coaching's "right to exist" as a service industry to organizations based on a "business case" where the benefits of coaching outweigh its costs, it makes sense that the focus of executive coaching must now increasingly include the impact that helps leaders grow their developmental capacities or forms of mind.

Traditionally, the field of leadership development has been influenced by thinking in business schools (and) social and organizational psychology and political science departments, and in terms of leader development, has emphasized knowledge-building and skill-development curriculums (Day & Dragoni, 2015), focusing specifically on the development of executive-level managerial and leadership competencies that leaders can benefit from (Van Velsor & Drath, 2004). Competencies, defined as "a combination of tacit and explicit knowledge, behavior and skills, that gives someone the potential for effectiveness in task performance" (Draganidis & Mentzas, 2006, p. 53), relate to the technical skills and knowledge used to address a complex problem (i.e., *informational* learning; Kegan, 2000). While more knowledge and skill are certainly helpful in dealing with any challenge, informational learning curricula do not privilege the role that context, process, and perception play in understanding and navigating complexity. Given the specific demands of complexity on leaders today, facilitators must not only focus on knowledge, technical skills, and problem-solving *competencies* but also, more importantly, on the *capacities* of leaders to solve problems, for example, through expanding their abilities to reason critically or perform an analysis of others' reasoning.

Capacity relates to one's form of mind or a "qualitatively different way of understanding the complex world around us" and one's current ability "to cope with complexity, multiple perspectives, and abstraction" (Berger, 2012, p. 10). Capacity is essential for perceiving and evaluating the aspects of complexity inherent to a presenting problem. This includes the approach taken to resolve the

problem, the perspective of the problem solver that selected the approach taken to resolve the problem, and the different aspects of the problem itself. Overwhelmingly, there is growing recognition of the need for leadership development that targets capacity (e.g., Berger, 2006, 2012, 2015; Berger & Atkins, 2009; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Van Velsor & Drath, 2004) and supports development for navigating complex problems, as complex problems cannot be solved by offering simpler solutions or simpler thinking (Kegan, 1994). This specific curriculum for leadership development involves restructuring and expanding a current frame of reference (Mezirow, 2000) or form of mind (Kegan, 1982, 1994), that is, it involves *transformative* learning. This process leads to “changes in the very form of one’s mind,” a growth in one’s capacity for dealing with challenges in a way that is more “spacious, more complex, and more able to deal with multiple demands and with uncertainty” (Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002, p. 29).

Van Velsor and Drath (2004) explain how skills and capacity (i.e., form of mind) are interdependent and how skills are used within one’s current framework of assumptions or frame of reference. The capacity of one’s framework of assumptions, in turn, limits what a person can be skillful in doing (p. 393) and learning. Williams et al. (2002) argue that “pure skill-based coaching seldom results in long-term change. Instead, sustainable change seems to require that the client recognize and understand the deeper motivators of his or her behavior” (p. 120). We can therefore conclude that while the views on leadership development may vary in their specific focuses and interventions, there is agreement on the need to develop both leader capacity and competence, and each focus will have its distinct curriculum.

The field of leadership development represents an industry receiving enormous investments from organizations today, one valued at USD 366 billion in 2019 (Beerel, 2020) and more than 130 times greater in value than the USD 2.849 billion that ICF reported in 2020. Within the sub-field of executive coaching, there is increasing interest in understanding how leaders make sense of and

respond to the demands of their environment and how this relates to their developmental capacity and form of mind (e.g., Berger, 2012; Faller, 2017; Van Velsor & Drath, 2004). Greater developmental capacity in leaders has been associated with greater leadership effectiveness (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005; Strang & Kuhnert, 2009), particularly in how leaders lead organizational transformations (Rooke & Torbert, 1998), challenge existing processes, manage conflict, delegate, solve problems, inspire a shared vision, empower, build relationships (Eigel, 1998), manage performance, catalyze teams, create a compelling vision, and inspire commitment (Harris & Kuhnert, 2008), and is related to how they interpret their experience and the patterns of reflection they can engage in (Joshi, 2021). Joiner and Josephs (2007) take a leadership skill approach to capacity, which he defines as leadership agility, seeing effective leaders as those that respond well to external situations that are complex and rapidly changing and draw on a greater personal developmental capacity (e.g., perspective-taking, self-awareness, and flexibility) to do so. Joiner and Josephs relate this leadership capacity to skills that include a leader's situational awareness, a sense of purpose, stakeholder understanding, power style, connective awareness, reflective judgment, self-awareness, and developmental motivation.

Unfortunately, leaders with the developmental capacity to resolve their demands are in short supply. Although one would hope this figure would have improved over the years, Kegan (1994) found that 93% of the adult population do not yet have the form of mind that would relate specifically to the particular demands found in highly complex, VUCA-plus, post-truth demands on leadership (Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002; Eigel, 1998; Kegan, 1994). Given that this gap is real, critical, and timely, it is clear that including coach practices supporting the kind of learning and development described by Mezirow (1978, 1991, 2000) and Kegan (1982, 1994) is not only critical to the field of leadership development but represents a demand and opportunity for the field of executive coaching to attend to. Where the focus of the field of leadership development has traditionally been on

developing competencies, technical knowledge, and behavioral skills, executive coaching now also needs to attend to a leader's developmental capacity in an attempt to reduce or close this demand-capacity gap (Berger, 2012; Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002; Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005; Kegan, 1994; Petrie, 2014; Van Velsor & Drath, 2004; Yorks & Nicolaides, 2012).

In trying to identify the kinds of practices executive coaches as facilitators of learning can use to help leaders grow their capacities to meet the current and future challenges and complexities, this dissertation draws on the intersection of Mezirow's transformative learning in the field of adult learning (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000) and Kegan's constructive-developmental theory (1982, 1994) in the field of adult development. Transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1978, 1990, 1991, 2000), and its specific focus on perspective transformation, relates to creating profound changes in learners' frames of reference or structures of assumptions that "selectively shape and delimit expectations, perceptions, cognition, and feelings" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5), providing a valuable space for the exploration of coaching practices for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight. Gray (2006), for example, considered how transformative learning theory may inform the coaching process, concluding that the "emphasis on encouraging self-reflection on fostering action and on co-learning that makes transformative learning a potentially powerful guide to coaching—and coaching a powerful tool for generating transformative learning" (p. 487).

Reflection plays a critical role in the process of transformative learning, as it serves to restructure and evolve meaning-making structures by exposing and examining the logic, validity, and greater truths of assumptions when they are no longer functional (Mezirow, 1994). Reflection is often triggered within the context of the problem-solving, where "we may reflect on the *content* for the problem (e.g., *what* is the problem?), the *process* of problem-solving (e.g., *how* did this problem come to be?), or the *premise* of the problem (e.g., *why* is this a problem?) (Cranton, 2016, pp. 26-27; Mezirow, 1994, p. 224), in part to understand the problem better, but, no less important, to

understand our perceptions and selves better and therefore be able to see, approach, and resolve a problem in new ways. Of the three levels of reflection, premise reflection (also referred to as critical reflection) is seen as the most fundamental and powerful level, as it can lead to the transformation of our *belief systems* (or meaning perspectives), making them more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative of experience (Mezirow, 1991). However, engaging in content and process reflection may lead to a transformation of a *belief* (Cranton, 2016; Mezirow, 1991), hereby making these kinds of reflective practices also important for the overall transformative learning process. Cranton (2016) found the distinctions between all three levels of reflection useful and pragmatic in facilitating transformative learning in her experience as an adult educator. She also described the role of an adult educator as one where the facilitator should act as “a provocateur, one who challenges, stimulates and provokes critical thinking” (pp. 82-83), one having “a role in questioning and challenging, helping us to unearth our hidden assumptions and their validity” (p. 51). This role Cranton describes very closely resembles one role of a coach, the one who actively challenges “existing assumptions to ensure learners are open to new learning” (Cox, 2015, p. 30), especially if we are talking about facilitating reflection toward transformative insight and growth in leaders’ capacity. Taken altogether, engaging coaching clients in reflection, especially in premise reflection, is an important space to be investigated, theoretically and practically/methodologically, in the process and facilitation of coach practices.

Constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994) provides another entryway to exploring developmentally-driven coaching practices. It helps to understand the process of the form of mind evolution and how we might facilitate and support such change; “changes not only in *what* we know but changes in *how* we know” (Kegan, 2000, p. 49). Previously described “subject-object” move, or a shift in how we make sense of the world, others, and of ourselves, offers a particularly useful approach to supporting learning and development. Once we understand how we move from

being held or limited by beliefs we were not previously aware of or in control of to holding those beliefs clearly in analysis and evaluation, we can also better understand how to support such shifts. This can include developing an understanding of these beliefs as being either constructive or not constructive and, as such, linking them to particular strategies or even inaction/acceptance, giving us greater control of them as part of our thought process, emotions, and behavior. This shift relates to insights into assumptions and generates new awareness, understanding, or differentiation of parts of ourselves that are, or were, held internally as unquestionable truths and are invisible to us. Facilitating this movement, this insight and shift of subject-object balance and its particular way of knowing is what Berger and Fitzgerald (2002) believe to be one of the primary objectives of coaching and “one of the most powerful interventions coaches can provide” (p. 35).

In many ways, executive coaching, as a structured intervention informed by these transformative learning and adult developmental lenses, is well suited to making a valuable contribution to bridging and or closing the demand-capacity gap. Bridging this gap would include facilitating transformative insight as part of the structured conversations, such as dialogues and discussions, inherent to coaching, ones where people “look more deeply at mental models that influence the way [they] take in and process information and frame their understandings of a situation” (Cseh, 1999; Marsick & Watkins, 1990, 1999; as cited in Marsick, 2003, p. 394). In addition, given the increases in organizational, workplace, and social complexity and the fact that many leaders might not yet have the necessary capacities to navigate their challenges within that complexity (Kegan, 1994), executive coaching can provide a tailored and targeted approach for this kind of leadership development.

If closing the gap between leadership challenge (what leaders *need* to do) and leadership capacity (what leaders are actually *able* to do) is indeed the “central learning problem of the twenty-first century,” as suggested by Kegan and Lahey (2009, p. 2), then which changes in the facilitation

of leadership development are part of making this possible? Who are among the leaders of learning that can facilitate these best-case scenarios of leadership development? Moreover, what role, if any, does their developmental capacity, their forms of mind, play in how they facilitate it?

Problem Statement

Of the variables considered important for maintaining a competitive edge in the complex business marketplace and society at large, individual leaders and their leadership are seen as key differentiators in an organization's ability to perform successfully within and in interaction with the organizational surround (DeRue & Myers, 2014; Peterson et al., 2009; Strang & Kuhnert, 2009; Strikwerda, 2023; Yorks & Nicolaides, 2012). Navigating challenges and creating possibilities for realizing organizational goals in today's VUCA post-truth world have increased the demand, and specifically the demand for developmental capacities that leaders need to have in order to manage and exceed in their roles amid this complexity (Berger, 2012; Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005; Helsing et al., 2008; Kegan, 1994; McCauley et al., 2006; Van Velsor & Drath, 2006). As a result, scholarly research, theoretical writings, popular books, and articles about leadership development have increased exponentially, as have organizations' investments in their leaders via various leadership development interventions (DeRue & Myers, 2014; O'Leonard, 2010). However, "until we target the goals of a leadership development program to the leader's developmental capacity to lead, we will not equip companies to meet the demands of this new century" (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005, p. 383).

As one of the interventions offering opportunities for leadership development, the field of executive coaching has continued to grow, with its total revenue in 2020 reported as USD 2.849 billion (ICF, 2020a), but still comparatively small given the USD 366 billion (Beerel, 2020) global leadership development industry it is part of. According to a McKinsey study entitled "Why Leadership Development Programs Fail," capitalizing on the critical capabilities of leaders within organizations will mean reorienting the focus of leadership development away from the more

traditional, standard methods of knowledge and skill-based classes or courses and also away from overly privileging functional, business, or marketplace themes and topics (Gurdjian et al., 2014). Coaching has the potential to positively influence leadership development and business results by targeting important forms of learning and development in leaders in distinctly contextual, personal, informal, relevant, transferable, and measurable ways. These forms of learning and development are necessary to “avoid the most common mistakes in leadership development and increase the odds of success” in developing curricula that meet the real-world demands and context of leaders (Gurdjian et al., 2014, p. 6). The need for greater developmental capacity in leaders and the supply becoming available to meet this demand for leadership development from executive coaching is also a fast-growing trend known broadly as “vertical” development (or *transformational* learning), compared to “horizontal” development (or *informational* learning), which is skill, technical, and competency-based (Cook-Greuter, 2004; Kegan, 2000). Representing this gap in leadership development and specialization within executive coaching, the Growth Edge Coaching organization, led by scholar-practitioner Jennifer Garvey Berger, mentioned in 2018 (private communication) that interest and participation in her firm’s Growth Edge Coaching workshops had been “exponential” in that year.

If executive coaches are to deliver on the promise of leadership development (and on the business case behind it) by closing the gap between leadership challenge (what leaders *need* to do) and leadership capacity (what leaders are actually *able* to do) (Kegan & Lahey, 2009), coach learning and development must be attended to in this space as well. Executive coaches need to have knowledge of and the competencies for facilitating transformative coaching practices. What has yet to be discovered is to which degree their own developmental capacity, or form of mind, might influence how they support their clients in coaching and which practices they use to do that. The lack of clarity around (1) the executive coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight and

(2) the possible influence of the executive coach’s developmental capacity or form of mind on that facilitation are the two focus areas this study addresses.

Importantly, given that this study’s primary intent is to evolve the field of executive coaching, more empirical studies are needed to increase our understanding of transformative coaching practices in general and contribute to the scientific knowledge base that serves as a foundation for developing informed-practitioner models (Stober & Grant, 2006)—that is, the kind of model that “provides theoretical frameworks, information, critical thinking, and methodological rigor that the practitioner can use to navigate the ever-changing waters of the coaching intervention” (Stober & Grant, 2006, p. 6).

Executive Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight

As accessible and broad as the opportunities for growing knowledge or competencies in coaching are, the specific practices targeting growth in a leader’s developmental capacity by way of facilitating the process to and beyond transformative insight and through the explicit application of transformative learning and adult development theories are still a relatively new specialty (McCauley et al., 2006). In what follows, I briefly provide an overview of the literature for Mezirow’s transformative learning theory (1978, 1990, 1991, 1997, 2000) and Kegan’s constructive-developmental theory (1982, 1994) to outline the gap this research attempts to address.

Transformative Learning Theory Perspective

A review of the transformative learning literature reveals an abundance of theoretical and some methodological suggestions and practices related to the approaches one can take to facilitate transformative learning (e.g., Brookfield, 2017; Cranton, 1996, 2006; Cranton & King, 2003; King, 1997, 2004; Mezirow, 1990, 1991, 1996, 1997). Taylor’s (2007) comprehensive review of the empirical research about transformative learning conducted between 1999 and 2005 reveals that, while there has been an increase in studies exploring the practices of fostering transformative

learning, these studies were almost exclusively conducted within the context of formal higher education, that is, in a classroom or a workshop setting. Exploring studies conducted post-2005 reveals that not much has changed (e.g., Gunnlaugson, 2006; Harrell-Levy et al., 2016; Hedly & Sinatra, 2017; Joubert & Slabbert, 2017; Patterson et al., 2015; Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012; Snipes & LePeau, 2017). The literature on facilitating transformative learning within the context of (executive) coaching is still a relatively new concept that is very slowly beginning to emerge—mainly through theorizing (e.g., Bennett & Campone, 2017; Corrie & Lawson, 2017; Cox, 2006, 2015; Cox, Bachkirova & Clutterbuck 2014; Fisher-Yoshida & Yoshida, 2022; Gray, 2006). Empirical research linking transformative learning and coaching, such as Terblanche (2020, 2022), has recently been done for transition coaching, or Mbokota, Myres & Stout-Rostron (2022) study in which they explored three key transformative learning elements (i.e., disorienting dilemma, critical reflection, and rational dialogue) to develop a transformative learning model for coaching, is sparse.

Dissertation studies, also not voluminous in number (but perhaps in length!), have, for example, explored the coach-coachee relationship and its impact on the transformative learning of coaching clients (Marlatt, 2012) or executives' experiences of coaching programs in terms of their learning and change using transformative learning theory as a lens for understanding those experiences (Han, 2017). Finally, Sammut (2014), whose study's intent, in part, comes closest to my own, explored the application of transformative learning theory in coaching, including how coaches foster transformative learning with their clients. This led to the identification of strategies for fostering transformative learning in coaching, such as, for example, creating a safe environment, acceptance, asking thought-provoking questions/deep inquiry for critical reflection, challenging false beliefs and assumptions, active listening, and modeling behavior (p. 48). While these general strategies are helpful starting points confirming the value of applying transformative learning theory in coaching,

in their description, they lack a clear methodological focus that would help coaches practically apply them in their practices aiming for growth in a leader's capacity.

Constructive-Developmental Theory Perspective

I turn now to constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994) in search of the executive coaching practices holding promise for facilitating transformative insights. A review of this stream of the literature reveals that while the application of this particular theoretical lens within the context of coaching is still in its infancy, it is gaining momentum, both through theorizing (e.g., Bachkirova & Borrington, 2018; Berger, 2006, 2012; Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002; Goodman, 2002; Hayes & Popp, 2019; Van Velsor & Drath, 2006) and a variety of coach development programs available (e.g., Berger's Growth Edge Coaching or Kegan's Minds at Work).

One of the most prolific writers on the topic, Jennifer Garvey Berger (2006, 2012, 2015; Berger & Atkins, 2009; Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002), outlines the ways in which an executive coach's understanding and incorporation of Kegan's constructive-developmental theory in their practice can aid coaches in supporting leaders' development. Berger and Fitzgerald (2002) argue that "if coaches are to be able to support leaders well, it is vital that they understand the many different worlds these leaders may inhabit" (p. 28), referring here to the leaders' forms of mind. Berger and Fitzgerald believe that the main objectives for coaches involve helping leaders understand the strengths and challenges of their current form of mind and how those relate to the demands of the contexts they find themselves in. An equally important objective involves helping leaders recognize, surface, and examine their hidden assumptions about themselves and the world (i.e., elements of the self to which the leader is "subject to" in order to trigger a subject-object movement), "which can lead to important insights for executives" (p. 30). To help coaches meet those objectives, Berger and Fitzgerald outline various suggestions for how executive coaches could support the development of clients with different forms of mind working with different demands. For example, they suggest that

coaches provide opportunities to executives to explore their own views, observations, thinking, and feeling around critical events and issues (p. 45); to explore with their clients key meaning systems and values of their family, ethnic group, or their organization (p. 46); to help executives understand and integrate perspectives of other people and groups (p. 47), etc. Kegan (2001) himself outlines the specific steps that can help move an assumption from subject to object so that a person can “look at it” versus “looking through it” (p. 80). These steps include: naming the assumption, noticing its implications, looking for discrepant evidence, charting the history of the assumption, and testing the truth of the assumption. This process of subject-object move outlined by Kegan closely resembles the process outlined by transformative learning literature, specifically Brookfield’s work on critical reflection (1987, 1991, 2009, 2011); yet another space where these two theoretical lenses, and each from their distinct vantage point, help us understand the process of learning for transformation and, as an extension, the ways to facilitate it.

Applying adult learning and adult development theories can go a long way in helping discern *what* this kind of developmentally-focused coaching process might look like (e.g., “coaching informed by transformative learning theory is aimed at helping clients gain an awareness of their current meaning perspectives or habits of mind,” Cox, 2015, p. 35; or “helping executives make subject-object shifts,” Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002, p. 30) and *what* the role of a coach in this process might be (e.g., “the role of the facilitator or coach is, therefore, to challenge existing assumptions to ensure learners are open to new learning,” Cox, 2015, p. 30); or “helping executives surface their hidden assumptions about the world,” Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002, p. 30). However, it is still unclear *how* exactly executive coaches approach this in their coaching or which practices have been most helpful to them and their clients, and why. Notably, a direct empirical investigation of these approaches within the coaching context is currently lacking for this theoretical lens, just like for the transformative learning one. It is this gap the current study is trying to address, with an overarching

goal of advancing the field of executive coaching by enabling the development of concrete practitioner models, the kind of models that would go a long way in delivering the benefits the clients at the receiving end are currently in need of.

Executive Coach's Form of Mind and the Facilitation of Transformative Insight

As executive coaches look for ways to grow by addressing the needs within the field of leadership development, the profession and its professionals must also turn inwards to find the approaches of coaching available within the field of executive coaching and even available in the perspectives of coaches themselves. As Maltbia et al. (2014) explained, “one’s assumptions about coaching influence what one pays attention to, and therefore, the practice options that are included or excluded, as well as the results that the coach and his or her clients realize” (p. 163). It is precisely the assumptions held by the coaches within their forms of mind and the influence on their facilitation of reflective practices toward transformative insight that I am looking to explore. Just as leaders’ capacity is shown to be related to their effectiveness on a wide range of leadership and organizational outcomes (e.g., Eigel, 1998; Harris & Kuhnert, 2008; Rooke & Torbert, 1998) as well as how they understand their role and their job (Berger, 2012), it is reasonable to assume that the same can be said for executive coaches. That is, it is reasonable to assume that executive coaches’ own developmental capacities or forms of mind can also influence their facilitation of transformative insight in executive coaching, including the specific practices they use to do so.

This assertion becomes particularly salient once we look at the characteristics of the three forms of mind that research asserts may be most commonly found in the adult population: the Socializing, the Self-authoring, and the Self-transforming forms of mind (Kegan, 1994). Kegan and Lahey (2009) and Berger (2012) describe the strengths and challenges of each of those three forms of mind. In doing so, they clarify the qualitative differences in how one understands and navigates the world. While some of the major strengths of the Socializing form of mind, for example, relate to

one's empathy, being reliant, being a good team player, and being a faithful follower, these individuals lack the capacity to decide between the arguments of important others (e.g., authorities, influencers, family, friends) or decide between competing values or ideas. In this way, these individuals can be strongly influenced by what they believe others want to hear as they look for a sense of self and guidance from external (re)sources. The strength of those with the Self-authoring form of mind is found in their self-direction, in their capacity to author and be committed to their approaches, ideals, and values based on their own experience and judgment, which is an internal (re)source available to them. However, these individuals lack the ability to get outside of their commitments and perspectives to see any potential limitations inherent to their preferred approach, which makes altering their strategies hard for them. Finally, a major strength of Self-transforming individuals (less than 1% of adults operating from this stage; Kegan, 1994) is their ability to see the limitations, including their own, and be interested in exploring them. These individuals are open to new perspectives, have a constant interest in learning, and have the ability to see nuances and hold contradictions. In general, Self-transforming individuals are not troubled by complexities but are engaged by them and even welcome them. The downside for these individuals is that having the perspective of this form of mind can feel lonely, as finding others of a like mind for company and deep and meaningful exchange can be difficult for them.

Looking at those differences in forms of mind now in relation to the process and context of facilitating reflection toward transformative insights in coaching, it seems reasonable to raise a question about the potential influence that executive coaches' forms of mind might have on their choice, understanding, and application of the kinds of reflective practices they incorporate in their work with clients. A review of the literature at the intersection of constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994) and coaching reveals that little is known about the specific relationship between *executive coaches' forms of mind* and their facilitation of the executive coaching process. The literature

that does exist is primarily focused on exploring how *clients' forms of mind* might inform the coaching process (e.g., Bachkirova & Borrington, 2018; Berger, 2012; Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002; Diehl, 2010; Laske, 1999). Moreover, while questions around the influence of an executive coach's form of mind on their ability to effectively facilitate the coaching process have previously been raised (it has been speculated that a coach should have a form of mind at least at the level if not beyond their client's form of mind; e.g., Bachkirova & Cox, 2007; Chandler & Kram, 2005; Laske, 2006; Perry, 2014), to my knowledge, only one research study exists that directly examines the relationship between these two variables (i.e., Perry, 2014). In her dissertation, Perry (2014) found distinct differences in how coaches with different forms of mind make meaning in their coaching engagements. This difference was, for example, found to be present around themes such as what constitutes an (un)successful coaching engagement and what in coaching brought about a coach's experience of feeling angry or torn. Given that the coaches' forms of mind were shown to influence the way they understand and experience coaching engagements, it is reasonable to wonder how, within the engagement itself, this might affect the practices coaches use to facilitate transformative insight.

Taken altogether, it is clear that both transformative learning and constructive-developmental theories are valuable perspectives that can inform executive coaching practices for supporting the development of leaders' capacities, that is, supporting the restructuring of their current frame of reference or form of mind. Theoretically, these lenses provide a rich account of the inner workings of the kind of learning that leads to a surfacing, examination, and eventual change in assumptions and the broadening of perspectives that leaders hold, allowing them to grow in a way that will help them more successfully navigate the complex context they currently face. As such, there has been an increased interest in both theories underpinning the coaching process and outcomes. However, two major gaps still need to be sufficiently explored, empirically and practically. First, the potential of these two lenses, as seen together, has yet to be significantly tapped into to

propel the field of executive coaching forward by evolving its practices and, as an extension, the benefits the clients can reap from it. Second, what influence the coaches' forms of mind might play in the process of facilitating that kind of learning and development process is not clear. It is my hope that this study will contribute to reducing some of these gaps.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this multiple-person case study is to gain more knowledge about how (1) executive coaching, as an intervention for learning and development, could help facilitate growth in the developmental capacities leaders need to navigate the complexities in their challenges and contexts; and (2) the executive coaches' own developmental capacity or form of mind might influence the kinds of practices they use with their clients in this process of facilitation.

More specifically, through the explicit lenses of adult learning theory (i.e., transformative learning) (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000) and adult development theory (i.e., constructive-developmental theory) (Kegan, 1982, 1994), the goal is to produce knowledge and greater understanding about specific executive coaching practices helpful for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight. Also, using the lens of constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994), this study seeks to understand how, if at all, a select sample of certified executive coaches with various developmental capacities or forms of mind differ in their understanding and descriptions of the coaching practices they use and see as helpful in the process of facilitating reflection toward transformative insights in work with their clients. The following two research questions were explored:

- (1) How do coaches describe and understand what they do in their coaching practices to facilitate transformative insight, and why? More specifically, how do coaches describe and use practices for different levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise reflection) to facilitate transformative insight?

- (2) What relationship, if any, exists between the coaches' forms of mind and how these coaches describe what they do in their coaching practices to facilitate transformative insight?

Research Design Overview

Due to the lack of empirical studies exploring the complex, contemporary phenomena of facilitating transformative learning via executive coaching and the role that the coaches' forms of mind might play in this process, a multiple-person case study was selected as the research design for this dissertation (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Yin, 2009). This research approach allowed for generating discoveries through an in-depth exploration and description of the coaches' experiences, perceptions, and understanding as they reflected on them having happened in the settings and conversations of coaching (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Maxwell, 2005), as was necessary for answering the research questions.

Two primary qualitative sources of data were used: (1) Subject-Object Interviews (SOI) (Lahey et al., 1988) and (2) in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The SOI is a 60- to 90-minute, semi-structured interview based on Robert Kegan's constructive-developmental theory (1982, 1994). During the interview, the ways in which a person constructs and understands their experience are explored to determine the complexity of their meaning-making or form of mind (see Appendix A for the SOI protocol). Each participant's SOI was transcribed, analyzed, and scored by two reliable SOI scorers to ascertain their developmental capacity, or form of mind, an input necessary for answering the second research question.

The second key data source was 90-minute, one-on-one, in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted with the coaches participating in the study (for the interview protocol, see Appendix C). The first part of the interview was anchored in critical incidents to elicit participants' responses based on concrete rather than abstract situations and bring them closer to their actual coaching

experience and practice (Brookfield, 1987; Flanagan, 1954). These critical incidents were addressing an actual coaching case where, from the coach's perspective, their client experienced transformative insight (i.e., those moments in coaching where a client experiences a "turning point" and has a profound change in their understanding of how they view themselves or their relationships with others, how they understand or view the world around them, thereby changing their deeply held beliefs, developing a greater sense of responsibility and perspective-taking, changing their goals for the future, or making major life changes), and insight for which they believe their coaching was instrumental in facilitating. The initial critical incident data were collected via an online survey before the semi-structured interview (see Appendix B). This was meant to ensure that the critical incidents brought in by the participants aligned with the transformative insight as defined for the purposes of this study, as well as for further and deeper exploration of relevant participant experience and understanding of transformative insight coaching practices during the semi-structured interviews. During the second half of the interview, a vignette describing one hypothetical coaching client case was provided to the participants as a way of collecting data on the participants' understanding of this hypothetical client's challenge, their descriptions, and understanding of the kinds of coaching practices they would use, as well as their reasoning behind those choices (see Appendix D).

The semi-structured interview protocol was piloted with two executive coaches from my network who, in characteristics, closely resembled the select sample of certified executive coaches from which the final data were collected to enable the necessary revisions to the protocol prior to the actual data collection (Maxwell, 2005; Robson, 2002; Yin, 2009). For information on the revisions resulting from the pilot, see "The In-Depth Semi-Structured Interviews" section in Chapter 3.

Given the qualitative nature of this study's purpose and research questions, identifying an appropriate research sample was essential. To determine the final research sample, a purposive

criterion sampling strategy was used (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The initial goal was to identify 12 participants who have the characteristics, knowledge, and experience necessary to provide the information needed to answer the research questions (Maxwell, 2005). These characteristics included participants who: (1) are fluent in English and are primarily coaching in English, (2) have earned a coaching certification recognized by the International Coach Federation (ICF) or from an academic institution, (3) have three or more years of post-coaching certification, active (external) executive coaching experience, (4) can identify and discuss the specifics of an actual executive coaching client case of theirs, one where, in their perspective, the client experienced a transformative insight, and (5) are making meaning from one of the four groupings of forms of mind (i.e., stage of development as indicated by the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) score; Lahey et al., 1988: (a) the Socializing form of mind, (b) the Socializing to Self-authoring forms of mind transition, (c) the Self-authoring form of mind, or (d) the Self-authoring to Self-transforming forms of mind transition). Due to the unforeseen difficulties in identifying participants in these initial four form-of-mind groupings, this criterion was adjusted later in the selection process (for detailed information, see the “Research Sample” section in Chapter 3).

The data analysis started as soon as the collection of the data via the SOI (Lahey et al., 1988), and the semi-structured interviews started, with the researcher making notes on the first impressions and observations. The main data analyses were carried out in three main phases. First, the SOIs were transcribed, analyzed, and reliably scored to determine the participants’ forms of mind, the information necessary to answer the second research question about the role of coaches’ forms of mind on the practices they use to facilitate reflection toward transformative insight. Second, a qualitative analysis of the data from the in-depth, semi-structured interviews, anchored in qualitative critical incidents (addressing an actual coaching scenario per coach) and a vignette (a short and uniform hypothetical client case), was conducted to identify various reflective coaching

practices for facilitating transformative insight (i.e., the first research question). All coaching practices discussed were first coded into the three levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise) using categorization based on Mezirow's (1991, 2000) definitions and related coding criteria (i.e., Oosterbaan, van der Schaaf, Baartman & Stokking, 2010; Wallman et al., 2008). Further, using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic data analysis process allowed the identification of main qualitative themes that emerged for coaching practices at each of the three levels of reflection. Additionally, these coaching practices were analyzed in terms of the frequency with which each coach participant discussed them to capture the extent to which some practices were (under)privileged over others. Finally, comparative developmental analyses of semi-structured interview data were carried out using the outcomes of the Subject-Object Interviews (i.e., the participants' forms of mind) to explore the association between the coaches' forms of mind and their experience, perceptions, and descriptions of the reflective coaching practices perceived as helpful for facilitating transformative insights.

Detailed descriptions and reasoning behind the choices made for the study's design, the research sample, and related participant selection criteria and sampling strategy, as well as the data collection methods and analyses, will be provided in the Methodology section of this dissertation (Chapter 3).

Assumptions of the Study

The following researcher's assumptions underlie the research design:

- Growth in a leader's developmental capacity is an essential focus of leadership development in today's world.
- Transformative learning theory will provide helpful frameworks for investigating reflective coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight and identify any potential influence of the coaches' forms of mind on that facilitation process.

- The constructive-developmental theory will provide a helpful framework for investigating reflective coaching practice for facilitating transformative insight and the potential influence of the coaches' forms of mind on that facilitation process.
- Naming and understanding the concept of transformative insight, also as it relates to other kinds of insights, will open up a specific field of understanding and practices that executive coaches need to have to support learning that is developmental in nature and that creates growth in client capacities.
- Coaches are in a position to facilitate reflection on the individual-social constructions of meaning, logic, perceptions, assumptions, and interpretations made in the process. They will be able to describe the conscious and tacit processes involved as they describe their perspective on client learning, client outcomes, and the practices they used to facilitate it. Coaches will, therefore, be able to judge whether or not, from the coach's and or client's perspective, their clients experienced a transformative insight and what that insight was, and what change it created.
- Coaches will be willing and able to recall and describe what they were doing in the moment of coaching, and as much as possible why, to facilitate a client's reflection toward transformative insight, and how they, and the clients, perceived that process and what was important about it.

Implications and Significance

Today's organizations have a clear-cut business case for leadership development investments targeting capacity growth in addition to knowledge and skill acquisition. Executive Coaching's right to exist as a professional and capable partner in leadership development relies on its ability to provide a return on the investments entrusted in its care. The impact of executive coaching will, in part, be determined by how it develops the kind of perspective and practices that—and the kind of

coaches who—can facilitate forms and curricula for learning and development related to real leadership demands and related growth in capacity. An executive coach’s contribution will be influenced by their skill and ability to foster the kind of learning process, relationship, and environment at or beyond the very challenges today’s leaders are facing in their work, but also in themselves. As examples from my own coaching practice, in doing so, I witness personal stories of disorientation, dilemma, lessons learned, stress, coping, self-esteem, success, and (dis)engagement. I witness learning’s greater realities and potentials and their intertwinement in our lives, work, coaching dialogues, and, of course, what we then give and take from society at large.

Coaches are exceptionally well-positioned to learn and share their experiences, dilemmas, and lessons learned with other fields and facilitators of adult learning. In a general sense, this study is relevant to all those interested in developing knowledge, practices, and internal capacities for facilitating transformative learning-driven adult development for capacity. Using coaching practices drawing on inquiry, reflection, and dialogue (Maltbia et al., 2014), reflection rooted in the lenses of transformative learning and adult development can bring pause and attention to those informal and incidental moments when taken-for-granted, tacit, or unconscious assumptions (Marsick & Watkins, 2001) are at play. The flexibility that coaching dialogue provides can be seen as a helpful structure to host and foster this particular kind of learning, as well as perhaps differently engage with what appears to be non-learning (Illeris, 2004; Patterson, 2018) or resistance to unlearning (Bateson, 2022; Faller & Marsick, 2023; Hislop et al., 2014). While executive coaching may give a podium to the experimentation, use, and results of applying these lenses with coaching clients for now, in the end, “all the world’s a stage” for how we can learn to better deal with the complexities in ourselves, others, and the world around us.

The study will benefit scholars and practitioners within the leadership development industry and those interested in better understanding executive coaching practices from an adult learning,

transformative learning, and adult development perspective. It will benefit scholars and practitioners interested in empirical research in how it helps establish a perspective on and utility to evidence-based theories, especially related to reflection, perspective transformation, the subject-object move, meaning-making, and forms of mind. Finally, the study will help those in executive coaching who find relevance and value in topics on vertical development. This niche, too, must learn from its limitation, insights, and opportunities, its experts and amateurs, and become more critical, true, and coherent its own development and the partners it chooses along the way. I hope the study will contribute to the evolution of coaching by shedding light on reflective practices for facilitating transformative insight, those deemed helpful by certified, experienced coaches working within the context of executive coaching and with a focus on adaptive challenges and turning points as a benchmark of what, how, and why the field exists and what it will do.

Another perspective of significance this study brings relates to how it explores an important and yet unanswered question about the possible influence that coaches' forms of mind might have on how they approach and understand facilitating reflection toward transformative insight. Investigating any form of mind-related differences in the process and the experience of facilitating transformative insights will help to coach researchers and practitioners to make more informed judgments about the extent to which certain practices shared by coaches might or might not serve as an appropriate stretch for a learner's capacity or otherwise reflect the natural preferences or interests that coaches have based on their own meaning-making systems (i.e., forms of mind). To be more specific, for example, based on the outcomes of the study, we might be able to extrapolate the extent to which the practices used by the coaches with the Socializing form of mind might (not) be helpful to clients with the Self-authoring form of mind (and vice versa). Making this kind of informed judgment is possible since, based on the literature at the intersection of leadership development and constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994), a good bit of discussion

has taken place about what leaders with this specific form of mind might find challenging and what their next developmental steps might be (e.g., Berger, 2012; Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002; Kegan, 1994). In that sense, the findings from this study will contribute to current knowledge and competencies within the field by reminding us that coaches are, and will always be, developing too. No matter their current capacity, they will, at times, have clients with different needs. Understanding the influence of a coach on client learning for transformative insight can help us clarify focus areas for coach development and recognize and make place for both spacious and targeted methodologies and practices for transformative learning with developmental impact within executive coaching. Such knowledge will add to the already ongoing and speculative debate happening about whether there is a need for a coach to have a form of mind at least at the (sub)stage, if not beyond, their client's form of mind (e.g., Bachkirova & Cox, 2007; Chandler & Kram, 2005; Laske, 2006; Perry, 2014).

If we know if or how reflective practices relate to forms of mind, perhaps these different practices, and their scaffolds of complexity, can be shared to illustrate variety in approach or style, to provide improved *adaptive support* to the adaptive challenges clients are facing, and to improve dialogue by finding more synergistic ways to join in and stretch ways of knowing. Perhaps in this way, coaches, too, can expand beyond their form of mind preferences with the knowledge and skill they gain. If the difference in (understanding of) practices for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight are found to be related to forms of mind, it may be possible to tune certain curriculum elements for coach education and coaching for leadership development in more developmentally appropriate ways to provide a bit, but not too much, of a healthy and productive stretch in reflective practices for the developing leader and the developing coach. For coaches, recognizing where their own natural and go-to practices lie might be helpful to challenge them to expand their understanding, comfort, and repertoire of coach practices.

From a personal perspective, as an executive coach with more than 15 years of specialized experience in executive coaching, having had, in that time, significant exposure to the fields of adult learning, transformative learning, and adult development through my studies in the Columbia Coaching Certification Program, various post-certification coaching classes and programs, and as part of the AEGIS doctoral program at Teachers College, Columbia University, I have a deep interest in learning more about how I can evolve my practices, and myself, as a facilitator of leadership development. I have been curiously and cautiously experimenting with different strategies to create space for and feel out my own repertoire of coach practices, with plenty of ups and downs along the way. Taking an observant and analytical perspective on transformative insight through this research and my studies around it has given me a valuable window through which I can start to take in, learn from, interact with, and share what other coaches are doing. I hope the contribution of this study will help start a conversation with some helpful empirical, pragmatic, and meaningful insights contributing to our understanding of transformative reflective practices in coaching.

I have long wondered about how insights of the transformative kind, or the lack thereof, could potentially function as barriers, portals, and/or ingredients of the human capacity and process that nurture transformative learning. It is my hope that this research study can contribute to providing support and challenge for leaders who are actively seeking, or could be surprised by, a valuable transformative insight into the greater realities of the self, others, and the world. This study provides me, and now you, within the context of executive coaching for leadership development, with the privilege of deeper exploration in reflections of this kind of precious learning, as shared by the coaches who have learned about it through their own experience and *experiencing*.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This research study aims to clarify new coaching practices for facilitating leadership development by exploring executive coaches' understanding of and experiences in facilitating reflection toward transformative insight. Additionally, I will explore any possible influence that the executive coaches' developmental capacity or form of mind has on how they approach the process of facilitating reflection toward insight. The main objective of this literature review is to create a clear and comprehensive overview of research, topics, and concepts relevant to the main theoretical lenses I have selected as a guide for investigating my two research questions:

- (1) How do coaches describe and understand what they do in their coaching practices to facilitate transformative insight, and why? More specifically, how do coaches describe and use practices for different levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise reflection) to facilitate transformative insight?
- (2) What relationship, if any, exists between the coaches' forms of mind and how these coaches describe what they do in their coaching practices to facilitate transformative insight?

As the context of my study is that of executive coaching, in the first section, I will review the current state of the field of executive coaching and make a case for transformative learning-driven developmental leadership coaching as a specialty that holds considerable promise as an intervention for helping leaders develop the capacities, or forms of mind, necessary to navigate their complex contexts successfully. Second, as one of my main objectives is to clarify reflective coaching practices

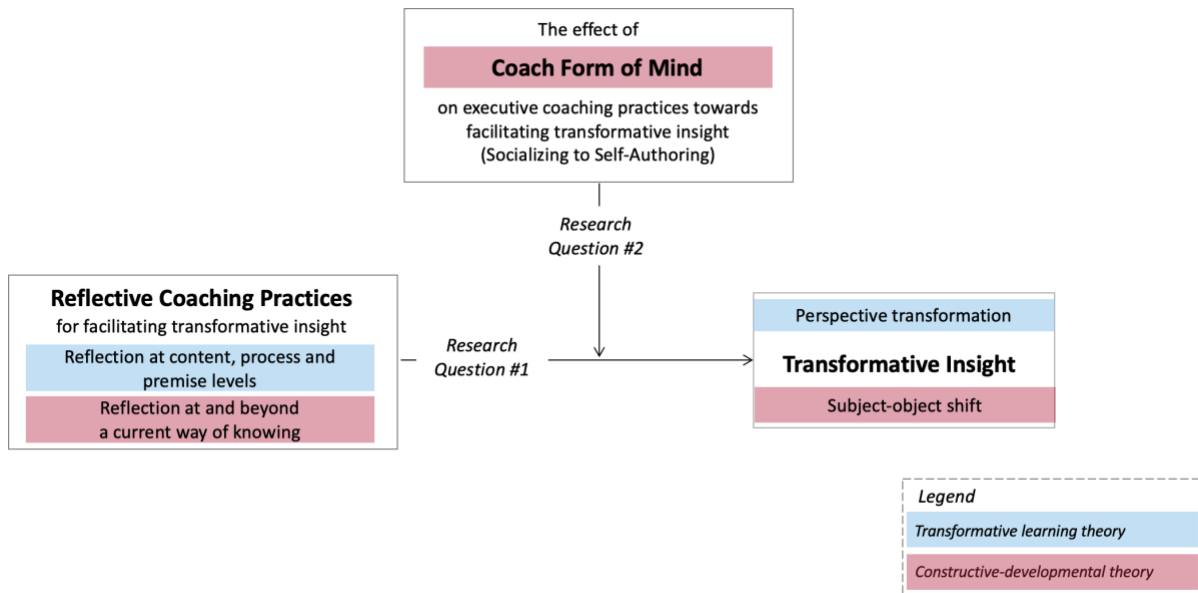
for facilitating transformative insight, I will focus on defining the concept of transformative insight by looking at my two main theoretical lenses, transformative learning (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000) and constructive-developmental (Kegan, 1982, 1994) theories. In doing so, a more apparent distinction between the general meaning and definition of insight and the specific kind of insight of interest in this study will emerge—that is, that transformative insight provides a potential and meaningful entryway to a process of transformative learning and one with developmental impact. Third, once the definition of transformative insight is clarified, I will introduce transformative learning (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000) and constructive-developmental (Kegan, 1982, 1994) theories, as they form an anchor for answering my research questions. Next, I will review the literature on practices that hold promise for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight in the executive coaching context (i.e., the first research question). I do that by looking into the theoretical and empirical literature around the two main theoretical lenses as they relate to the process of facilitating transformative learning in coaching. Here, I will explore, compare, and contrast the main theoretical concepts and tenets that could be helpful to this process, as well as empirical research directly relevant to my research questions. In the fifth and final section, using the constructive-developmental lens (Kegan, 1982, 1994), I will explore, in more depth, the strengths and challenges related to different forms of mind, as well as what those strengths and challenges might look like in the context of facilitating reflection in coaching. Seen from both process and facilitator perspectives, in this way, and this literature review, I will explore what kind of relationship might exist between coaches' forms of mind and the kinds of practices they use to facilitate reflection toward transformative insight (i.e., the second research question).

As a result of this literature review, the analysis, and synthesis of the theoretical and empirical information, as well as my own professional and personal experience, I developed a

conceptual framework (see Figure 2.1) that will serve as a guide for this research and my decision-making process with regard to every aspect of this study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

Figure 2.1

Conceptual Framework



Role of Coaching in Leadership Development

Just as it goes for the socio-economic dynamics of demand and supply, so too it applies to the timeless and tireless human need to learn, develop, and perform to overcome the demand of challenges in their environments. Long before the professional field of coaching emerged, well before most scientific fields of the natural and social sciences had themselves formalized, the perspectives, methods, and roles that coaching is built on were already actively in use (Brock, 2014). Dr. Brock's (2014) extensive research on the field of coaching identified its earliest roots in the theories and applications of Eastern and Western philosophic traditions and their focus on the achievement of greater self-understanding (achieved, for example, through Socratic inquiry and dialogue), as well as in the earliest days of athletic performance and competitions with their trainers and theories and applications on the achievement of skill, behavior, and performance. Brock

remarks that these two foundational roots form a “dichotomy that continues to this day” in coaching (p. 6).

Traveling in time ahead at least several thousand years, if not more (Brock, 2014), to the last 70 years of modern times, the first generation of what we recognize now as early coaching in organizations emerged as onboarding-like interventions in the 1950s workplaces and organizations (Grant, 2017). Young trainees were given a curriculum of instructions and demonstrations, and as they grew in the experience and application of their roles and responsibilities, they received feedback about the skills and proficiencies they developed (Cox et al., 2018). In the 1960s, the changes in the political, cultural, and social contexts of society placed new kinds of demands on individuals, and the contexts of coaching transitioned to include a focus and, over time, an emphasis on achieving one’s potential and self-actualizing (Grant, 2017). In this second generation of coaching (Stelter, 2014b), it also became more and more the client’s agenda (Cox et al., 2018) that drove the objectives and outcomes of personal and professional development. By the 1980s and 1990s, as organizational life grew more intense due to the growing influences of technological change, the need for knowledge workers, migration, and globalization (Brock, 2014), performance management processes emerged as the flavor and fervor of leadership. In response to these contexts, and along with its ongoing efforts to expand skill and knowledge in such areas as communication sciences, business, management, and leadership (Brock, 2014), coaching expanded beyond its initial training-focused approaches facilitated through coaching-like roles by drawing on additional multidisciplinary traditions and methods of learning and development, such as those found in philosophy and psychology (Stober, 2006), adult education, organizational development, and sports coaching (Du Toit & Sim, 2010) in order to provide learning and development support for leadership to meet the demand of their workplaces and industries. Coaching grew as a profession and one that brought new forms and focus to increasing self-understanding and competency development.

According to Dr. Stelter (2014a, 2014b), a leading Danish researcher, educator, and practitioner in coaching psychology, a new, third-generation form of and response for coaching is necessary to provide support to the complexities faced by individuals in organizations today, ones where deepening and expanding competencies will no longer be enough, and where the self's identity is under considerable pressure. To be clear, the third generation of coaching does not trivialize or replace other prior focuses of coaching; they, too, address necessary and valuable curricula of learning and development. Instead, the third generation of coaching focuses on breaking down the “knowledge monopolies” (Stelter, 2014a, p. 3) held hostage in us and our worlds through the predominance of conventional ways of thinking and being that are privileged. The third generation of coaching, as Stelter describes it, responds to this demand by facilitating a form of learning and development to meet the demands for (leader) capacity. This form of coaching leads from and into current responses of thoughts, feelings, emotions, beliefs, values, and identities that leaders bring to the table to engage them in and facilitate growth related to the demands of today's “hyper-complex” external contexts they are part of or partake in. Outcomes of this form of coaching include that a leader's responses must be solidly rooted and a-situational or attuned to the context and dynamics of any specific situation. Stelter (2014a) sees the demands coaching must respond to as facilitating a leader's perspective-taking, thinking, and behavior to be more flexible, adaptable, and cross-contextual. As this happens, individuals can be truly open to and able to better meet the idiosyncratic demands of their challenges.

Defining the perspectives, methods, and roles of third-generation coaching as being less about goal orientation and more about the coaching process, Stelter (2014b) advocates for coaches to create “reflective spaces” for capacity development that can lead to new constructions of knowledge, increased self-awareness, personal growth, and transformation. He defines these reflective spaces to be founded in, and evolve through dialogue, co-creation, and synergy between

the client and coach. Describing the focus of third-generation coaching as specifically targeting development in the construction of knowledge and the self's meaning-making processes, Stelter looks to the review, reassessment, and reinterpretation of meaning through the transformative process of reflection as the main form of coaching process and dialogue. He sees the role of the coach as supporting the client in the reflective process of integrating one's subjective perceptions and subjective reality with the reality of contexts he or she lives in. While the boundaries and definitions that Stelter assigns to a "third generation" coaching—one oriented toward capacity and founded in a strong epistemological focus on meaning and knowledge construction through dialogue and reflection—may be his own, the sentiments of sophistication in sense-making he describes are known demands on leaders today.

As a reminder, in Chapter 1, the case for how capacity—as related to one's form of mind or a "qualitatively different way of understanding the complex world around us" and one's current ability "to cope with complexity, multiple perspectives, and abstraction" (Berger, 2012, p. 10)—showed capacity as essential for perceiving and evaluating the aspects of complexity inherent to a presenting problem. This includes the approach taken to resolve the problem, the perspective of the problem solver that selected the approach taken to resolve the problem, and the different aspects of the problem itself. And that there is growing recognition of the need for leadership development that targets capacity (e.g., Berger, 2006, 2012, 2015; Berger & Atkins, 2009; Kegan & Lahey (2009); Van Velsor & Drath, 2004) and supports development for navigating complex problems, as complex problems cannot be solved by offering simpler solutions or simpler thinking (Kegan, 1994).

As this related to the changing and growing responses to leadership development from coaching, I remind you of the second generation's greater focus on competency building and self-awareness. Van Velsor and Drath (2004) explain how skills and capacity (i.e., form of mind) are interdependent and how skills are used within one's current framework of assumptions or frame of

reference. The capacity of one's framework of assumptions, in turn, limits what a person can be skillful in doing (p. 393) and learning. Williams et al. (2002) argue that "pure skill-based coaching seldom results in long-term change. Instead, sustainable change seems to require that the client recognize and understand the deeper motivators of his or her behavior" (p. 120). We can therefore conclude that, while the views on leadership development may vary in their specific focuses and interventions, there is agreement on the need to develop both leader capacity and competence, and each focus will have its own distinct curriculum.

Stelter (2014a, 2014b) is certainly not alone in his endeavor to create awareness and action for similar forms and focuses on a third generation of coaching that lead to sustainable growth and change that comes from increased complexity within ourselves and our assumptions, in turn making it possible for us to tackle greater complexity in the world. This kind of new generation of coaching enriches these processes of human growth and development that are accessible and need attention. Harvard's Institute of Coaching study (Moore, Todorova & Hull, 2022) of qualitative interviews with 33 executive leaders describes the urgent, post-pandemic influences on leadership awareness and perspective as themes related to a shifted understanding of the value of, and supporting deeper engagement in, their organizations. Describing the leadership now and in the future as relating to "a combination of compassionate, human-centered leadership with agile, adaptive, and generative leadership of systems" (p. 10), the study outlines a need for coaches and coaching to respond as "a catalyst, enabling and accelerating individual transformation" (p. 10). To achieve this, study outcomes identify the need for contexts and support in coaching that prioritize safe space for clients to ground and reflect, help clients navigate challenges and crises, help them expand consciousness, see, and navigate blind spots and biases, expand capacity, and enable change of thinking and behavior.

Stelter's third-generation coaching has focused on narrative collaboration and values. There are many other multidisciplinary traditions and holistic, systemic lenses growing in prominence in coaching that I could see as helpful in their general forms and specific supports, which while not new, could potentially be tapped into and leveraged in this new generation's focus on capacity. I think here, for example, of systems and gestalt coaching lenses, ontological coaching lenses, neuro, social, emotional, and somatic coaching lenses, mindfulness coaching, etc. At the same time, if capacity is the focus and context, it is time to understand its own systems more and bring them more deeply and broadly into the field of coaching today.

Toward a Conceptualization of Transformative Insight

What makes defining transformative insight important? It is important because when we choose to view insight not only as an input or output of learning but also as the precious moment and significant trigger for deep understanding and change it makes possible and keeps alive, we see it more clearly for the profound (i.e., "deep and bottomless," Merriam-Webster, n.d.) qualities and ingredients it brings to learning and development. When we understand that insight happens at the cusp of how we know and who we are, instead of insight being a commodity or a requisite mark of "good learning" (Newman, 2012, p. 37), we understand at that moment that we are holding up the very context and spark for the developmental opportunity, one that, when followed, creates new connections in our thinking, approach, and behaviors, expands our perspective on reality, and allows for transformative learning and developmental growth.

I will attempt to define transformative insight as the "space" from which a new and expanded frame of knowing first clearly emerges into consciousness, triggering the unearthing, touching, and shifting of one's epistemological assumptions, thereby offering a helpful segue to the process of transformative learning. Through finding boundaries to and characteristics of a conceptual anchor for a construct such as this, it is my hope that I will then be able to investigate

the kinds of portals, pathways, and practices for learning and development that are preceded by transformative insight. My intent echoes Hoggan's (2016) remark that only "when we have clarity around the transformative outcomes, does it make sense to talk about the learning processes that lead to those outcomes" (p. 72).

Insight, defined in the vernacular as "[the ability to have] a clear, deep, and sometimes sudden understanding of a complicated problem or situation" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.), can occur in any domain of our life and every form of learning. Insights can be described as related to a transition from a state of "not knowing" to a state of "knowing" (Mayer, 1992, 1995, as cited in Schilling, 2005). In this space, there is a quality of "newness" about it; for example, it has been reported to occur separate from and in the absence of any pre-existing interpretation (Kounios & Beeman, 2009). It has further been related to the recognition of one's own consciousness or awareness, locating insight also in one's perspective on thinking, and specifically on the processes of recognition and understanding (Trevisi et al., 2012).

The definitions of *insight* I have found in the literature do not do justice to the kind of insight I have observed when working with my clients. The definitions I have found mainly relate to thinking being reorganized around the problem as it was characterized or the approach to the problem (Korovkin et al., 2018; Cushen & Wiley, 2012; Topolinski & Reber (2010). The perspective of the problem solver herself, the one who is determining the approach to the problem and the perception of the problem, the idea that a new realization of a problem or situation is not only about a new perspective or a solution in the realities we live but instead in the realities we ourselves can see, is not a focus of this stream of literature, although the restructuring element to insight is involved in this (Devine & Sparks, 2014; Luo & Niki, 2003). What exactly can be restructured in the process of learning as it relates to insight? Thinking about thinking as a transformative context for insights, instead of the process of them, is harder to find in the literature, although the space related

to the “mechanisms underlying recognition and understanding” (Trevisi et al., 2012, p. 236) is alluded to, however little we perhaps know about reaching it.

As much as the idea of insight is something we can speak about and have shared human experience with (Cushen & Wiley, 2012), comparatively speaking, the research related to insight itself is fairly voluminous and varied, drawing on fields of study that individually, and collectively, seem more focused on investigating the mind as it relates to learning than it does the mind, its learning, and those inherently existential relationships with meaning. Exploring the topic of insight brought me more often to literature from disciplines such as philosophy, cognitive sciences, and psychology than to the broad field of adult education or the specializations of transformative learning and adult development. In the most general sense, a review of all the literature shows agreement for insight as related to restructuring knowledge, to the experience of learning, and to the idea that insight has not yet been fully defined and remains mysterious (Clancy & Binkert, 2017; Ménard, 2016).

Generally speaking, within any meaning-making process we hold, we can experience insight as happening (a) within the current meaning structure or form of mind, what Piaget (1952, 1965) would call the process of *assimilation* or the instance where our experiences can be assimilated within our current interpretive network; or (b) as being a trigger for perspective-taking toward a possible restructuring of the current meaning structure or form of mind, what Piaget would call the process of *accommodation*, reflecting the instances where our current way of understanding cannot accommodate the new experience) (Mezirow, 2000; Popp & Portnow, 2001). With regard to the latter, insight can be seen as “a transformative step during problem-solving, [one] which requires successful restructuring or reformulation of the problem” (Duncker, 1945, as cited in Sheth et al., 2009, p. 1269). Yorks and Nicolaidis (2012) argue further that insight can also be future-oriented in nature, involving “increased awareness of new possibilities derived through asking provocative

questions through engaging with diverse perspectives, assessing trends in divergent domains, as well as making explicit and challenging one's taken-for-granted assumptions" (p. 195). Such insight is described by Yorks and Nicolaides as insight occurring under conditions of perceived complexity and relating to a process of adult learning and adult development (i.e., "strategic insight"). As such, insight has been seen to play an important role in the end-to-end process of transformative learning, including acting as a necessary precondition for the kind of learning that increases the learner's capacity to address the problem that led to the new insight in the first place. But what about how this new problem-solving involves the problem-solver?

In what follows, for the purposes of this dissertation, I build toward the definition of transformative insight by drawing from my two main theoretical lenses of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000) and constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994). I will use these lenses as a pragmatic entryway for understanding transformative insight and the coaching client process of transformative learning (vertical development or growth in capacity) as a necessary pre-condition for this kind of transformative learning to occur that results in developmental outcomes as outlined by the theories of adult development.

Transformative Learning Perspective

In his psycho-critical approach to transformative learning (Taylor, 1998), Mezirow (1990) describes insight as an awakening and a building block of understanding in instances where our experiences do not fit the meaning perspectives we hold, resembling Piaget's (1952, 1965) idea of *accommodation*:

In our encounters with the unfamiliar, we begin with partial insights to direct the way we collect additional data; compare incidents, key concepts, or words; and relate emergent patterns metaphorically to our meaning perspectives. When the properties of the event do not fit our existing schema, we create new meaning schemes to integrate them. Each item of relevant information becomes a building block of understanding, which is transformed by further insight. (p. 9)

Mezirow's (1991) *perspective transformation* as “the central process in adult development” (p. 151) relies on the unique qualities of the transformative learning process to blaze its path of restructuring and settle itself in irreversible shifts in our perspective-taking abilities and how we experience, conceptualize, and (inter)act with the world (Hoggan, 2016, p. 71) and is an important anchor in my conceptualization of transformative insight. Perspective transformation is defined as “the process by which we transform problematic frames of reference (mindsets, habits of mind, meaning perspectives)—sets of assumption and expectation—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective and emotionally able to change” (Mezirow, 2009, p. 92). This process is about “becoming critically aware of one’s own tacit assumptions and expectations and those of others and assessing their relevance for making an interpretation” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 4). And while the literature on transformative learning is prolific, often with various perspectives for understanding its process and outcomes across a variety of contexts, Stuckey et al. (2013) emphasize that, independently of the perspective, the outcomes of transformative learning are similar in how they involve “developing a more inclusive, discriminating, and permeable worldview” (Mezirow, 1991; as cited in Stuckey et al., 2013, p. 213).

Looking at the process of perspective transformation, transformative insight would then be a moment, or a turning point, where one’s habitual meaning-making mechanisms become more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally capable to change (Hoggan, 2016; Mezirow, 2009), as well as more permeable, justified, differentiating, critically reflective, open to other points of view, and integrative of experience (Mezirow, 1998; p, 189)—a moment that can later lead to the transformation of those meaning-making mechanisms that the insight has brought into consciousness and toward a more seamless integration of one’s inner experience and outer worlds, leading to a learner becoming more authentic, self-aware, and whole (Hoggan, 2016, p. 61).

Robertson (1997), in his essay on how to promote transformative learning within the context of adult education, notes how the main goal of an educator is to facilitate “aha” experiences or moments of insight in the learner. Weld (2011) agrees, now in the context of professional supervision, stating that the goal of transformative learning is “building insights,” the kind of insight that can help progress the learner’s development in terms of how they make sense of the world (p. 20). Robertson (1997) sees insight as representing “a ‘flash,’ ‘bolt,’ ‘light going on,’ or some other image of sudden illumination, [and] is actually a part of a process of some duration—an epistemological transition during which learners move from one paradigm of knowledge to another” (p. 106). Similar to Mezirow’s (1990) idea of insights serving as building blocks for further discovery, Robertson also notes how moments of insight can cause a “ripple effect” leading to new insights and further learning.

In defining transformative insight, Hoggan’s (2016) typology of transformative learning outcomes or the distinct ways in which the learner changes, based on analysis of the work of various scholars and their understanding of the transformative learning process, is of great use. The four broad categories of change that emerged from Hoggan’s analyses included changes in learners’ (1) *worldview*, including one’s assumptions, beliefs, attitudes, expectations; ways of interpreting one’s experience, developing more comprehensive or complex worldview; and having a new awareness or understanding; (2) *sense of self*, including one’s sense of self in relation to others; an increased sense of empowerment and responsibility; shifts in identity; change in self-knowledge (e.g., strengths, limitations, motivations, authenticity); personal narratives or how the learner makes sense of their lives; meaning or purpose; and personality; (3) *epistemology*, more closely relating to Mezirow’s idea of perspective transformation, including epistemological habits of mind becoming more discriminating; more open; and utilizing extra-rational ways of knowing (e.g., somatic, spiritual, emotional); (4) *ontology* or “the way a person exists in the world,” including one’s affective experiences; ways of

being; and attributes; (5) *behavior*, including actions that reflect new perspectives; social action; professional practices; and skills; and finally, (6) *capacity*, referring to a greater complexity for navigating the world, including cognitive development; consciousness; and spirituality (pp. 65-69).

Looking further into transformative learning outcomes and toward defining transformative insight from a more practical perspective and toward its operationalization, I now turn to work that has attempted to operationalize transformative learning outcomes and that has some evidence of psychometric reliability and validity. Stuckey et al. (2013) have developed the Transformative Learning Survey to assess the transformative learning outcomes and processes in college-educated adults. The survey reflects three main approaches to transformative learning: cognitive/rational (Mezirow, 1991, 2003), extrarational (Dirkx, 1998, 2012; Lawrence, 2012; Tisdell, 2000), and social critique perspective (Brookfield, 2012; Freire, 1970). Through these efforts, they arrived at four correlated but unique categories of transformative learning outcomes: (1) *acting differently*, referring to changes in behavior that are remarkably different from previous behaviors; (2) *having a deeper self-awareness*, referring to conscious reflection and knowledge of one's own character, values, feelings, motivations, and impact on others; (3) *having more open perspectives*, referring to receptivity to new ideas and experiences, often involving curiosity and seeking to understand others' point of view; and (4) *experiencing a deep shift in worldview*, referring to a shift in paradigm that radically alters a perspective and replaces a prior thought process or way of being (Stuckey et al., 2022, p. 1462). Romano (2018), in her review of transformative learning assessment tools, concludes that the Transformative Learning Survey is "the most precise effort to operationalize the construct of the transformative learning" (p. 61).

Another helpful instrument for my conceptualization of transformative insight is Cox's (2017) Transformative Outcomes and Processes Scale (i.e., TROPOS) for assessing transformative learning. In his dissertation, based on the existing literature and with the help of various

transformative learning researchers, Cox constructed an instrument for assessing transformative learning piloted in an educational context. One subset of the scale assesses specific transformative learning outcomes. For the purpose of developing that scale, transformative learning outcomes were defined based on Mezirow as “a learner’s profound re-assessment of beliefs, typified by changed assumptions and a more inclusive, open perspective toward self and others” (p. 7). The following transformative learning outcome, which was one of the two “most statistically sound standalone subscales” (p. 71), included: (1) changing deeply held beliefs; (2) developing a greater sense of responsibility toward others; (3) changing goals for the future; (4) making major changes in life; (5) changing view of oneself; (6) changing view of the world; and (7) [educational] program changed the learner’s life (p. 63). These transformative outcomes are very much aligned with those of Stuckey et al. (2013).

Taken together, we see how, indeed, as Stuckey et al. (2013) emphasized, the outcomes of transformative learning explored in the prolific transformative learning literature are similar and, as such, provide a firm anchor for understanding and defining transformative insight. Before defining transformative insight, I will first explore my second theoretical lens for any further illumination of the concept I am looking to define, Kegan’s constructive-developmental theory (1982, 1994, 2000).

Constructive-Developmental Perspective

Looking at insight now from the psycho-developmental perspective to transformative learning (Hoggan, 2016), and more specifically from Kegan’s (1982, 1994, 2000) constructive-developmental theory of adult development, insight, as conceptualized for the purpose of this study, relates to the “changes not only in *what* we know but changes in *how* we know” (Kegan, 2000, p. 49). The kind of insight I am looking to define relates to the beginning of the kind of developmental process that is, as Popp and Portnow (2001) explain, “more than the accumulation of new information and represents qualitative changes in the very ways we know” (p. 49).

More specifically, from this perspective, insight relates to the beginning of a particular shift known as the *subject-object move* that describes the process by which we evolve increasingly complex capacities (i.e., forms of mind) for understanding and organizing our experience, resembling the process that Piaget (1952, 1965) referred to as *accommodation*. As previously mentioned, this shift describes the gradual movement of elements of our meaning-making from being hidden from us (i.e., elements we are subject to and are identified with) to becoming visible to us (i.e., elements that become an object, so we can take perspective on them; Kegan, 1982, 1994). Once an element of our knowing moves from being a subject to being an object, only then can we look at it, reflect on it, take control of it, and act upon it (Kegan, 1982, 1994). It is at that moment that the expansion of our form of mind, our meaning-making, has begun. It is in this very moment of disequilibrium in our knowing, resulting not only in another perspective on the world but our acute awareness of it and understanding of responsibility for our perspective itself, or once we get a glimpse of something we were subject to, that I propose transformative insight occurs. This would relate to what Kegan and Lahey (2001, 2009), in their Immunity to Change model for overturning our assumptions, would trigger becoming “consciously immune,” referring to the idea that even though we can see an assumption driving our meaning-making and the immune system keeping it in place (we are conscious of it), we are still not released from it; we are had by it and hence cannot yet do anything about it. For this release to occur, or for the subject-object shift to become permanent, for this insight to “stick” in order to be able to evolve further, we need to act upon it (Kegan & Lahey, 2001; Mezirow, 1990). In other words, we need to build our “psychological muscle” (Kegan & Lahey, 2001) to ensure that our newly gained insight does not fade and or get reabsorbed back into an “old” frame of reference we are still subject to, that is once again not visible to us. Building psychological muscle around a transformative insight and specific path and process of transformative learning that naturally flows and follows from it can prevent us from fallback

(McCallum, 2008), from going back to “business as usual, behaving as if the insight had never taken place” (Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002, p. 31), and beckon us forward into the deliberations and process of this particular form of end-to-end learning that happens between transformative insight and results in adult development. Marked as having happened by the outcomes that specifically characterize it, this change is one of learning happening in assumptions, assumptive design, and meaning-making.

A particular subject-object balance identifies the complexity with which a person is engaging in meaning-making activity; that is, it identifies their form of mind (or developmental stage), where each successive form of mind transcends and includes the previous one, building on it. As we have seen, each form of mind or meaning-making system has its own characteristics, which can be seen as transformative learning outcomes from one stage to the next. However, to identify a *general* definition of transformative insights independent of form of mind, I am looking at it now only from a general development process or mechanism and its outcomes.

This is where the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) can serve as another helpful segue into understanding those general transformative learning outcomes from this perspective. The SOI is a tool for assessing one’s form of mind or where a person is in their development along the developmental continuum as described by Kegan’s constructive-developmental theory (1982, 1994). When assessing one’s form of mind, or the complexity with which a person constructs the meaning of her experience, the distinction is made between investigating the *content* and the *structure* of a person’s thinking (Lahey et al., 1988; Popp & Portnow, 2001). It is the underlying meaning-making *structure* (or the “subject-objectness”) that determines from which form of mind a person is constructing their experience (Lahey et al., 1988, p. 8) and the way the “*content* of their lives” is being filtered and interpreted (Popp & Portnow, 2001; p. 50). Looking at the methodology behind the SOI, or the ways in which a person’s meaning-making *structure* can be ascertained, is a helpful way to

understand the general outcomes of transformation. In this process, there are a number of areas across multiple domains (i.e., cognitive, emotional, interpersonal) that the assessor is looking at, including, for example, sources of a person’s identity, the degree of abstraction in one’s thinking, the number of perspectives a person can take, the understanding of conflict, the extent of responsibility-taking, the constructions of interpersonal relationships and the self, the experience and sources of emotions, thinking about thinking, and the assumptions shaping one’s worldview (Berger, 2012; Lahey et al., 1988; Popp, 2020). As such, any changes in the ways in which a person constructs their experience in these areas can be seen as outcomes of transformative learning or the complexification of one’s meaning-making capacity relating to the “changes in *how* we know” (Kegan, 2000, p. 49).

Transformative Insight Defined

Table 2.1

Transformative Learning Process and Outcomes as Seen from Transformative Learning and Constructive-Developmental Perspectives

Perspective			
Transformative learning		Constructive-developmental	
Process			
<i>Perspective transformation:</i> assumption becoming more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective and emotionally able to change (Mezirow, 2009).		<i>Subject-Object move:</i> The movement of elements of our meaning-making from them being hidden from us (i.e., elements we are subject to and are identified with) to them becoming visible to us (i.e., elements that become an object, so we can take perspective on them; Kegan, 1982, 1994).	
Outcomes			
Profound changes in person’s:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - worldview - sense of self - epistemology - ontology - capacity - behavior (Hoggan, 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - worldview - self-awareness - openness of perspectives - action (Stuckey et al., 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - worldview - view of oneself - deeply held beliefs - sense of responsibility toward others - goals for the future life (Cox, 2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - worldview - sources of identity - degree of abstraction in thinking - thinking about thinking - perspectives-taking ability - understanding of conflict - responsibility-taking - constructions of interpersonal relationships experience - understanding and sources of emotions (Lahey et al., 1988; Berger, 2012; Popp, 2020)

Drawing on these two theoretical lenses (see Table 2.1 above), which have been developed independently of each other and refined through substantial theoretical thought, challenge, and research, a synergistic and shared conceptual definition for transformative insight for the purposes of this dissertation is framed as those moments in coaching when, from the participant coach's perspective, a client experiences a "turning point" and has a profound change in their understanding of how they view themselves or their relationships with others, how they understand or view the world around them, thereby changing their deeply held beliefs, developing a greater sense of responsibility and perspective-taking, changing their goals for the future, or making major life changes.

Theoretical Perspectives

Transformative Learning Theory

Jack Mezirow's (1978, 1991, 2000) transformative learning theory is a comprehensive theory of adult learning that has had a prominent role in the field of adult education for more than 40 years, being one of the most researched and debated theories in the field (Hoggan, 2016; Taylor, 2007). It is anchored in constructivist assumptions emphasizing the role of our meaning-making in how we make sense of our experiences and how we learn. That is, it is based on the idea that how we understand ourselves and our worlds is determined by the ways, by *how*, we construct the meaning from our experiences, constructions that act as filters to our thinking, feeling, and acting (Cranton, 2016). It describes how adults transform their worldviews or frames of reference by identifying, challenging, and expanding their assumptions through the process of critical reflection and interaction with others, making them more inclusive, discriminating, open, and emotionally able to change (Cranton, 2016; Dirkx, Mezirow & Cranton, 2006). Specifically, it describes "the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (Mezirow, 1996, p. 162).

As seen from the above definitions of transformative learning, change in frames of reference or meaning perspectives is central to the theory, where frames of reference refer to “the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences, selectively shaping and delimiting expectations, perceptions, cognition, and feelings, hereby setting our ‘line of action’” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5). Frames of reference or meaning perspectives relate to what developmental psychologists would call stages of development or forms of mind that fundamentally influence how we make meaning (they serve as “principles for interpreting” our experience) and our consequent actions, that are uncritically acquired through the process of socialization (Mezirow, 1990, p. 3). Our frames of reference provide us with a stable sense of identity and coherence in the way we interpret our experience and, as such, are strongly defended in instances when their validity is questioned (Mezirow, 2000). However, those very instances when our experience no longer fits the way we make meaning from that current frame (often triggered by what Mezirow, 2000, calls a disorienting dilemma) lead to the process of their very transformation. In this process of transformative learning, reflection has an essential function in creating and nurturing insight. It helps us reassess the assumptions, the truths we hold about the world and the self, that are at the core of our beliefs to elicit new insights upon which we can act (Mezirow, 1990). As such, reflection is seen as a goal of adult learning—a foundation, and a prerequisite, to development and transformation (Cranton, 2016; Mezirow, 1990).

Content, Process, and Premise Reflection

In defining reflection, Mezirow (1990) draws on Dewey (1933), who defines it as a process of “assessing the grounds (justification) for one’s beliefs” (p. 9), referring to the process of “rationally examining the assumptions by which we have been justifying our convictions” (Mezirow, 1990, p. 5), enabling us to correct the distortions in our meaning-making. The centrality of reflection, among other Mezirow’s work, is clearly seen in Chapter 4, “Making Meaning Through

Reflection,” from his 1991 book, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, where he, building further on Dewey’s ideas, differentiated three different types of reflection (i.e., levels of reflection), namely, content, process, and premise reflection (see Table 2.2 below for an overview) and elaborated on their role in the process of transformative learning. As such, Mezirow writes, “Reflection is the process of critically assessing the content, process, or premise(s) of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to our experience” (p. 104).

Table 2.2

Main Characteristics Across Three Types of Reflection: Content, Process, and Premise

	Level of Reflection		
	Content	Process	Premise
Focus of reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflecting on the content or description of a problem - <i>What</i> one perceives, thinks, or feels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflecting on strategies and procedures of problem-solving - Assessment performance effectiveness - <i>How</i> one performs the functions of perceiving, thinking, feeling, or acting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflecting on and questioning the problem itself and the assumptions underlying it (problem posing) - <i>Why</i> one thinks, feels, or acts the way one does and awareness and critique of the reasons why we have done so
Reflective questions	“What is happening here?” “What is the problem?” “What do I believe about myself?”	“How did this come to be?” “Did I misinterpret this?” “How have I come to have this perception of myself?”	“Why is this important to me?” “Why is this a problem anyway?” “Why should I question this perception?”
Role in perspective transformation	Dynamics by which our beliefs transform: may lead to the transformation of a specific belief		Dynamics by which our belief systems (meaning perspectives) transform: engages learners in seeing themselves and the world in a different way

(Cranton, 2013, p. 270; Cranton, 2016, pp. 25-29; Mezirow, 1991, pp. 100-111; Wallman et al., 2008, pp. 9-10)

In this process, content reflection refers to reflection on the content or description of a problem (Mezirow, 1991, p. 104) and relates to *what* one perceives, thinks, or feels (Wallman et al.,

2008). Example questions associated with this type of reflection include: “What is happening here?”, “What is the problem?” (Cranton, 2016, p. 26). Process reflection involves reflecting on the strategies and procedures of problem-solving rather than the content itself (Cranton, 2013; Mezirow, 1991) and relates to *how* one performs the functions of perceiving, thinking, feeling, or acting, as well as to an assessment of how effective that performance is (Wallman et al., 2008; p. 9). Example questions related to this type of reflection include: “How did this come to be?” or “Did I misinterpret this?” (Cranton, 2016, p. 26). Through content and process reflection, which Kember (1999) considers being equivalent in utility in the learning process, however different their focuses as “levels of reflection” are, the learner can transform her specific beliefs (Cranton, 2016; Mezirow, 1991). Finally, premise reflection involves reflecting on, questioning, and examining the problem itself and the assumptions underlying it (Cranton, 2013, 2016) by challenging the validity of presuppositions from prior learning (Mezirow, 1990). It relates to *why* one thinks, feels, or acts the way one does (Wallman et al., 2008, p. 9), as well as “awareness and critique of the reasons why we have done so” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 106). Example questions related to premise reflection include: “Why is this important to me?” or “Why is this a problem anyway?” (Cranton, 2016, p. 26).

Premise reflection is seen as a more complex level of reflection (Kember, 1999), as it can lead to the transformation of our unconsciously assimilated, taken-for-granted belief systems or meaning perspectives (Mezirow, 1990, 1991), the kind of transformation that leads to learners understanding themselves and the world around them in a profoundly different way (Cranton, 2016). Premise reflection, also (and more often) referred to as critical reflection (Mezirow, 1990), usually occurs after content and process reflection (Cranton, 2013) and is the least common of these three types (Kember, McKay, Sinclair, & Wong, 2008; Wallman et al., 2008; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). It is not surprising that it is not more common given the depth of our embeddedness in our

assumptions, our unawareness of their existence, and the central role they play in our sense of self and our self-concepts (Kember et al., 2008; Mezirow, 1990; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009).

In his elaboration on the three types of reflection and their role in the transformative learning process, Mezirow (1991) concludes, “If we are to facilitate learning, we must differentiate between these three types of reflection ... so we may design appropriate educational interventions for each (p. 106). And while Mezirow, in his later work, moved away from this distinction, Cranton (2016), in her ongoing efforts to find practical ways to promote transformative learning, still finds it a useful distinction for the same reason. Mezirow came up with this differentiation in the first place. That focus on finding practical ways to facilitate transformative learning is precisely the goal of this dissertation. As such, reflection, in general, and its three types, or “levels,” are central to investigating the practices for facilitating transformative insight in the coaching context—a context in which client reflection plays a central role and where the client is continuously invited to reflect on her or his thinking, feeling, and actions (Grant, 2003; Jackson, 2004).

Constructive-Developmental Theory

Robert Kegan’s (1982, 1994) constructive-developmental theory describes how individuals grow and change in the way they make meaning of their experiences across their lifespan. Constructive-developmental theory combines two “Big Ideas” (Kegan, 1982, p. 8) from the theoretical paradigms of constructivism and developmentalism. Both ideas connect, and connect in us, the central idea that our assumptions, knowledge, narratives, and the particular strengths and limitations of learning we experience are contextual and subjective. The constructive aspect of the theory refers to the idea that individuals actively engage in and construct their reality based on prior experiences and beliefs; that is, they construct meaning from their experiences as they interact with their environment and make new interpretations and inferences about the greater nature of reality. The developmental aspect suggests that the way they do this “constructing” evolves over time, that

as it happens, capacities for awareness and meaning-making systems grow and an individual's form of mind becomes increasingly more complex, which then leads to a process of reconstructing meaning and identity in the new contexts.

Kegan's is a neo-Piagetian theory of human development building on and expanding on Piaget's (1952) work on cognitive development, as well as the early works of others that have explored how people grow and develop across various domains (e.g., Fingarette, 1963; Kohlberg, 1969; Loevinger, 1976; Perry, 1970; Selman, 1974). It depicts an overall adult development process that includes cognition and additional lines of development, namely, affective, interpersonal, and intrapersonal experiences, emphasizing adults as active meaning-makers of their experiences within their social context (Drago-Severson, 2009).

In his theory, Kegan explicitly outlines the trajectory of adult development, outlining how our meaning-making systems gradually evolve following consistent and predictable patterns as we interact with, and experience, increasingly complex environments (Popp & Portnow, 2001). The theory posits that adults evolve through qualitatively different stages of development or forms of mind, filtering our experiences of ourselves, others, and our contexts, thereby shaping our thoughts, feelings, and actions (Kegan & Lahey, 1983), with each stage of development or form of mind becoming more complex than the previous one. To understand a process of constructive-developmental growth or the transformation and complexification of one's meaning-making system, one first needs to understand the idea of the subject-object relationship or the "root or 'deep structure' of any principle of mental architecture or organization" (Kegan, 1994; p. 32). Kegan (1994) asserts that *subject* "refers to those elements of our knowing or organizing that we are identified with, tied to, fused with, embedded in" and as such "cannot be responsible for, in control of, or reflect upon" (p. 32). *Object*, on the other hand, refers to the opposite idea (Berger, 2002); it "refers to those elements of our knowing or organizing that we can reflect on, handle, look at, be

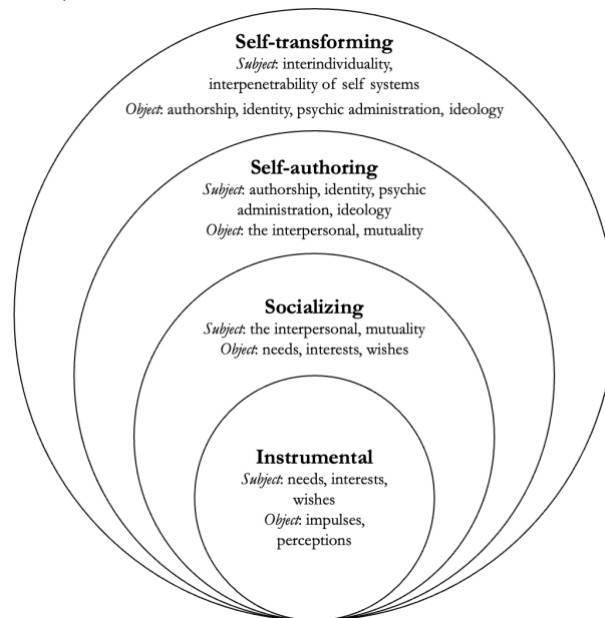
responsible for, relate to each other, take control of, internalize, assimilate, or otherwise operate upon” (Kegan, 1994; p. 32). As such, “we *have* (an) object; we *are* subject” (p. 32). The process of development involves gradually moving the elements of our knowing from subject to object, thereby complexifying the way we make meaning of our experience, and the reality we know.

Forms of Mind in Adulthood

Kegan outlines various subject-object balances giving form to specific developmental stages or forms of mind (see Figure 2.2 below for an overview). As we evolve from one form of mind to the next, we do not jump suddenly from one form of mind to another. Instead, we spend a considerable amount of time developing a new and more complex form of mind from the foundation of the current one and integrating it into a new system of meaning (Kegan & Lahey, 1983).

Figure 2.2

The Subject-Object Balances Across Forms of Mind (i.e., Subject: What One is Identified With; Object: What One CAN Reflect and Take Perspective On)



(Drago-Severson, 2009; Kegan, 1982, 1994; image adapted from Drago-Severson & Blum DeStefano, 2018)

As depicted in Figure 2.2, each new form of mind transcends and includes the previous one (McCauley et al., 2006). According to the theory and research, four forms of mind are found in adulthood: Instrumental, Socializing, Self-authoring, and Self-transforming forms of mind (see Table 2.3 below for key characteristics associated with each form of mind).

Instrumental Form of Mind. Adults making meaning from the Instrumental form of mind are subject to their needs, interest, and wishes, while they can take perspective on (i.e., can take as object) their impulses and perceptions. They understand themselves and the world through a concrete orientation, durable dispositions, rules, and focus on what they want. Not yet capable of genuine empathy, they see others as obstacles or helpers to meet their needs and goals. They can take only perspective, their own, making it hard to consider the feelings and actions of others. Example questions guiding their meaning-making include: “Will I get punished?”, “What’s in it for me?”, “Do others have exactly the same thing?” (Berger, 2012; Drago-Severson, 2009).

Socializing Form of Mind. Adults making meaning from the Socializing form of mind are subject to the interpersonal and mutuality. At the same time, they can take perspective on (i.e., can take as object) their needs, interest, and wishes. They understand themselves and the world in abstract ways, defining themselves by the opinions and expectations of others. Feeling empathy, they feel responsible for others’ feelings and experience others as responsible for their own. They can take multiple perspectives, but only one at a time, and thus cannot mediate between them. Intolerant of ambiguity, they use others’ expectations and role definitions as a compass, feeling a strong sense of responsibility for meeting those expectations. Example questions guiding their meaning-making include: “What will others say?”, “Will you (valued other, authority) still like me, value me, approve of me, think I am a good person?”, “Am I doing this right?” (Berger, 2012; Drago-Severson, 2009).

Self-authoring Form of Mind. Adults making meaning from the Self-authoring form of mind are subject to authorship, identity, psychic administration, and ideology. At the same time, they can take perspective on (i.e., can take as object) the interpersonal and mutuality. They understand themselves and the world through their own internal authority—their own internal compass, defining themselves through internally defined standards, values, and principles. While they feel empathy and consider others’ feelings, expectations, and goals, they are no longer defined by them or take responsibility for them. They understand others as autonomous identities, with their own sets of values and principles, taking differences with others as opportunities for growth. They can take in multiple perspectives simultaneously and mediate between them according to their own internally generated standards and principles. Example questions guiding their meaning-making include: “Am I maintaining my personal integrity, standards, values?”, “Am I achieving my goals and being guided by my ideals?”, “How do I develop the standards to judge my own success?” (Berger, 2012; Drago-Severson, 2009).

Self-transforming Form of Mind. Adults making meaning from the Self-transforming form of mind are subject to interindividuality and interpenetrability of self-systems. At the same time, they can take perspective on (i.e., can take as object) authorship, identity, psychic administration, and ideology. They understand themselves and the world as being in context and constant process and change, understanding their experience as it occurs at the moment and that having one particular identity is, in itself, limited. Instead, they can look across ideologies and belief systems to identify patterns and similarities and orient toward dialectical thinking, contradictions, and opposites. Their emotional experiences and internal conflicts are welcomed and are understood as valuable input for the further evolution of the self, the primary concern of those making meaning from this form of mind. They welcome multiple perspectives and take them as momentary, context-specific constructions that allow for the emergence of new dynamics from which new perspectives

and choices can be made. Example questions guiding their meaning-making include: “How can other’s people’s thinking help me to enhance my own?”, “How can I seek out information and opinions from others to help me modify my own ways of understanding?”, “What is lost if I succeed here? What is gained if I fail?” (Berger, 2012; Drago-Severson, 2009).

Table 2.3

Key Characteristics Across Forms of Mind in Adulthood

Form of Mind <i>Guiding Questions</i>	Key Characteristics
<p>Instrumental</p> <p><i>“Will I get punished?”</i></p> <p><i>“What’s in it for me?”</i></p> <p><i>“Do others have exactly the same thing?”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concrete orientation to the self and world - The self is identified with and defined through one’s self-interests; by own concrete needs, interests, wishes, plans - Not capable of to think abstractly or making generalizations - Driven by dualistic thinking (e.g., right vs. wrong, either/or distinctions) - Can take only one perspective – one’s own - Unwavering focus on rules and concrete consequences for oneself - Not capable of empathy - Sees others as either helpers or obstacles to getting one’s concrete needs met - Interactions with others in terms of concrete give-and-takes and outcomes
<p>Socializing</p> <p><i>“What will others say?”</i></p> <p><i>“Will you (valued other, authority) still like me, value me, approve of me, think I am a good person?”</i></p> <p><i>“Am I doing this right?”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orients to self and the world in abstract terms - Focus is outward; sense of self is defined and shaped by opinions and expectations of others/personal environment - reliance on external authority and important others for standards, values, direction, legitimization, acceptance, belonging - Mutuality, loyalty, belonging, and reciprocity are paramount - Concerned with abstract psychological consequences as related to important others - Difficulty with ambiguity: needs a clear sense of what others expect and want - Can take multiple perspectives (and become embedded in), but only one at a time - Feels empathy - Emotions – always in co-creation with others and the environment; feels responsible for others’ feelings and experiences others as responsible for own feelings.

Table 2.3 (continued)

Form of Mind <i>Guiding Questions</i>	Key Characteristics
<p>Self-authoring</p> <p><i>“Am I maintaining my personal integrity, standards, values?”</i></p> <p><i>“Am I achieving my goals and being guided by my ideals?”</i></p> <p><i>“How do I develop the standards to judge my own success?”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orientation is inward, toward own internal authority, values, standards, principles - Concerned with consequences of personal integrity and meeting one’s own standards - Capable of constructing the whole complex systems of abstractions - Takes multiple and contradictory perspectives simultaneously, while maintaining her own - Takes full responsibility for own feelings, choices, opinions, actions - Others are experienced as autonomous, with their own psychological agendas and value - Differences with others are appreciated and are taken as opportunities for growth and creativity - Relates to emotions as many parts of the self, can hold contradictory feelings simultaneously
<p>Self-transforming</p> <p><i>“How can other’s people’s thinking help me to enhance my own?”</i></p> <p><i>“How can I seek out information and opinions from others to help me modify my own ways of understanding?”</i></p> <p><i>“What is lost if I succeed here? What is gained if fail?”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orients to self and world as continually in process, not invested in any one particular identity; the self as always in context and in the process, as ever-evolving - Orients to underlying morals and values that precede societies - Capable of holding on to multiple systems, and orientation toward dialectical thinking, paradox, contradiction, and opposites - Sees multiple perspectives and uses them to continuously transform her own - Able to step back from and reflect on the limits of own ideology or personal authority to see that any one system of self-organization is in some way partial or incomplete - Concerned with the consequences of and for the process rather than the end result - Other’s opinions are experienced as an expression of any one of an endless array of choices, which, in their expression, create a new dynamic and context within which to make new choices and create new dynamics, and create a new story - Emotions – more recognizable and tolerable, and even welcomed; open to emotional conflict as an interior conversation; can simultaneously hold contradictory feelings without experiencing them as contradictory

(Berger, 2012, pp. 19, 117; Drago-Severson, 2009, pp. 40-41; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Popp & Portnow, 2001, pp. 55-58)

Kegan’s (1982, 1994) constructive-developmental theory, which specifies both the process and the outcomes of adult development, holds great promise for the field of executive coaching, which itself is a “fundamentally developmental activity” (Cavanagh, 2016, p. 165). As such, the field of executive coaching has seen a clear rise in the various applications of the theory for the development of its practices (e.g., Bachkirova & Borrington, 2018; Berger, 2006, 2012; Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002; Goodman, 2002; Hayes & Popp, 2019; Van Velsor & Drath, 2006).

In the following sections of this chapter, I will use this theoretical lens as well as Mezirow's (1978, 1991, 2000) transformative learning to conceptualize transformative insight and narrow in on the kinds of practices that hold promise for its facilitation as dictated by my first research question. Finally, Kegan's (1982, 1994) constructive-developmental theory will also serve as an anchor for answering my second research question investigating how executive coaches' developmental capacities or forms of mind might influence the ways in which they facilitate transformative insight in coaching, including the specific practices they use to do so.

Executive Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight: Transformative Learning Perspective

In this section, I provide an overview of the theoretical frameworks and related existing practices anchored in transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000), holding promise for the facilitation of transformative insight in the context of executive coaching. In his psycho-critical approach to transformative learning (Taylor, 1998), insight relates to the starting point in the process of perspective transformation, where one's assumptions become more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change; the process that allows generating beliefs that are more true or justified as guides for one's future actions (Mezirow, 2009, p. 92).

The review of the literature at the intersection of transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000) and (executive) coaching reveals the scarcity of work that has directly applied this theoretical lens in this particular context. This might not be surprising since transformative learning has not yet been widespread in the context of adult education, let alone in its application in the business or corporate world (Brock, 2015; Illeris, 2003, as cited by Beckett, 2018, p. 49), a world that the executive coaching field is a part of. Nonetheless, some scholars have recognized the theoretical value this theory holds for understanding and development of the executive coaching field and its practices (e.g., Bennett & Campone, 2017; Corrie & Lawson, 2017; Cox, 2006, 2015; Cox,

Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck 2014; Fisher-Yoshida & Yoshida, 2022; Gray, 2006); however, only a few have put this idea to test (e.g., Mbokota et al., 2022; Sammut, 2014; Terblanche, 2020, 2022).

In what follows, I will provide an overview of the literature most relevant to answering my research questions. I find this to be a worthwhile effort since both transformative learning (as an adult learning theory) and executive coaching share the common goal of fostering reflection in order to effect changes in the way the learner makes meaning of their experience and related thinking, feeling, and action. As such, the role of the coach can be seen as that of an adult educator, that is, to act as an “empathetic provocateur” who models, challenges, and stimulates critical reflection so that the limiting perspectives can be brought into awareness, expanded upon, and used as a base for new learning and action (Cranton, 1992, 2016). Gray (2006) explains:

It is this emphasis on encouraging self-reflection on fostering action and on co-learning that makes transformative learning a potentially powerful guide to coaching—and coaching a powerful tool for generating transformative learning. (p. 487)

Moving Through the Phases of Transformative Learning

Through his research on women’s re-entry into college after a long break and the process of their perspective transformation, Mezirow (1978a, 1978b) identified ten phases of transformative learning (see Table 2.4 below), with critical reflection at the center of this process (Kitchenham, 2008). Gray (2006) proposed transformative learning as an anchor for understanding the coaching process and has emphasized the value of Mezirow’s transformative learning phases, arguing that coaches may “assist and promote” them with their clients (p. 488).

Cox (2015) was somewhat more specific in describing how coaches help their clients move through each of the phases outlined by Mezirow. When the client encounters a disorienting dilemma and experiences related stuckness and a need for guidance is most often what brings a leader to executive coaching (Fisher-Yoshida & Yoshida, 2022). Independently of the ‘content’ of the dilemma (e.g., context change, personal crisis conflict, cross-cultural or -functional complexity), it

always involves some form of interruption to their daily function, the kind of interruption that is not easily resolved, and that is precisely when the client “becomes coachable and the potential for some form of change or transformation becomes apparent.” (Cox, 2015, p. 33). Once the client experiences a disorienting dilemma, the coach can have a specific role and focus in each of these phases to help the client navigate this process of change, of transformation. In Table 2.4 below, I have outlined Cox’s (2015) suggestions about what coaches might pay attention to in their process of facilitating their client’s transformative learning process (pp. 33-35).

Table 2.4

Mezirow’s (1978a, 1978b) Ten Phases of Transformative Learning and Role of the Coach (Cox, 2015)

Phases of Transformative Learning	Role of the Coach
1. A disorienting dilemma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paying attention to opportunities to challenge the client and uncover mini-dilemmas, or “openings,” which can result in transformation
2. A self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use to explore client’s motivations - Help clients think through their dilemmas and their roles within them - Provide emotional support as they come to certain realizations
3. A critical assessment of assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage critical reflection to help identify the frames of reference and structures of assumptions that underpin and influence perception, thinking, decision-making, feelings, and actions - Challenge the client to provoke the disequilibrium that creates learning and development
4. Recognition that one’s discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use self-disclosure, metaphors, or stories or ask for examples from the client that illustrate that the current predicament is not exceptional and therefore there is no need to feel isolated, hereby creating a springboard to the next stage of exploring options - Encourage realization that the dilemma is a shared and potentially negotiable experience in the sense that it is a dilemma by interpretation—one that is instigated by outmoded frames of reference
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look at a range of alternatives to replace the “lost” perspective - Comparing alternatives to help with the decision-making - Help the client analyze a variety of interpretations and alternative scenarios and the potential roles and relationships that these might create - Explore the actions that might result from each of the alternatives

Table 2.4 (continued)

Phases of Transformative Learning	Role of the Coach
6. Planning of a course of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helping the client to formulate plans to help deal with new realities, particularly in relation to trying out new roles and building new relationships and including acquiring knowledge and skills, trying out new roles, building competence and self-confidence
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans	
8. Provisional trying of new roles	
9. Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships	
10. A reintegration into one's life and society with the new perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helping clients to integrate the new perspective into their lives, taking account of the implications of the new perspective - Provide examples of models for functioning within the new perspective or provide opportunities for role-play - Some referral to specialist advice and support may also be necessary

(Adapted from: Cox, 2015, p. 33-35; Cranton, 2016, p. 16; Kitchenham, 2008, p. 105; Mezirow, 2000, p. 22)

Important to mention is that Mezirow (1978a) indicates how transformative learning phases do not always follow an invariant sequence of consistent forward movement. This is often due to challenges inherent to various parts of the learning process and includes, for example, self-deception, fallbacks, the experience of threat to the current way of life and sense of self, or difficulty committing to taking action following insight. As such, Cox (2015) warns that coaches should not expect each of their clients to follow exactly the same trajectory of the transformative learning process and in the same way, noting that some phases might need to be revisited and approached differently as related to clients' individual needs (p. 34). Cranton (2016) provided another suggestion in this regard, noting how she follows this process from the perspective of the learner undergoing transformation and how, at times, she may "shorten and adapt [the phases] based on [her] own thinking about the process and [her] observations of and conversations with students" (p. 47).

Corrie and Lawson (2017) have also attempted to relate Mezirow's phases of transformative learning to executive coaching. They worked on developing a relationship between transformative learning and executive coaching by theoretically mapping Mezirow's ten phases of transformative learning to Dingman's (2004) six generic stages of coaching in an attempt to develop a

transformative learning coaching model (see Table 2.5 below). They hoped this model would help coaches foster transformative learning and help clients overcome their disorienting dilemmas and sense of dissonance toward meeting a goal of achieving personal and organizational development and outcomes.

Table 2.5

Mapping of Mezirow’s Ten Transformative Learning Phases to Dingman’s Six Generic Stages of Coaching, and Toward Corrie and Lawson’s Transformative Learning Coaching Model

Mezirow’s Transformative Learning Phases (1978a, 1978b)	Dingman’s Six Generic Stages of Coaching (2004)	Corrie and Lawson’s Transformative Learning Coaching Model (2017)
1. A disorienting dilemma	1. Formal contracting 2. Relationship building	<i>Stage 1: Rapport building and listening</i> - Developing a safe place and trust: creating a liminal space - Allowing the coachee’s story to be heard, listening, enabling ventilation - Finding the coachee’s disorienting dilemma
2. A self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame 3. A critical assessment of assumptions	3. Assessment	<i>Stage 2: Critical reflection.</i> - Coachee hears their own story - Suspension of normality - Critical reflection and making sense of the story
4. Recognition that one’s discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change	4. Getting feedback and reflecting	<i>Stage 3: Making meaning from the story.</i> - Testing problematic frames of reference, critical self-reflection, exploring alternative perspectives - Meaning making, developing a clearer picture, and starting to reframe
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions 6. Planning of a course of action 7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plans 8. Provisional trying of new roles	5. Goal-setting	<i>Stage 4: Working with meaning</i> - Re-framing, new knowledge/skills, developing new perspectives - Developing a plan for action
9. Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships 10. A reintegration into one’s life on the basis of conditions dictated by one’s perspective	6. Implementation and evaluation	<i>Stage 5: Integration and investiture.</i> - The coachee’s new story has been accepted and integrated into their world view

(Adapted from Corrie & Lawson, 2017, p. 54)

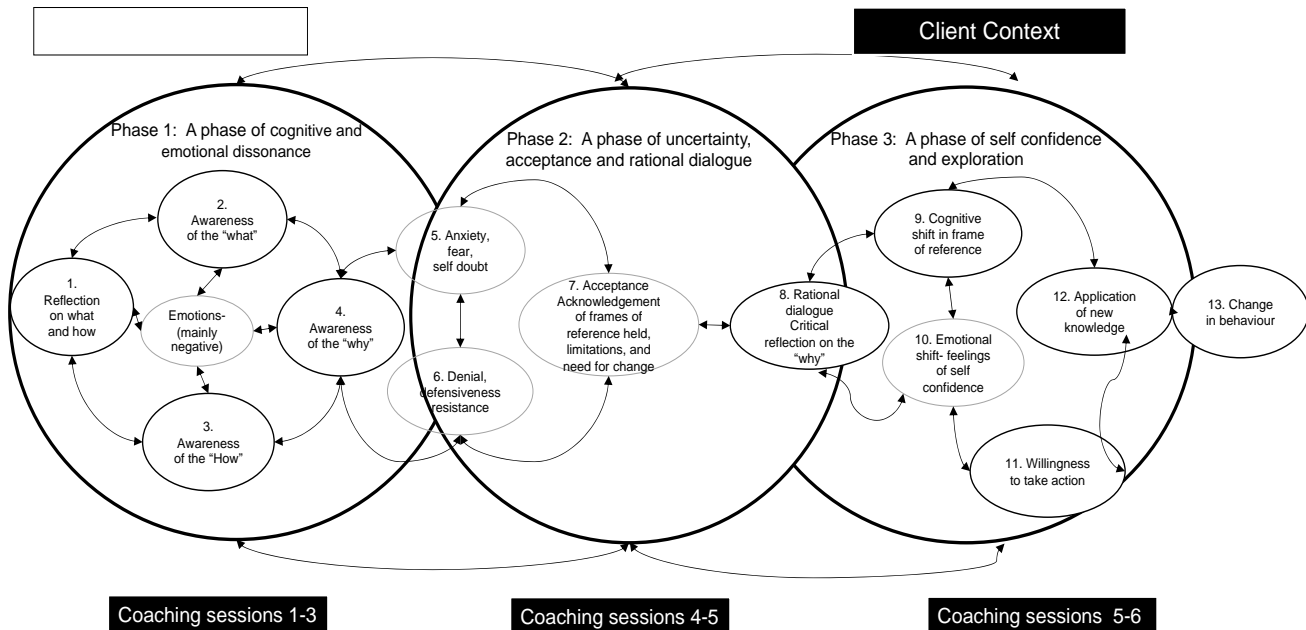
Corrie and Lawson's (2017) transformative learning coaching model has not been tested but only "pragmatically developed" (p. 56), and Cox's (2015) suggestions have also not yet been empirically examined, nor do they very explicitly outline coaching practices, making it hard to readily put them to use. However, they both may serve as helpful input for outlining an overarching coaching process anchored in transformative learning and, as such, can serve as a starting point for the development of more specific coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight.

One study that has looked into the transformative learning phases in the context of executive coaching empirically is that of Mbokota et al. (2022). And while they have not investigated all ten transformative learning phases as outlined by Mezirow, they have explored, from the perspective of the learner/coaching client, three key transformative learning elements, namely, disorienting dilemma, critical reflection, and rational dialogue. To do so, they applied a longitudinal multiple case study with 11 executives from the public sector in South Africa who received six individual 90-minute coaching sessions within a 6-month period. Using unstructured observations via video recordings, client diary entries involving their post-coaching reflections, and semi-structured interviews, they captured the clients' experience of executive coaching and their related learning. Mbokota et al. analyzed the clients' learning process, leading them to conclude that next to the three key transformative learning elements (i.e., disorienting dilemma, critical reflection, and rational dialogue), there is one additional element to the clients' learning process—acceptance, a step that follows disorienting dilemma and critical reflection but precedes the process of rational dialogue. Specifically, they found that the process of critical reflection, which caused mostly negative emotional and cognitive experiences, was mitigated by the coaching process, which helped the clients "acknowledge their emotions and reframe their points of view, [helping them] move to a place of cognitive and emotional safety and acceptance" (p. 129). This allowed the learners to proceed to engage in rational dialogue, where one's beliefs and assumptions are objectively and

critically brought into a discussion with the coach (Mezirow, 1997, as cited in Mbokota et al., 2022), the process for which the client's confidence and positive emotions were a prerequisite in order to explore new ways of thinking, feeling, and doing (p. 129). Based on these findings, Mbokota et al. have developed a theoretical model of the transformative learning process in executive coaching consisting of three main phases: (1) the cognitive and emotional dissonance phase, (2) the uncertainty, acceptance, and rational dialogue phase, and (3) the self-confidence and exploration phase (see Figure 2.3 below for an overview of the model). Mbokota et al.'s study also contributes to understanding the process of reflection in coaching, namely, that of content, process, and premise reflection, an area of particular interest for this dissertation. Specifically, they demonstrated how, in order to get to awareness of the *why* behind their dilemmas (i.e., premise reflection), the client first needs to gain awareness of the *what* (i.e., content reflection) and *how* (i.e., process reflection) behind them. Only when that awareness is in place can the client engage with the *why* behind the dilemma through the process of rational dialogue, including critical reflection. This model, outlining the process of transformative learning and its key components in coaching from the perspective of the client, provides a framework from which coaches can help their clients think critically toward transforming their meaning perspectives and provides a strong anchor for future research. However, one thing that this study does not answer is precisely *how* the coaches could facilitate this transformative learning process, that is, which coaching practices would help the clients move through these phases.

Figure 2.3

Mbokota et al.'s (2022) Model of Transformative Learning Process in Executive Coaching



(Mbokota et al., 2022, p. 131; reproduced with the author's permission)

Another researcher who explored how coaching might contribute to leaders' transformative learning is Terblanche (2020). In the specific context of career transition coaching, Terblanche used two-phase qualitative research during which he interviewed 20 managers going through a career transition. The goal was to capture their experiences related to significant changes resulting from coaching (to ascertain instances in which transformative learning occurred) and coaching techniques they perceived as helpful in that process. In the first phase of the analysis, Terblanche identified instances of meaning perspective changes using Hoggan's (2018) transformative learning criteria: (1) depth (learning must generate a significant change of a substantial nature in the person's life); (2) breadth (change must present itself in multiple contexts in the person's life, such as work and private life); and (3) relative stability (change must be of a permanent nature) (Terblanche, 2020, p. 15). All cases in which Hoggan's transformative learning criteria were met were analyzed further to identify coaching techniques associated with managers' perspective changes. In this second phase,

Terblanche identified and clustered the coaching techniques and reported on their frequencies. The results revealed a total of 13 techniques that managers perceived as helpful for their transformative learning, with active experimentation, questioning, reflection, challenging views/providing different perspectives, and using frameworks and theories as the most frequently cited ones by the managers (see Table 2.6 below for the full overview).

Table 2.6

Ranked Coaching Techniques that Potentially Aided in Transformative Learning as Identified by Terblanche (2020)

Coaching Technique	Description
Active experimentation	Co-designing behavioral experiments with the manager in between coaching sessions
Questioning	The coach asking incisive questions that stimulated reflection and promoted alternative perspectives
Reflection	Allowing the manager to reflect during and after the coaching sessions on insights and outcomes of experimentation
Challenging views and providing different perspectives	Managers liked being challenged openly in a directive manner in order to gain alternative perspectives
Frameworks and theories	Managers valued the acquisition of new knowledge in the form of theories and frameworks (shared by their coaches) on how they were learning, changing, and the challenges they faced
Listening	The ability of the coach to listen attentively
Unclear	Managers were not sure which coaching techniques were used
Analyzing current situation	Gaining more insight into the present state of the manager
Assessments	Using psychometric or other types of assessments
Networking and branding	Expanding the manager's network and actively promoting themselves
Future vision	Imagining an ideal future state
Role playing	Enacting potential social scenarios
Goal setting	Agreeing on and actively aiming to fulfill a coaching outcome
Consulting external parties	Enlisting the help of people outside of the coaching dyad

Source: Terblanche (2020, p. 23)

Continuing his work on examining the kinds of coaching processes that may lead to leaders' transformative learning during career transitions, Terblanche (2022) conducted another qualitative research with the goal of developing a Transformative Transition Coaching (TTC) framework, once again using a two-phased approach. During the first phase, Terblanche (2022) interviewed a total of 16 participants whose experiences he deemed relevant for constructing the TTC framework. This

included eight senior executives who had received transition coaching, five executive coaches who coached transition managers, two HR practitioners, and one transition leader's line manager. Using these participants' data, Terblanche captured their experiences related to transition coaching to derive the main conceptual themes, which were then used to draft the TTC framework. In the second phase of the study, Terblanche used a canonical action research approach to test the initial framework with six senior transition leaders, each receiving six transitional coaching sessions. During this phase, the collected data included the researcher's written reflection on what (did not) work during coaching, leaders' written feedback, and finally, post-coaching leader interviews. The findings revealed a total of seven aspects of the TTC framework, including contextual, contractual, anticipatory, procedural, temporal, technical, and efficacious. In Table 2.7 below, I have outlined all seven aspects of the framework and extracted the role of the coach for each (Terblanche, 2022; pp. 283-288). Two of these seven aspects most closely relate to the focus of my first research question exploring coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight. The first is the procedural aspect of the TTC framework and its five stages in which transformative learning principles (i.e., Mezirow's, 1994, perspectives and three levels of reflection and Hoggan's, 2016, transformative learning criteria) are most explicitly included (Terblanche, 2022, p. 287). The second is the technical aspect of the framework, where coaching tools and techniques are considered. Both of these aspects are very informative for exploring the kinds of coaching practices that have the potential for the facilitation of reflection toward transformative insight. However, once again, none of these are explicit enough or have enough depth to provide coaches with practical suggestions. For example, Stage 3 of the Procedural aspect of the TTC framework, "identity and design," is about helping leaders identify and reflect on the origins of their problematic perspectives and their negative effects, but no concrete suggestions are provided on how a coach might facilitate this process with her client in practice. The same can be said for the technical aspect concerning the

application of coaching tools and techniques to facilitate deep, permanent changes. Stating that coaches may, for example, use questioning and reflection or challenge their clients' views and assumptions is a valuable general space but still one that needs to be more explicitly worked out if coaches are to enact these activities in a way that might actually lead to those intended deep, permanent changes in their clients' limited perspectives. It is precisely that gap that I am hoping to fill with this dissertation.

Table 2.7

Aspects of Terblanche's (2022) Transformative Transition Coaching (TTC) Framework and Related Role of the Coach

Aspects of the TTC Framework	Description and Role of the Coach
1. Contextual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Context and focus of the coaching intervention must explicitly focus on TTC – supporting the transitioning leader by facilitating transformative learning - <i>Role of the coach:</i> the coach must share frameworks and theories about career transitions and transformative learning with the leader
2. Contractual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A contract should be in place to guide the coaching intervention and to manage the expectation of both the client and the coach - <i>Role of the coach:</i> spell out the rules of engagement, with emphasis on the confidential nature of the coaching, to the exclusion of the organization
3. Anticipatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coaching goals relating to transition challenges must be agreed upon and recorded in collaboration with the organization - <i>Role of the coach:</i> engage with the client in the goal-setting process to ensure that the focus of the coaching remains within the context of the career transition and to provide the client with structure and accountability

Table 2.7 (continued)

Aspects of the TTC Framework	Description and Role of the Coach
4. Procedural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying and transforming leader’s problematic perspectives preventing them from succeeding in their new roles - <i>Role of the coach in this aspect relates to five stages:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Initiate:</i> define coaching context and identify the transitioning leader’s most pressing challenges 2. <i>Understand:</i> analyze the current perspectives held by the transitioning leader according to Mezirow’s eight perspectives (Mezirow, 1994): sociolinguistic, moral-ethical, epistemic, philosophical, psychological, health, political, aesthetic 3. <i>Identity and design:</i> identify the most problematic perspective from the list in the previous step. Reflect on the origins of this perspective and its negative effects. Conceptualize the desired new perspective and design a behavioral experiment to change the problematic perspective 4. <i>Reflect and redesign:</i> reflect on the progress of transforming the problematic perspective using Hoggan’s transformative learning criteria (Hoggan, 2016) and design a new behavioral experiment to deepen the transformative process. 5. <i>Complete:</i> This state is reached when the transitioning leader shows an acceptable level of perspective transformation according to Hoggan’s criteria. A strategy is defined to secure the transformation, put stretch goals in place and decide to terminate the coaching or select a new problematic perspective to transform.
5. Temporal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encapsulates the timing elements of the intervention (e.g., coaching starting prior to the career transition) - <i>Role of the coach:</i> na
6. Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applying coaching tools and techniques to facilitate deep, permanent changes - <i>Role of the coach:</i> application of identified coaching tools and techniques, including questioning, reflection, active experimentation, using frameworks and theory (about career transitions and transformative learning), and challenging views and assumptions
7. Efficacious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluating coaching intervention - <i>Role of the coach:</i> use Hoggan’s (2016) three criteria (i.e., depth, breadth, and relative stability) to determine to what extent the leader has experienced transformative learning

Source: Terblanche (2022, pp. 283-288)

Additionally, both Terblanche’s (2020, 2022) studies are placed in a context of transitional coaching, which is aimed at helping leaders navigate very specific challenges of their career transitions and with a goal of helping them succeed in their new roles. And while there is certainly

overlap with the general leadership dilemmas, not all aspects of Terblanche's findings can be readily applied to the context of executive coaching.

Finally, Sammut (2014) also applied transformative learning theory in coaching and explored how coaches foster transformative learning with their clients from the coach's perspective, and is as such directly relevant to my own study's intent. Sammut interviewed eight coaches (all female), to whom she asked (among other topics) the questions most relevant to my own research, namely, questions regarding the facilitation of transformative learning with an explicit focus on the following core areas of coaching most connected to transformative learning: experience, critical reflection, dialogue, and holistic experience (p. 42). The analysis of the data led to identification of the most prominent themes, including ten strategies for fostering transformative learning in coaching that were mentioned by all eight participants. These strategies include creating a safe environment, acceptance, presence, non-judgment, asking thought-provoking questions/deep inquiry for critical reflection, challenging false beliefs and assumptions, accountability, active listening, and modeling behavior (p. 48). When relating her overall findings to "common themes" related to transformative learning and necessary for perspective transformation—i.e., experience, critical reflection, rational discourse (Mezirow, 1991), holistic orientation, awareness of context, and authentic practice (Taylor, 1998)—Sammut (2014) found that these are "actively used by coaches, even though they may not have been overtly aware that they were doing so" (p. 52).

Facilitating Reflection: Content, Process, and Premise

Reflection—and specifically critical (or premise) reflection—is at the very core of the transformative learning process (Cranton, 2016; Kitchenham, 2008; Mezirow, 1990), as it is at the very core of the (executive) coaching practices. Eschenbacher (2019) writes that "one is not trapped by one way of looking at the world or being in the world that is forced on us" (p. 258). This hopeful thought resonates well with the intent of both transformative learning and executive coaching,

which is to help adults find ways to bring their assumptions and perspectives through which they construct their worldviews into awareness and expand them so they can resolve the challenges that matter to them and achieve their goals. A helpful way to liberate oneself from those limiting meaning perspectives is by articulating and questioning them by reflecting on the content, process, and premise of their current challenges (Cox, 2006). As already mentioned, it is premise reflection (i.e., critical reflection) that has the most potential to lead to that liberation (i.e., perspective transformation or change in the learner's belief system), but content and process reflection can also contribute to that process by affecting changes in the learner's beliefs (Cranton, 2016; Mezirow, 1991). It is for those reasons that I have chosen to explore the coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight in coaching through the lens of these three reflective levels. Reiterating Mezirow's (1991) thoughts around these three levels of reflection and their role in the transformative learning process: "If we are to facilitate learning, we must differentiate between these three types of reflection ... so we may design appropriate educational interventions for each" (p. 106).

Looking at the ways to facilitate reflection, and specifically at the content, process, and premise levels in coaching, I did not find a single research study that explored this particular area. One reference to content, process, and premise reflection (without these being explicitly explored) was in Sammut (2014), who remarked that coaches in her study discussed using critical reflection (i.e., premise reflection) throughout the coaching process, but they "did not verbalize different levels of reflection as Mezirow does; however, there is evidence to suggest critical reflection has taken place at the content, process, and premise level" (p. 49). The other was in Mbokota et al. (2022); however, in both of these, there was no mention of how this might occur or what it might look like.

When looking at the sources at a more prescriptive, theoretical level, the one scholar that has explored the ways to facilitate content, process, and premise reflection with adult learners in the process of promoting transformative learning is Patricia Cranton. She has advocated for incorporating reflective practices at these three levels in the context of professional development, stating that “reflecting on *what* we do, *how* it works, and *why* we believe it is important ... is at the heart of transformative learning” (Cranton & King, 2003, pp. 31-32). As such, Cranton (2016) has focused her efforts on devising reflective questions at each of three levels of reflection, making this work practically relevant and particularly useful in the context of coaching, where inquiry is one of the main activities inherent to all coaching practices. In that process of inquiry, the content reflection questions serve to raise one’s awareness of assumptions or beliefs, process reflection questions address how one has come to hold a certain belief, assumption, or perspective, and premise reflection questions get to the core of one’s belief and help examine the very foundation on which beliefs, assumptions, and perspectives were built (Cranton, 2016; pp. 108-109).

In Table 2.8 below, I have outlined Cranton’s (2016) reflective questions at each of three levels of reflection across various domains of knowing (e.g., psychological, sociolinguistic, epistemic). Looking at these questions, it is clear how readily applicable they are to the coaching conversations and the variety of dilemmas clients may bring to them. Another observation is how these reflective questions can act as a scaffold for the reflective process in the coaching conversation. Take, for example, the idea of coaching clients reflecting on their values so that they can use them as guides for their future actions (something that often occurs in coaching). A coach might start with the content reflection around the question “What are your values?” to bring the client’s value system into their awareness. Once that is clarified, a coach might continue with a set of process reflection questions focused on exploring *how* the client’s values were formed and then continue to facilitate the client’s reflection at the premise level focused on *why* these specific values

Table 2.8

Cranton's (2016) Reflective Questions at Content, Process, and Premise Reflection (and Corresponding Reflective Focus) Across Various Domains of Knowing

Domain	Level of Reflective Questions		
	Content <i>Raising awareness of held assumptions, beliefs, perspectives</i>	Process <i>Raising awareness of how one has come to hold a certain assumption, belief, perspective</i>	Premise <i>Examine the very foundation on which beliefs, assumptions, and perspectives were built</i>
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you know or believe about yourself? - What do you see as your skills in this area? - What would you like to improve? - What is your perception of yourself as a learner? - What are your feelings about this decision? - What draws you to this work? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did you come to have this perception? - How did you choose this career? - How long have numbers made you feel anxious? - Can you remember a time when you didn't feel this way? - How was your view of yourself as a poor leader shaped? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why should you question this perception? - Why is this important in the first place? - Why should you care about this? - Why is your self-image a concern to you? - What does it matter if you are afraid of public speaking?
Sociolinguistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the social norms in this context? - What was the perception of this in your home community? - What would be the organizational view on this issue? - What views does the media present? - What are other leaders saying about this? - What does the way we use language tell you about this area? - What would you say to this if you were the leader? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How have these social norms been influential? - How did the community where you grew up influence that view? - How did your experiences in high school shape what you believe? - How has the media had an effect on what you believe? - How does what other leaders are saying influence your own leadership? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why are these norms important? - Why do you value hard work? - Why is it relevant what your extended family thinks? - Why do you associate freedom with conflict? - Why do you believe that it is only through education that people can come to engage in critical reflection?
Epistemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What knowledge do you have? - What knowledge have you gained from your experience in these areas? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did you obtain this knowledge? - How did you come to the conclusion that this theory is valid? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why do I need or not need this knowledge? - Why is that knowledge important?

Table 2.8 (continued)

Level of Reflective Questions			
<i>Reflective focus</i>			
Domain	Content <i>Raising awareness of held assumptions, beliefs, perspectives</i>	Process <i>Raising awareness of how one has come to hold a certain assumption, belief, perspective</i>	Premise <i>Examine the very foundation on which beliefs, assumptions, and perspectives were built</i>
<i>Moral-ethical</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are your values? - What does your conscience tell you? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How have your values formed? - What led you to see this as unethical? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why are your values important? - Why does it matter if you behave ethically in that situation?
<i>Philosophical</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is your worldview? - What philosophical concepts inform your view? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How have you come to hold this worldview? - How did you decided this research is flawed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why do you stay with this worldview? - What does understanding a philosophical stance contribute to anything?
<i>Aesthetic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What about this do you find beautiful? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How have your views of beauty been shaped? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why do you care about beauty?

Adapted from Cranton (2016, pp. 25-29, 107-110)

are important to get to the very core of her beliefs concerning her values and related thinking, feeling, and behaving. This movement of inquiry from content to process to premise reflection depicts a scaffolded conversational arc that can help clients get to their belief systems in a stepwise way without the risk of making the reflective process too difficult or too emotionally charged by, for example, jumping right into the premise reflection process. This is something that Cranton (2016) explicitly warns about, as these kinds of premise reflection questions may be experienced as “emotional and traumatic,” so the facilitator should approach them with care (p. 109).

Given the centrality of premise reflection in the transformative learning process leading to profound changes in how we construct our reality, I will close this section by giving it additional attention. One scholar who has dedicated the majority of his work to premise (or critical) reflection is Stephen Brookfield, who emphasized how “the central process of critical reflection is hunting

assumptions” (Brookfield, 1995; p. 17). Brookfield (1992) describes assumptions as taken-for-granted, common-sense beliefs and conventional wisdoms we have about reality that serve as rules of thumb guiding our actions, seeing the main goal of the reflective practice as the process of “coming to recognize the conditions and contexts that render assumptions more, or less, invalid” (p. 13). Brookfield (1991) has identified the central components or phases of the critical thinking process, which I find can serve as a useful guide in the process of facilitating (premise) reflection toward transformative insight in coaching. These include: (1) Identifying the assumptions that underlie our thoughts and actions; (2) Scrutinizing the accuracy and validity of these in terms of how they connect to, or are discrepant with, our experience of reality; and (3) Reconstructing these assumptions to make them more inclusive and integrative (p. 177). In this process, he sees the role of the educator (or, in the current context, the role of the coach) as helping the learners bring their assumptions into awareness, question them, and explore alternatives. Brookfield (1991) compares the role of the educator to being “like psychological or cultural demolition experts” who work to “lay the charges of psychological dynamite” so that the assumptions that act as filters to our interpretations of reality can be destroyed while at the same time making sure that the learner’s self-esteem is left intact (pp. 178-179).

In order to facilitate that process of critical (premise) reflection, Brookfield (1988, as cited in Stein, 2000, p. 3) outlined four main activities educators can engage in with learners. The first, *assumption analysis*, involves activities aimed at bringing to awareness beliefs, values, cultural practices, and social structures guiding one’s behaviors and considering the impact they have on the learner’s life. The second set of activities, *contextual awareness*, relates to examining assumptions as rooted in the context in which one lives, mentioning historical or cultural context, but could also include work and private life contexts or any other contexts salient to the learner. The third, *imaginative speculation*, involves challenging one’s current ways of knowing by imagining alternatives that are better suited

for the learner's current experience, situation, and the encountered challenges so that they can be handled more successfully. Finally, throughout this reflective process, it is important to help learners engage in *reflective skepticism* by suspending current assumptions driving their meaning-making so that any unexamined universal truths, claims, or patterns of interaction can be questioned.

Within these four critical reflection activities outlining a "reflective playground," there are various ways in which these can be enacted. In this arena, too, Brookfield was by far one of the most prolific thinkers. And while most of his work was placed in education contexts, most of the practices he describes may still, with some adjustments, be very applicable to the context of coaching. In his book, *Developing Critical Thinkers*, Brookfield (1987) dedicated two full in-depth chapters (pp. 69-132) to effective strategies for facilitating critical reflection aimed at identifying, examining, and challenging assumptions underlying one's meaning-making and exploring alternative ways of thinking and acting (p. 71). Detailed explanations are given for how to engage in, for example, *critical questioning* for eliciting assumptions (e.g., the facilitator needs to be specific, work from the particular to general, and be conversational), *critical incident exercise* for exploring specific situations and events occurring in the learner's life, *criteria analysis* for establishing subjective value judgments one uses to estimate their successes and failures, *role play* and *critical debate* as a way of taking on and exploring perspectives and perceptual filters of others at both cognitive and emotional levels, and *crisis-decisions simulations* during which the learner is asked to imagine being in a situation in which she needs to make a difficult decision by choosing among various uncomfortable choices and by explaining the reasoning behind the decision made. Additionally, next to outlining various reflective practices, Brookfield has also provided recommendations on, for example, how the facilitator can model critical thinking, ensure to affirm the learner's self-worth, listen to them attentively, show support for their reflective efforts, reflect and mirror their ideas and actions, or evaluate their progress. As such, Brookfield's important and prolific work, even though it was originally intended for adult

education contexts (and no literature or research exists relating it to coaching), can serve as a useful guideline in the process of promoting transformative learning in coaching and specifically for engaging in critical reflective practices that have the potential to lead to transformative insights.

Executive Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight: Constructive-Developmental Perspective

I now turn to constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994) to provide a further understanding of the process of facilitating transformative insight in the context of executive coaching. As a reminder, looking from this psycho-developmental perspective to transformative learning (Hoggan, 2016), insight relates to the starting points in “changes not only in *what* we know but changes in *how* we know” (Kegan, 2000, p. 49). That is, transformative insights such as these, as conceptualized for the purposes of this study, relate to the entryways to growing a person’s developmental capacity or form of mind by way of triggering a subject-object move. The process of a subject-object move entails “a succession of qualitative differentiations of the self from the world, with a qualitatively more extensive object with which to be in relation is created each time” and “successive triumphs of ‘relationship to’ rather than ‘embeddedness in’” (Kegan, 1982, p. 77). As such, from this particular perspective, the facilitation of a subject-object move toward making one’s world and self-views more complex is believed to be one of the primary objectives of coaching and “one of the most powerful interventions coaches can provide” (Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002, p. 35).

A review of the literature at the intersection of constructive-developmental theory and executive coaching reveals an increase in the application of this particular theoretical lens within the context of coaching (e.g., Astorino, 2002; Bachkirova & Borrington, 2018; Berger, 2006, 2012; Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002; Goodman, 2002; Hayes & Popp, 2019; Van Velsor & Drath, 2006). In this stream of literature, it has been argued that understanding and the incorporation of Kegan’s constructive-developmental framework into one’s coaching practices are beneficial for understanding the factors influencing the coaching process in order to help leaders achieve the next

step in their development (Bachkirova & Cox, 2007; Berger, 2006, 2012; Berger & Atkins, 2009; Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002; Laske, 2006, 2011). Proponents of this approach argue that this lens allows a coach to tailor their coaching interventions (using the appropriate and targeted degree of support and challenge) more carefully to the needs of each individual (Bachkirova & Cox, 2007; Berger, 2012). By understanding the nature and trajectory of the process of adult development, as well as where clients are on their developmental journeys, including the strengths and challenges inherent to their current form of mind, it is thought that coaches can better support their clients by tailoring their interventions to the developmental aspects that relate to the demands of each client's specific context.

This increase in interest in applying the constructive-developmental lens to coaching is now visible within the context of coach training. A variety of coach development programs is available to coaches in an attempt to provide them with theoretical and practice-oriented anchors for applying this lens in their coaching practices and toward their support of leaders' development. (e.g., Kegan's Minds at Work's "Immunity to Change" coach certification program; Berger's "Growth Edge Coaching"). In the literature review that follows, I provide an overview and analysis of the theoretical and empirical sources available on these practices to shed some light on the kinds of coaching practices that hold promise for facilitating transformative insight by way of *starting* out a learning process aimed at true growth in a leader's developmental capacity, or form of mind.

Understanding and Facilitating the Process of the Developmental Journey

Facilitating the Subject-Object Move

One of the ways in which the constructive-developmental theory can provide a useful lens in the context of coaching is by telling us something about the nature and process of adult development itself. Training, resources, and time committed to growing one's understanding of the "how" behind facilitating the client's development related to the expansion of their meaning-making

and the increased complexity with which one comes to construct their reality is an essential investment for a coach to make and one that pays off in the coaching. Deeper understanding, skill, and expertise about the “how” can help coaches recognize, pay attention to, and provide more targeted supports (and challenges) to coaching clients—wherever they find themselves on their developmental journeys.

Berger and Fitzgerald (2002) outlined the three ways in which understanding the constructive-developmental lens and, specifically, the subject-object move can have “profound implications for the executive coaching practice” (p. 30). First, the importance of identifying instances when a client is working through the subject-object move is emphasized. This can be noticed when a client feels “stuck or is at (her) wits’ end” (p. 32) and is unable to make the desired changes despite her best motivation and intent to do so. In those instances, it is important to support this process by helping clients surface and examine their deeply held, hidden assumptions about themselves and the world to elicit important insights. Second, a coach should also be mindful of how the process of a subject-object move can be a challenging experience for the client. Seeing the limitation of one’s own understanding is often not welcomed, since this process is associated with losses, as one might need to give up the safety of the old ways of making meaning, something that has also worked well for them in the past. Finally, coaches should understand the consequences of the subject-object move for the client in terms of increasing his or her meaning-making complexity. The process is one that can “shake up a client’s way of seeing and dealing with the world, thus affecting the client’s self-concept, relationships, goals, and plans” (p. 32).

To support the facilitation of a subject-object move in the context of coaching, Berger and Fitzgerald (2002) rely on the five steps outlined by Kegan (as cited in Kegan, 1995; Kegan & Lahey, 2001). These five steps can help move an assumption from subject to object so that a person can “look at it” instead of “looking through it” (Kegan & Lahey, 2001, p. 80). The steps are (1) naming

the assumption, (2) noticing its implications, (3) looking for discrepant evidence, (4) exploring the history of the assumption, and (5) testing the truth of the assumption—steps that closely resemble the phases of critical thinking as outlined by Brookfield (1987, 1991) and the process of transformative learning (e.g., Dirkx, Mezirow, & Cranton, 2006). Starting by naming the deeply held assumption is a step that helps the client see the assumption as an object and reflect on it (Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002), as well as start noticing the implications of it—the influence that the assumption may have on their lives and the ways in which it may be limiting them (Kegan & Lahey, 2001). Further, noticing how our assumptions influence our experience, choices, and options, sometimes in unexpected ways, usually sparks the person’s curiosity and “creates added energy to continue the exploration” (Kegan & Lahey, 2001, p. 83). Once this recognition and sparked energy are in place, a person can then start moving toward looking for any discrepant evidence that may cast even a small doubt on the truthfulness of their assumption, an assumption upon which we tend to make universal generalizations. Stepping into and engaging in this process of looking for disconfirming data to cast shadows on the (older) truths we held about ourselves and the world around us helps us move on “toward building a relationship to an assumption rather than being run by it” (Kegan & Lahey, 2001, p. 83). The fourth step in moving an assumption into view and away from being subject to it involves the idea of exploring the history or a biography of our assumption. The goal is to identify the very roots upon which that specific assumption grew, that is, where and when the assumption came into existence. This process often leads to the realization that, even if our assumption was true at one point in our lives and may even still be true, the foundation on which it was built may no longer be appropriate in our lives today. In holding this truth about truth, we find that we now may have a great power than we did in our past to deal with this assumption—to give it a new place, one that better fits with our present view of the world and our present selves (Kegan & Lahey, 2001, p. 84). Finally, Kegan and Lahey (2001, 2009) suggest that clients are facilitated in

testing the truth of these limiting assumptions by running small and safe experiments to see which evidence, if any, exists for the worry and fears that kept us away from revising the assumption before. In conducting and reflecting on those experiments, we learn to try out new or alter some of our usual behaviors and take action we would usually not dare to take when we believed that our assumption was true. Along the way, we gather new information upon which we can continue our reflection about the certainty of our assumptions. Throughout this process, coaches help clients keep their newly found insights alive by engaging in continuous reflection (taking assumption as an object), including making space for insights as they emerge, exploring what they mean, and how to turn them into new actions. This process is one that coaches need to actively facilitate in order to help their clients build what Kegan and Lahey (2001) call “psychological muscle.” Adding this strength and stability to the process helps coaches help clients prevent the fallback, that is, to prevent their insights from fading and becoming reabsorbed into being a subject once again. When that happens, clients risk going back to “business as usual, behaving as if the insight had never taken place” (Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002, p. 31) and losing the traction in the learning process they once had.

Overturing Immunity to Change

Continuing their work toward a better understanding of transformative learning, the dynamics behind the process of transformative change, as well as the reasons why those change efforts often fail, Kegan and Lahey (2009) have devised one of the most concrete and explicit developmental practices known to be anchored directly in constructive-development theory. It is a powerful coaching intervention and a tool for uncovering our hidden assumptions and the system around them that prevents us from changing, a methodology that Eschenbacher (2020) notes also provides “more depth” to Mezirow’s transformative learning theory (p. 765).

The goal of this practice is to bridge the gap between one's genuine intention to change and an ability to actually bring those changes about, with a focus on the psychological mechanism that prevents us from changing. This process (and psychological mechanism) is called "Immunity to Change" (ITC), and its focus is on exposing the inner dynamics related to the subject-object move. This methodology does this by supporting new shifts in the expansiveness and complexity of one's form of mind by uncovering the "hidden dynamic that actively (and brilliantly) prevents us from changing because of (our immunity's) devotion to preserving our existing way of making meaning" (Kegan & Lahey, 2009, p. x).

Kegan and Lahey (2009) build on Heifetz's (1998) distinction between technical challenges (which can be resolved when we grow a "bigger" technical skill and knowledge *within* our current form of mind) and adaptive challenges (which can be resolved when our forms of mind, our perspectives, "get bigger"). They reason that in order to meet one's adaptive challenges and to overcome our Immunities to Change, it is necessary to enter the person's meaning-making system and transform one's form of mind (one's current operating system, p. 6). Kegan and Lahey's methodology is focused on facilitating the movement of the mental structures that we are subject to by making them object. In an attempt to do so, Kegan and Lahey (developed a "four-column" exercise (i.e., ITC map) designed to expose our Immunity to Change, our system of self-protection. More specifically, the goal of the ITC map is to be able to clearly see our own "change-prevention system" (p. 59), developing a new understanding of how we ourselves are the ones that are systematically working to prevent us from achieving our own goals. The ITC map-making process makes these once deeply hidden, self-protective commitments visible in a stepwise process that unfolds before our eyes. There, on the paper in front of us, appear the dynamics of the deeply held (self-limiting) assumptions we had come to see as unquestionable truths, assumptions that, in fact, greatly inhibit our change efforts. By making the invisible visible, we can start working on

overturning our Immunity to Change. We can start moving from a place where those hidden commitments and assumptions have us (and we are, in turn, run by them) to us having (and running) them. This makes it possible to move forward in thinking and behavioral changes toward achieving the changes that are important to us.

Stepping into this process more deeply, the first part of the ITC process involves diagnosing one's Immunity to Change by responding to a series of procedural questions (and noting the responses in a template) over the four different columns (Helsing et al., 2008). In the first column, an improvement goal needs to be identified. An improvement goal should be related to something valuable and important to us, require us to stretch in some way, and directly implicates *us* in the change, that is, a goal that is adaptive in nature (e.g., I am committed to getting better at delegating) (Kegan & Lahey 2009, p. 128). The next column involves clearly identifying the things we are doing—or not doing—that prevent us from achieving the column one goal. The focus of column two is not about the “why” behind what we are (not) doing or what we should be doing instead; it is about the actual concrete behaviors we do (or do not) enact that end up working against us in achieving our goal (e.g., I accept more tasks and sacrifice non-work-related things; I don't ask people to help me). Next, in column three, the coach asks the client to imagine doing the exact opposite of the behaviors identified in column two. In doing so, a “worry box” of concerns takes shape. Paying attention to and noting the fears and anxieties elicited in us when we imagine engaging in those “opposite” behaviors helps us clarify the feelings we are protecting ourselves from. Exposing our worries, fears, and anxieties gives us the raw material from which we can identify those hidden commitments that serve as a self-protection mechanism (e.g., I fear letting my team down; If I put myself first, I feel guilty and selfish; I am committed to being selfless). Completing column three allows us to expose the Immunity to Change system related to our goal, to see what it is exactly that our immune system is protecting us from (e.g., from feeling guilty and selfish), and why our

“unproductive” column two behaviors make sense and are so hard to change. Finally, in column four, we identify our “big assumption,” the assumption that makes the hidden commitment (that always has negative consequences for us) identified in column three absolutely necessary (e.g., If I put myself first, I’ll become what I dislike in others—superficial and trivial). Once the ITC map is completed, the second part of the ITC process can begin. This is where the work to overturn the diagnosed Immunity to Change starts by engaging in testing the big assumption. By experimenting with new behaviors that run counter to that big assumption (Helsing et al., 2008), we can gather more helpful information about the extent to which our assumption holds true in the present day and context, and the extent to which it needs to be modified. In this way, a new relationship can be formed with an assumption, meaning that we more and more begin to choose when the assumption works for *us*. We begin to open up to other, more complex ways to deal with the challenges themselves.

In an interview on the topic of applying the constructive-developmental theory in the context of coaching, Kegan has described the effect the ITC process can have on eliciting insights for the learner: “There is a big ‘aha’ to that process, and it is very gratifying to lead people through it. At the same time, what people were really marveling at was the power of insight and the speed with which they could get to it.” (Bachkirova, 2009, p.15). Indeed, there is initial empirical evidence to support the claims of effectiveness of the ITC process in the context of leadership development (i.e., Markus, 2016; Reams & Reams, 2015).

However, it needs to be mentioned that the process of effectively facilitating the ITC process is not an easy one. A correct diagnosis and mapping of Immunities to Change require strict adherence to the outlined protocols, as well as a highly trained and skilled facilitator (the issues around the role and competence of the ITC facilitator have also been raised by Kjellström, 2009, and Reams, 2010). Anything less than that, in my own experience, can lead to outcomes that do not

feel powerful or engaging enough for clients to propel themselves into achieving the goals in which they have been stuck for a while. Kegan and Lahey have themselves noticed that for about 30% to 40% of people, the ITC four-column exercise doesn't lead to a really powerful experience and an identification of meaningful and useful big assumption (as cited in Kjellström, 2009, and Reams, 2010). Another difficulty related to implementing ITC in a coaching process relates to the time it takes to complete the first part of the ITC process, identifying the immunity system through the four-column exercise. Conducted by a skillful and experienced facilitator, adequately completing a four-column exercise can take between 2 to 4 hours or even up to a period of 2 days (as cited in Kjellström, 2009). Given that the typical coaching engagement consists of 4 to 12 meetings within a 2- to 12-month time period (Passmore, 2007), implementing the ITC approach may not be a very practical approach time-wise, especially if a client has more than a single improvement goal and wants time to experiment with changes after each meeting before reflecting on it together.

Understanding the Client's Form of Mind and Current Positioning on Their Developmental Journey

Another way in which constructive-developmental theory can serve as a valuable lens in the context of coaching, now in a more developmentally targeted way as compared to the more developmentally spacious practices described above, is in how it tells us something about the unique characteristics of each of the forms of mind (see Figure 2.2 and Table 2.3 above), as well as the incremental transitions between those forms of mind. Understanding the specific process and patterns of development, the qualitatively different ways in which adults make sense of themselves and the worlds they live in, as well as the associated strengths and challenges, can help coaches improve their ability to provide more targeted, and therefore more helpful, supports and challenges to each individual client. By adjusting their styles, approaches, and perspectives to support and challenge the client within a comfortable range of their developmental understanding, coaches can meet their clients at the edge of—and not too far beyond or under—their current meaning-making

capacity. In doing so, coaches are able to facilitate client learning in a more powerful and meaningful way (Berger, 2012). Kegan (1982) writes:

The value of the constructive-developmental approach as related to the nature of psychological supports offered moves beyond the quantity of caring for others, even beyond the intensity of their care, to consider, in a fairly discriminating way, the structural quality of those supports. Are there others who “know” the person, who can see, recognize, and understand who the person is, and who he or she is becoming? Support is not alone an affective matter, but a matter of ‘knowing’; a matter of shape, as well as intensity. (p. 260)

Additionally, the process of ascertaining where the client is on their developmental journey not only provides fine-grained information on the client’s current form of mind, but moreover, this process can in itself be understood as a developmental intervention or practice that helps clients engage in deep forms of reflection. I now turn to that process or the methodology behind the constructive-developmental theory, the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) (Lahey et al., 1988).

Measuring the Client’s Form of Mind as a Reflective Coaching Practice

A reliable approach to ascertaining the client’s form of mind or where the client currently is on the developmental continuum as described by Kegan’s constructive-developmental theory (1982, 1994) is the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) (Lahey et al., 1988). The SOI is a semi-structured, 60- to 90-minute interview through which a person’s meaning-making can be assessed by examining what someone’s experiences mean. This helps to determine an individual’s current and next step in “subject-object development” (Kegan, 1982, as cited in Lahey et al., 1988). By making an important distinction between the *content* (one’s experience) and the *structure* (how one makes sense of that experience) present in one’s narrative, the SOI can surface and clarify the assumptions and reasoning behind an individual’s thinking, feeling, and behavior.

while the SOI was initially developed for research purposes alone, those of us using the SOI in coaching have discovered that the benefits of doing the SOI, for both the interviewer and the interviewee, go beyond “just” providing a developmental score (e.g., Berger, 2006, 2012; Berger & Atkins, 2009). For the interviewer, asking the kinds of questions inherent to the SOI, the questions

that require one to engage in a respectful inquiry (Lahey et al., 1988) while openly and without judgment following the person constructing the story, helps the interviewer become “a better listener, a more thoughtful questioner, and a more compassionate person” (Berger, 2012, p. 50). For the interviewee, the process is experienced as enjoyable and as a powerful tool for self-reflection, often eliciting significant and profound insights (Berger & Atkins, 2009). As such, it is not surprising that the use of the SOI is now expanding to contexts beyond that of research alone, including the contexts of adult learning and certainly the executive coaching profession.

Preliminary empirical evidence supports the advantages of using the SOI in the coaching process. Berger and Atkins (2009) have investigated the use of the SOI with 15 senior executives in the context of coaching. They reported that every single participant reacted favorably to the process. This process brought the executives many insights into important issues they were dealing with at the time (e.g., navigating stressful experiences, achieving a deeper understanding of previously defined leadership goals, or the need for recognition and encouragement). Other benefits related not only to learning about their own current ways of making meaning (which was welcomed and experienced as helpful), but they also found that learning about the developmental trajectory itself and the different forms of mind had a positive effect. Knowing that their current challenges are a part of the natural growth trajectory was a relief. Also, seeing what might come “next” for them developmentally offered them hope that there might be a different way of seeing the world (p. 30). This finding related to the positive effects of explicit use of the developmental lens in coaching and, as such, is at odds with Bachkirova and Cox’s (2007) belief that this “pursuit of an abstract ideal” (p. 14) introduced by constructive-developmental theory might distract the client from dealing with real-life, current challenges. That executives could potentially experience the approach as being judgmental is a concern related to the frequent criticism of the approach as being “bigger-is-better,” while, according to Berger and Atkins (2009), not a single executive (even those with a dominant

Socializing form of mind who might be more inclined to “reject” the outcomes) reacted negatively or defensively when given their SOI reports. This finding is also at odds with Bachkirova and Cox’s (2007) assertion that clients who compare their own with more complex forms of mind might find that it undermines their self-confidence and self-efficacy. The positive effects of explicit use of the developmental lens, as explored in the Berger and Atkins (2009) study, might be in part because the reports were described as having been structured with respect and care and were focused on the leader’s strengths, as well as the challenges. It is also possible that the positive effects reported could also have been due to the nonjudgmental nature of the SOI interview process. Actively and respectfully trying to take and understand another person’s perspective is a process that sends an underlying message to the interviewee: that their experience matters, that it is complete and valuable, thereby increasing trust and strengthening the relationship between the coach and client, as well as increasing positive regard between them (Rogers, 1951; as cited in Berger & Atkins, 2009, p. 31).

The positive effects of drawing on the SOI approach in the context of coaching were also observed by Flo van Diemen van Thor (2014) in her qualitative master thesis exploring a self-taught approach based on her understanding of the SOI. Her method, which she named the ASOI (the autodidactic SOI), looked at the benefits and limitations of applying her evolving learning from constructive-developmental theory in the practices of coaching. Van Diemen van Thor found that participants experienced the ASOI as enjoyable, safe, and interesting. In their experience, the process of the ASOI differs from the coaching process in that it is less solution-focused in nature. This makes it easier for the client to open up to the coach/interviewer. It increases the client’s ability to highlight the reasoning behind his or her actions, which acts as a helpful trigger of self-reflection toward insight and consolidating them. Van Diemen van Thor proposed a model for integrating ASOI questioning and reflection in the coaching process to establish a coach-client relationship, goal-setting, identifying developmental needs, and setting the pace and tone of coaching (p. 19). In

this process, she emphasized the importance of contracting with integrity (including explaining the nature of the ASOI approach and its benefits to clients), of considering the timing for conducting the interview (can depend on the trust present between the coach and the client), as well as the timing for reflecting on the interview outcomes and experience as a distinct component of the coaching process.

Learning to conduct and reliably score the SOI is a highly demanding learning process that requires months of facilitated study, learning, and practice with experts (Berger, 2012). Even when one is officially trained and qualified to use the SOI methodology, there are some limitations to using the SOI in the context of coaching (Berger, 2006; Torbert, 2016). First, there are the practical limitations related to the administration and scoring of the SOI, a time-consuming and expensive process (it takes 60-90 minutes to conduct the interview, which then needs to be transcribed, hours to score, and hours to create a client-friendly report). Second, developing the skills and ability to use it with clients is an even longer process (Berger & Atkins, 2009), however rewarding and game-changing it is for both the coach and client. In our private communications, Dr. Nancy Popp, one of the foremost experts on the SOI, who was trained by Kegan and has been an SOI master certifier since 1984 (including training many thought leaders in the field (e.g., E. Drago-Severson, J. Garvey Berger, C. McCauley, O. Laske, S. Cook-Greuter, K. Eigel), mentioned that it takes conducting and scoring about 100 Subject-Object Interviews before becoming fully “fluent” in this process. As such, for coaches who plan on incorporating the SOI explicitly in their work with clients but who are not prepared to invest in this learning process, it is better to call in an expert to facilitate it (Berger, 2012). This is the only secure way of ensuring that the developmental score obtained truly reflects where the client currently is in their development—a requirement necessary if this approach is to be used ethically and for it to be of any value. Anything less than a trustworthy, reliable developmental score is a disservice to a client and to the integrity of the coaching process. And while it requires

time and dedication, engaging in deep learning on the SOI, next to it being a valuable resource in coaching, it allows for a truly practical and much deeper understanding of the theory itself. Berger (2006, 2012) noticed that getting trained in the SOI methodology profoundly impacted the ways in which she listens and asks questions “more than any other single thing I have learned about coaching” (2006, p. 96), concluding that the effort was well worth her time.

Taken altogether, these suggestions for using constructive-developmental theory, including through the measures and process of the Subject-Object Interview, can be helpful and are a great contribution to the application of the theory and its practices within the field of executive coaching.

Executive Coach’s Form of Mind and the Facilitation of Transformative Insight

As a structured intervention for leadership development, and one informed advantageously by the inclusion of transformative learning and adult development lenses, executive coaching holds the potential for facilitating transformative insights with the developmental impact of the kind that is both needed and matters to today’s leaders who are navigating the demands of increasingly complex contexts. In the literature, quite a bit of attention has been given to understanding the complexities faced by these leaders and the influence that their capacities, their forms of mind, could have on growing their effectiveness in leading in those contexts (e.g., Eigel, 1998; Harris & Kuhnert, 2008; Rooke & Torbert, 1998). Much less attention has been given to understanding the complexities faced by the “leaders of learning,” the executive coaches themselves. This includes attention to the ways in which their own forms of mind might influence the effectiveness with which they enact their coaching role.

In their work, executive coaches not only have to step into the space of a leader’s challenges, but the space of the leader and her challenges also becomes a direct demand on the coach. Finding effective ways to help leaders navigate these challenges while keeping the leader in the driver’s seat of their own exploration, dialogue, and process can be quite a challenge for a facilitator. And if

leaders with different forms of mind see and understand their role and their job “in significantly different ways” (Berger, 2012; p. 141), by extension, we can expect the same dynamic to apply to the “leaders of learning,” the executive coaches themselves. Looking at the key characteristics (see Table 2.3) and related strengths and challenges (see Table 2.9 below for an overview) inherent to the three forms of mind most commonly found in adulthood (i.e., the Socializing, the Self-authoring, and the Self-transforming forms of mind, Kegan, 1994) now in relation to the process of facilitating reflection toward transformative insight in the context of coaching, it seems reasonable to raise the following question: *In what ways, if any, does the coach’s own developmental capacity, or form of mind, influence how they support their clients in coaching as well as the kinds of executive coaching practices they use and deem helpful for facilitating transformative insight in coaching?*

While there has been considerable attention paid to exploring how *clients’ forms of mind* might inform the coaching process of *perspective-taking* (e.g., Bachkirova & Borrington, 2018; Berger, 2012; Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Laske, 2011), there has been much less attention given to exploration of the potential influence of the *coaches’ form of mind* on their facilitation of the coaching process, in essence, the influence of *perspective-sharing* on a client’s learning. Looking at the profoundly different ways in which adults may experience and make sense of themselves and the world and the related strengths and challenges (see Table 2.9 below), it becomes clear that this exploration is well worth the effort. Building on Table 2.3, the table below is meant to provide an additional overview and illustration of the qualitatively different and increasingly complex ways in which adults with different forms of mind construct their experience.

Table 2.9

Strengths and Challenges Associated with Forms of Mind and Related Subject-Object Balances Most Often Found in Adulthood

Form of Mind <i>(Subject-Object Balance)</i>	Strengths	Challenges
<p>Socializing</p> <p><i>Subject: The interpersonal, mutuality</i></p> <p><i>Object: Needs, interests, wishes</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empathy - Ability to internalize others' points of view - Reliant - Aligning and harmony - Seeking direction - Team player and wanting to do well by others - Faithful follower - Loyalty to ideas, groups, and organizations with whom he identifies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing own philosophies, theories - Inability to untangle or mediate divergent perspectives, loyalties, and obligations - Assuming an authority is always right - Decision-making in difficult situations with a number of stakeholders - Feeling torn apart by conflicts - Taking a higher level of responsibility than they feel they can cope with - Work-life balance connected to an inability to say "no" and need to please - Performance anxiety - Issues of self-esteem - Feeling responsible for others' feelings - Need to be liked - Criticism and conflict experienced as destructive and threatening to self - Single role orientation
<p>Self-authoring</p> <p><i>Subject: Authorship, identity, psychic administration, ideology</i></p> <p><i>Object: The interpersonal, mutuality</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-direction: having a clear sense of personal mission based on own self-authored compass (own approaches, ideals, and values) - Reliance on own authority - Problem-solving - Independent - Ability to hold many different perspectives (including criticism) and make informed decisions that take competing perspectives into account - Appreciates and learns from differences with others - Doesn't feel torn apart by conflicts, seen as a chance to enhance own and others' perspective - Roles more permeable and multiple 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having an inflexible attachment to own mission; identification with and over-trusting own internal compass - Dealing with most complex situations (e.g., cross-cultural or -functional leadership) - Dealing with others who are not able to take responsibility for their own feelings/ experience or are not yet able to deal with conflict - Remembering that the process is as important as the outcome - Coping with a high amount of self-created work - Achievement of recognition, promotion, etc. - Drive for success and underlying fear of failure - Interpersonal conflicts - Learning to delegate - Stress management - Self-defensive under threats to own autonomy

Table 2.9 (continued)

Form of Mind (Subject-Object Balance)	Strengths	Challenges
<p>Self-transforming</p> <p><i>Subject:</i> Interindividuality, the interpenetrability of self systems</p> <p><i>Object:</i> Authorship, identity, psychic administration, ideology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding complexity: seeing nuances/shades of grey and connections everywhere - Multi-framing - Holding contradictions - Problem-finding - Openness to new perspectives (context-specific) - No longer invested in one particular identity: seeing the limitations, including their own, and interested in exploring them - Commitment to learning/ evolving - Concerned with consequences for the process vs. end result - Conflict experienced as natural process of interaction, one that enhances thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dissatisfaction with life in spite of achievements - Not “fitting in” - Loneliness - Search for meaning - Overcoming life crisis - Initiating a significant change - Dealing with personal illusions - Staying true to themselves in a complex situation

(Bachkirova, 2013, p. 149; Berger, 2012, pp. 33, 41, 44; Drago-Severson, 2009, pp. 40-41; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Kegan & Lahey, 2009, pp. 16-17; Popp & Portnow, 2001, pp. 56-58)

Recognizing the influence that the coaches’ form of mind could have on their work with clients and their own personal and professional growth, Bachkirova and Cox (2007) have outlined a model of coach development. Drawing on the work of various developmental theorists, they make a distinction between the cognitive-reflective dimension of adult development (i.e., the complexity of thought and reflective judgment—Kohlberg, 1969; King & Kitchener, 1994; Perry, 1970) and the ego-development dimension of adult development (i.e., intra- and inter-personal lines of development—Cook-Greuter, 1985; Kegan, 1982; Loevinger, 1976, 1987). The ways in which coaches with different forms of mind (i.e., different cognitive-reflective and ego-development dimensions) work with their clients and the kinds of developmental tasks they could be effective in facilitating are outlined below (see Table 2.10). To facilitate the ease of understanding, in Table 2.10,

I have related each of the cognitive-reflective and ego-development dimensions to the corresponding form of mind as outlined by Kegan (1982, 1994).

Table 2.10

Model of Coach Development

Stage of Development <i>(Form of Mind)</i>	Cognitive-reflective dimension + Ego development dimensions	Coaches typical pattern of working with coaching clients	Tasks that coach could be effective in facilitating
The Helper <i>(Socializing)</i>	Abstract thought; careful comparisons; reliance on internalized systems and intuition; subjective knowing Self-conscious; group-oriented but realizing their specialness; strong internalized super-ego; high moral standards and sense of duty; critical of others, but able to build good relationship	Give emotional support; help to investigate the situation to ‘figure it out’; heavy reliance on psychometric tools; offer own interpretations of situations; generate various solutions to problems	Developing confidence; learning new skills; dealing with concrete problems; adjustment to difficult situations
The Questioner <i>(The Socializing to Self-authoring form of mind transition)</i>	Multiplicity and patterns; clear separation of knower and the known; critical evaluation; rational and analytical; going beyond subjectivism; introspective; intellectually skeptical towards things that are not yet proven Strong ego; high self-esteem; genuine interest in self-understanding and understanding others; becoming aware of the potential for self-deception; can build intense and meaningful relationship	Effective listening and paraphrasing without unnecessary interpretations; in-depth questioning; identifying root causes and reasons of issues; developing rational arguments; examination of evidence; identifying contradictions; use of appropriate contracting	Identifying motives; making choices; attaining goals and ideals; focusing on action, achievements and effectiveness; taking calculated risks; future-oriented tasks; working with self as it should be

Table 2.10 (continued)

Stage of Development <i>(Form of Mind)</i>	Cognitive-reflective dimension + Ego development dimensions	Coaches typical pattern of working with coaching clients	Tasks that coach could be effective in facilitating
The Acceptor <i>(Self-authoring)</i>	Relativism; awareness of the ‘observer’s’ interpretation and cultural conditioning; turn to systems view and meaning-making; move from purely rational analysis to a more holistic approach Set to redefine oneself; awareness of many subpersonalities; explore internal conflicts; scrutinize own beliefs; focused on individuality and mutuality in a relationship; enjoy diversity; high level of empathy	Minimal structures to the process: letting things unfold; exploring things: they are rarely what they seem; working with paradoxes; understanding ‘now’ rather than focusing on future; spontaneous interventions; accepting any expression of individuality	Developing unique individuality and authenticity; exploring role-personality match; discovering the meaning of critical situations or specific stages in life
The Cultivator <i>(The Self-authoring to Self-transforming form of mind transition)</i>	General systems view of reality; perceive systemic patterns and long-term trends; articulation of own models and strategies; contextualization of problems; articulate ambiguity; insightful; overarching principles; truth can be approximated Strong autonomous self; integrate all elements of the self in a new meaning; the shadow is accepted; aware of mutual interdependency and its role in individual development; responsibility for relationship and helping others grow	Linking idealist vision with pragmatic and principled actions; exploring the self; coming to terms with conflicting needs; identifying qualitative differences; may be impatient with slowness of the others’ growth	Creating a meaningful life; identifying strategic concerns and principles; working toward self-fulfillment; identifying psychological causation and processes; nourishing creativity
The Playwright <i>(Self-transforming)</i>	Meta-cognition beyond culture and own life time; cross-paradigmatic; reality is understood as undivided unity; truth is ever illusive because all thoughts are constructed and language is inevitably used for mapping of reality The ego becomes more transparent to itself and not the main operator; self-critical about their own ego-attachments; understanding others in developmental terms; genuine compassion and adjustment to the individual’s ways of meaning-making	Empathetic listening; timely challenging; transformational non-distorted feedback; drawing from unconventional, non-rational sources of information; help in reframing clients’ experience in terms of their stage of development	Working with conflict around existential paradoxes; problems of language and meaning-making; working beyond contradictions and paradoxes; facing together the need for theories and explanation; creating a new story of one’s life

(Bachkirova & Cox, 2007, pp. 12-13)

It is important to note that the descriptions in Table 2.10 indicate a center of gravity from which coaches operate, meaning that at times coaches may revert to strategies from the previous form of mind but also might be able to adopt some of the strategies inherent to the next form of mind into which they are in the process of growing (Bachkirova & Cox, 2007).

Another rich source of information worth exploring, and to my knowledge the only study relating the coaches' form of mind to how they might approach their work with clients, is a qualitative study conducted by Perry (2014). In her dissertation, Perry explored the ways in which coaches with different forms of mind make meaning of their coaching engagements. Based on the qualitative, form of mind-related differences found in coaches' understanding of their coaching engagements, Perry outlined three broad types of coach profiles: the Interpersonal coach (i.e., coaches with the Socializing form of mind), the Observer coach (i.e., coaches with the Self-authoring form of mind), and the Transformational coach (i.e., coaches with the Self-transforming form of mind). The characteristics of each of the three form of mind-related coach profiles are presented in Table 2.11, again mapped to and interpreted by Kegan's theory.

Table 2.11

Coach Profiles as Related to Coach's Form of Mind

Coach Profile <i>(Form of Mind)</i>	Characteristics
The Interpersonal Coach <i>(Socializing)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coach consciousness is established through the mutuality of the interpersonal relationship with his/her client - Likely part of a societal group of professional coaches - Socially bound by coach rules of engagement and a code of ethics learned from their professional membership group without question - May be formally trained by a particular coaching program with a defined and unique curriculum - Will use the theories and tools provided by their program to coach their clients - Loyal to what they have been taught and will use these methods without question - Success or failure in coaching is defined and validated externally by teachers, clients, and other experienced coaches - Likely new to coaching and will accept all clients who hire them

Table 2.11 (continued)

Coach Profile <i>(Form of Mind)</i>	Characteristics
The Observer Coach <i>(Self-authoring)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More experienced and has created his/her own way of coaching based on what has worked well for his/her as a coach - As members of a professional organization, they may help define the rules of engagement, and coaching ethics - Some may teach in coaching programs or mentor new coaches - Some may create their own coaching theories, coaching programs, and market them to other coaches - Able to stand back and observe their client’s development and are able to see multiple perspectives - Experience objective knowing - For this coach it’s all about self-regulation, self-formation and self-authorship - Success or failure in coaching is defined and validated by their observation and the evaluative nature of their own internal voice - Will have a defined client selection process and will select clients which fit his/her self-authored criteria of a suitable client and will only accept coachable clients - Failure is rarely experienced by this coach because of his/her selection process
The Transformational Coach <i>(Self-authoring)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly experienced - As much changed by the coaching relationships as the client is - Creates an environment for forming and transforming ideas, theories, or systems with all who are open to connect with them at the deepest most complex level - Success and failure can be experienced at the same time within a coaching relationship - Accepting of the dualities of life - Can be courageous and vulnerable at the same time - Open to whatever emerges from the interconnection with their client and the world - Being in community is important to them - Easily tune into the environment; it’s a way of being in which something new results from the interconnectedness of one or more individuals or systems.

(Perry, 2014, pp. 72-74)

The outcomes of Perry’s (2014) study, as well as Bachkirova and Cox’s (2007) different form of mind-related coach profiles, are very helpful in exploring the extent to which the coaches with different forms of mind influence or might (not) be able to effectively facilitate the coaching process with clients. However, the reader should keep in mind that Bachkirova and Cox’s study outlined those coach profiles based on theoretical analysis and their observation of groups of coaches they worked with, and thus have no empirical support. Perry’s (2014) findings should also be interpreted with caution due to the lack of rigor in analyzing the coaches’ Subject-Object Interview data, on

which various coach profiles were based, as only 10% of the SOIs in Perry's study were scored by an additional experienced SOI scorer as a way of ensuring inter-rater reliability. On the upside, looking at and comparing Perry's (2014) and Bachkirova and Cox's (2007) different form of mind-related coach profiles, we can see the similarities in their descriptions, as well as how those descriptions reinforce one another. What is left now is to explore the extent to which these descriptions can be observed in the context of coaches facilitating reflective practices for transformative insight, something I will investigate in my second research question.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this multiple-person case study research was to gain more knowledge about the ways in which executive coaching, as an intervention for learning and development, could facilitate growth in the leadership capacities executives need to navigate their challenges and contexts.

More specifically, through the explicit lenses of adult learning theory (i.e., transformative learning; Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000) and adult development theory (i.e., constructive-developmental theory; Kegan, 1982, 1994), this study examined specific executive coaching practices for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight. Also, using the lens of constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994), this study sought to understand how, if at all, a select sample of certified executive coaches with various developmental capacities or forms of mind differ in their understanding and descriptions of the reflective coaching practices they use and see as helpful in facilitating transformative insights in working with their clients. The following research questions were explored:

- (1) How do coaches describe and understand what they do to facilitate transformative insight, and why? More specifically, how do coaches describe and use practices for different levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise reflection) to facilitate transformative insight?
- (2) What relationship, if any, exists between coaches' forms of mind and how they describe what they do in their coaching practices to facilitate transformative insight?

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology used to explore these questions and the rationale behind selecting this method. Next, the research sample is described along with the criteria for sample selection and sampling strategy, followed by an overview of the information needed to answer the research questions. The following section outlines the data collection methods used and the approaches to the data analysis. Finally, the potential threats to validity and reliability are discussed.

Research Design

The current study involves an inquiry into complex phenomena that are relatively unexplored in the literature (Marshall & Rossman, 2011); the research questions require an in-depth exploration, description, and interpretation of individuals' experiences, practices, perceptions, and understanding (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Maxwell, 2005). Therefore, in this dissertation, I employed a multiple-person case study methodology. The goals of this study include understanding how participants (executive coaches) approach and understand the reflective coaching practices they use and deem helpful in facilitating transformative insight and how their form of mind might influence how they perceive and navigate this process. These goals relate more to understanding the processes and reasoning behind these reflective practices and forms of mind than to a focus on the outcomes of executive coaching (Merriam, 1988), making this study especially suited to using a qualitative approach (Maxwell, 2005). The inductive and open-ended nature of a qualitative interview approach (Maxwell, 2005, p. 24) allowed me not only to answer the main research questions but also provided me with a more specific case-level opportunity to “conduct formative evaluations, ones that are intended to help improve existing practices” (Scriven, 1967, 1991, as cited in Maxwell, 2005, p. 24).

This multiple-person case study research design meets all three conditions Yin (2009) outlined for case study research. Regarding the first condition, the research questions are of a more explanatory nature and are focused on the “how” and “why.” The second condition Yin stipulates

for case studies is that the relevant behaviors (i.e., participants' coaching practices) cannot be manipulated and are outside the researcher's control. For Yin's third condition, case studies must examine real-life contemporary events, in this case, from each coach participant's own executive coaching experience. This study's client-coaching cases and related reflective practices were described retrospectively via critical incidents gathered in an online survey and in more detail during the qualitative interviews. For example, I explored and examined the differences in the (understanding of) executive coaching reflective practices in multiple cases where coaches (i.e., participants) with varying developmental capacities, or forms of mind, believed their coaching practices played a role in facilitating a client's transformative insight. While such a multiple-case research design was time-consuming and demanded considerable resources, the specific design of this study enabled me to collect compelling data for explorative analysis. This allowed me to draw more powerful conclusions (Yin, 2009) regarding the "how" and "why" of coaching practices that coach participants perceived as helpful for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight. It also provided an additional perspective on the role that the coaches' forms of mind could play in driving their perceptions of the "how" and "why" of their practices. This contributes to the robustness of the study (Herriot & Firestone, 1983, as cited in Yin, 2009, p. 53).

I collected the data for each participant using multiple sources of complementary information described in detail later in this chapter (see Methods of Data Collection section). The primary sources of qualitative data were two types of participant interviews: (1) semi-structured Subject-Object Interviews (SOI) (Lahey et al., 1988), and (2) semi-structured research interviews anchored in a critical incident addressing an actual executive coaching client case and a uniform coaching case vignette containing an "in-the-moment" exploration. The semi-structured interview is a widely used data collection method in qualitative research (Robson, 2002) and is often considered "the most important source of case study information" (Yin, 2009, p. 106). This is not surprising, as

semi-structured interviews allow for the exploration of the phenomenon of interest by studying individual perceptions and experiences with enough depth and flexibility to modify the line of inquiry and with the ability to investigate the relevance of participant responses further (Robson, 2002) as they emerge. The interviews also allowed me to explore the coaches' opinions, understanding, perceptions, and attitudes in greater detail in the moment, in addition to reflecting on the thinking expressed and the behavioral events that occurred in the executive coaching sessions with their clients (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Yin, 2009). This openness and flexibility of questioning encourage depth of inquiry and facilitate the emergence of new concepts, thereby enhancing the quality of the data gathered (Dearnley, 2005, p. 22).

Additional sources of data collected for each participant include: (1) demographics and qualitative critical incidents addressing an actual executive coaching client case, (2) a vignette (a short and uniform hypothetical coaching client case), and (3) a reflective journal of my own assumptions, thinking, and experience of the study itself, including a review of the analytical memos I kept during the data coding. Collecting data on the research questions from multiple sources “provides multiple measures of the same phenomenon” (Yin, 2009, p. 116) with the aim of corroborating the data. This process of qualitative triangulation increases the overall quality of (data in) the study while “addressing the potential problems of construct validity” (Yin, 2009, p. 116).

Research Sample

This section describes the research sample and the process used to select the participants for this study; that is, the sampling procedure and the criteria used for participant inclusion in the research sample are explained in more detail. It also outlines how this selection process evolved in response to the difficulties encountered in identifying the final research sample.

Selection Criteria

Due to the nature of this study and its research questions, a purposive criterion sampling strategy was used to determine the final research sample based on several criteria (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Purposive sampling was an appropriate choice, as it is “a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately to provide information that cannot be gotten as well from other choices” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 88). This approach, therefore, enabled the selection of individuals who have shared characteristics and yet represent different perspectives in terms of their depth of knowledge and their experience with the phenomenon of interest, all as aligned with the specific needs and goals of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Maxwell, 2005; Robson, 2002).

The number of cases used in a multiple-case research design is usually based on the researcher’s judgment regarding the number deemed sufficient or necessary for detecting the phenomenon under investigation (Yin, 2009, p. 58). Given that the purpose of the study is to explore reflective coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight and, specifically, to determine if there are differences between executive coaches with different forms of mind in their understanding and descriptions of these reflective practices, without having a clear or straightforward expectation for the outcomes, five, six, or more participants are recommended (Yin, 2009, p. 58). This recommendation for this study aligned with my goal of discovering as many meaningful differences in transformative insight coaching practices as possible across various forms of mind. With the time constraints considered (for both the researcher and participants) and given the required (financial) resources for conducting the study, as well as the limited number of available potential subjects who met the purposive sampling selection criteria, 12 participants were initially deemed an ideal sample to strive for in this research, with a minimum of 9 participants equally

distributed across varying forms of mind being an acceptable number should the selection process have evolved otherwise in time or hardship to necessitate it.

One of the most important aspects of participant selection in qualitative research is forming a research sample that is uniquely able to provide the information needed to answer the research questions (Maxwell, 2005). With this in mind, the sample for this study was formed using five selection criteria. Initially, those criteria were that the participants:

- (1) are fluent in English and are primarily coaching in English
- (2) have earned a coaching certification recognized by the International Coach Federation (ICF) or received from an academic institution
- (3) have three or more years of post-coaching-certification, active, *external* executive coaching experience
- (4) can identify and discuss the specifics of one of their executive coaching client cases and the related coaching practices they used at that time, a case where, from their perspective, the client experienced a transformative insight (e.g., an insight into how they see themselves and their relationships with others or how they understand the world around them; based on Cox, 2017)
- (5) make meaning from one of the four groupings of forms of mind (i.e., stage of development as indicated by the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) score; Lahey et al., 1988): (1) the Socializing form of mind, (2) the Socializing to Self-Authoring forms of mind transition, (3) the Self-Authoring form of mind, or (4) the Self-Authoring to Self-Transforming form of mind transition.

Fluency in English

As stated, in the first place, participant selection was focused on executive coaches who are fluent in English and coach primarily in English, to reduce the influence that English language skills

could have on sharing their experience and practices. And while coaches included in this study were of varying nationalities (e.g., Dutch, Portuguese, Indian), this criterion was met by all participants included in the final sample, as was demonstrated by the ease with which they engaged in every aspect of the data collection process, including both interviews (i.e., the semi-structured interview and the Subject-Object Interview).

Coaching Certification

I aimed to identify certified executive coaches who have earned a coaching certification from an ICF-approved or academic institution to ensure they have met generally accepted professional criteria regarding coaching knowledge, process, skill development, and ethics. All the participants in this study met this criterion, including having a coaching certification from, for example, the University of Sydney (Australia), INSEAD (France), Columbia University (United States of America), Fielding Graduate School (United States of America), Oxford Brookes University (United Kingdom), Henley Business School (United Kingdom), and the University College Cork (Ireland).

External Executive Coaching Experience

To ensure that depth in the application of executive coaching knowledge and practical client experience was included, only those executive coaches who met the third selection criterion were included in the final research sample, that is, participants with at least three years of active, *external* executive coaching experience post-certification. This ensured they had time to experiment with, reflect on, and personalize their approaches to facilitating transformative insight based on their experience. It was also important that the participants were *external* coaches, coaches who did not work in the same organization as their clients but were hired from outside the client organization. External coaches are less directly affected by internal organizational politics or culture. They can more easily take a more independent, neutral position in coaching conversations—potentially providing them with more freedom of expression, which can include more choice in the direction or

selection of their practices. In this way, the choice of a research sample of external coaches ensured a certain degree of homogeneity in the context within which these coaches facilitate their clients' learning. All the coach-participants included in the final sample met this criterion, with the years of external executive coaching experience varying from 3 to 25, with an average of 13.05 years.

Identification of a Coaching Client Case Where a Client Experienced a Transformative Insight

The fourth criterion for participant selection was dictated by the purpose of the research, which related to the participant's ability to identify and discuss one of their executive coaching client cases and the related coaching practices they used at that time, a case where, from their perspective, a client experienced a transformative insight. I was, therefore, looking for executive coaches who were willing and able to recall and describe some of their "success stories" and real-world experiences related to facilitating transformative insights in their client work. Specifically, I was looking for those executive coaches whose descriptions of client transformative insight in the chosen client case were in line with the transformative insight as defined in this dissertation. That is, the client's case was about an insight related to how clients view themselves or their relationships with others, how they understand or view the world around them, changing their deeply held beliefs, developing a greater sense of responsibility and perspective-taking, changing their goals for the future, or making major changes in life. Also, I was looking for coaches willing and able to recall and describe the specifics of the coaching practices they used at that time and for which they believed they were instrumental in facilitating transformative insights. Only those coaches whose client cases met the above criteria were invited to participate further in the research. Initially, this information was gathered via a critical incident online survey (see Appendix B) that was sent to participants before the rest of the critical incident data was gathered during the semi-structured interviews that took place later in the data collection process (and for those participants who met all selection criteria). This initial collection of critical incident data via an online survey allowed me to ensure that

their cases met the above criteria and gauge the participants' level of recollection of the coaching cases chosen. All 25 coaches initially selected in the research sample met this criterion.

Coach Form of Mind

The fifth criterion for participant selection was dictated by the second research question, which involved exploring, identifying, and describing the differences in experiences of the executive coaches with various forms of mind (i.e., stage of development as indicated by the Subject-Object Interview score; Lahey et al., 1988) as related to their descriptions and understanding of the reflective practices they perceived as helpful for facilitating transformative insights. To allow for a meaningful between-coach comparison based on coaches' forms of mind as much as possible, it was necessary to have comparison groups, each making meaning from a different form of mind. More specifically, initially, I aimed for an equal distribution of participants across each of the four following form of mind groupings: coaches making meaning from a (1) Socializing form of mind (i.e., coaches with the SOI scores of 3 or 3(4)); (2) Socializing to Self-authoring forms of mind transition (i.e., coaches with the SOI scores of 3/4 or 4/3); (3) Self-authoring form of mind (i.e., coaches with the SOI scores of 4(3) or 4), and a Self-authoring to Self-transforming form of mind transition (i.e., coaches with the SOI scores of 4(5) or above). In this attempt to achieve an even distribution across these four form of mind categories, Subject-Object Interviews not only served as a source of data on how the coaches make meaning from and experience their coaching practices, but the SOIs also served as the fifth selection criterion for participation in the research. Only those coaches whose forms of mind met the requirements for the form of mind groupings outlined above were invited to participate in the research. The Subject-Object Interviews reviewing potential participants' meaning-making were to continue until the desired even distribution of participants across these four different forms of mind was achieved and, if possible, balanced at three or minimally two participants per form of mind grouping.

However, as the participants' SOI data-gathering process evolved, it soon became apparent that it would be hard to identify coaches falling in two out of four form of mind groupings and, hence, that it would be especially hard to achieve the desired distribution of participants across the four initially defined groupings. After collecting the SOI data for the first 12 participants (the number it was hoped would be sufficient for answering the research questions), it became clear that the following form of mind groupings would be hard to populate: (1) Socializing form of mind (i.e., coaches with the SOI scores of 3 or 3(4)), and a Self-authoring to Self-transforming form of mind transition (i.e., coaches with the SOI scores of 4(5) or above). More specifically, not a single participant made meaning from a fully Socializing form of mind (i.e., SOI scores of 3) nor the Self-authoring to Self-transforming form of mind transition grouping (i.e., SOI scores of 4(5) or above). Additionally, only 3 out of 12 participants made meaning from a Self-authoring form of mind, while the rest (9 out of 12) fell into a Socializing to Self-authoring form of mind transition.

And while it was anticipated to be difficult to populate the Self-authoring to Self-transforming form of mind transition as the estimate is that only 6% of adults between the age of 19 and 66 make meaning from that space (Kegan, 1994), it was unexpected that it would be equally hard to populate the Socializing form of mind group. The estimate is that 14% of adults make meaning from a fully Socializing form of mind (the SOI score of 3; Kegan, 1994). Given that the Socializing form of mind grouping in this dissertation also included the SOI score of 3(4), a score that technically falls in the Socializing to Self-authoring forms of mind transition, where 32% of adults reside, which would serve to increase that percentage, the difficulty identifying this group of coaches was, to an extent, unexpected.

Given the difficulties in identifying the coaches with the forms of mind deemed necessary to answer the second research question, in the second round, I collected the SOI data from 13 additional potential participants, hoping that the form of mind categories defined above would be

populated. In searching for those participants and as a way of increasing the probability that I would identify individuals that do fall into the two so far unpopulated form of mind groupings (i.e., (a) Socializing form of mind: coaches with the SOI scores of 3 or 3(4), and (b) a Self-authoring to Self-transforming form of mind transition: coaches with the SOI scores of 4(5) or above), I adjusted the second round of the participant selection process. More specifically, in discussion with Dr. Nancy Popp, a developmental psychologist specializing in constructive-developmental theory and a certified and highly experienced SOI interviewer, scorer, and certifier, I created an online survey in which potential participants were asked the following two questions: “In your experience, what have you come to see as the most important roles a coach plays in the coaching process?” and “In your experience, what do you personally find most challenging about your role as a coach?” Two highly experienced SOI reliable scorers, including Dr. Popp, analyzed potential participants’ answers and made a rough guesstimate as to where along the developmental continuum each respondent might fall. Additionally, I was also looking for coaches who had either very little or very extensive coaching experience, hoping that this information, together with the data from the above two questions, would assist in the process of identifying participants with the two forms of mind I was still looking for.

After collecting the SOI data from a total of 25 potential participants (participants from rounds 1 and 2), the following distribution of the form of mind groupings emerged:

- (1) Socializing form of mind (i.e., coaches with SOI scores of 3 or 3(4)): 1 participant
- (2) Socializing to Self-authoring forms of mind transition (i.e., coaches with SOI scores of 3/4 or 4/3): 16 participants
- (3) Self-authoring form of mind (i.e., coaches with SOI scores of 4(3) or 4): 8 participants
- (4) Self-authoring to Self-transforming form of mind transition (i.e., coaches with SOI scores of 4(5) or above): 0 participants

For a complete overview of the form of mind grouping distribution over the two SOI data collection rounds and the final distribution I arrived at, see Tables 3.1 and 3.2 below.

Table 3.1

SOI (Form of Mind) Score Distribution per SOI Data Collection Round and for All Potential Participants

SOI Score	Data Collection Round 1 N=12		Data Collection Round 2 N=13		TOTAL N=25	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Below 3	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
3	0	0.00%	1	7.69%	1	4.00%
3(4)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
3/4	2	16.67%	5	38.46%	7	28.00%
3/4 - 4/3	0	0.00%	2	15.38%	2	8.00%
4/3	7	58.33%	0	0.00%	7	28.00%
4(3)	0	0.00%	1	7.69%	1	4.00%
4	3	25.00%	4	30.77%	7	28.00%
Above 4	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

Table 3.2

Form of Mind Grouping Distribution per SOI Data Collection Round and for All Potential Participants

Data collection round	Number of participants	Form of mind groupings distribution (and related SOI scores)			
		Socializing form of mind (3, 3(4))	Socializing to Self-authoring forms of mind transition (3/4, 4/3)	Self-authoring form of mind (4(3), 4)	Self-authoring to Self-transforming form of mind transition (4(5) and above)
1	12	0	9	3	0
2	13	1	7	5	0
TOTAL	25	1	16	8	0
	%	4.00%	64.00%	32.00%	0%

It became clear that the intended equal distribution across the initially defined four form of mind groupings could not be attained given the time and financial constraints involved. As such, in discussion with Dr. Popp and following Hayes (2008), I decided to adjust the form of mind groupings to the following three categories: (1) Socializing transitioning *toward* a Self-authoring form of mind (i.e., coaches with the SOI scores of 3(4) or 3/4); (2) Self-authoring transitioning *away from* Socializing form of mind (i.e., coaches with the SOI scores of 4/3, or 4(3)); and (3) *Fully Self-*

authoring form of mind (i.e., coaches with the SOI score of 4). Further, given that I aimed for an equal distribution across forms of mind, now, with these three new form of mind groupings, 4 out of 25 participants were excluded from the study. First, the participant with an SOI score of 3 (i.e., fully Socializing form of mind) was excluded since this was the only individual with this SOI score. Second, two participants in a so-called *micro*-transition form of mind space, with SOI scores between 3/4 and 4/3, were excluded. These micro-transitions occur when the SOI interviewee is right in-between two transitional SOI scores (e.g., 3/4 to 4/3), that is, when the SOI data indicate that the interviewee “sits” in both score spaces at the same time, which often occurs before an individual fully transitions from one SOI score to another (e.g., from 3/4 to 4/3). Experienced SOI scorers, such as Dr. Popp, who has 35+ years of experience in adult development and the SOI, can identify these micro-transitions, which is not unusual given that adult development is a continuum. Finally, to achieve an equal distribution across the three new form of mind groupings, the last participant excluded from the final sample was the one with the SOI score 4/3. The reason for exclusion was that during the semi-structured interview conducted online, the participant had connectivity issues, making the interview hard to transcribe with precision, leaving 21 participants included in the final sample, with 7 participants in each of the three final form of mind groupings.

While the initially defined form of mind grouping distribution was not attained, this had no bearing on my ability to answer my second research question about the relationship between the coaches’ forms of mind and the kinds of reflective coaching practices they used to facilitate transformative insight. What changed was the form of mind range within which that question was answered. With this final sample, the developmental space was narrowed, emphasizing the differences between the coaches in the Socializing to Self-authoring form of mind space, where most of the adult population lies (Kegan, 1994). This allows for a more micro-level exploration of

how coaches with different Socializing to Self-authoring form of mind transitions influence how they use reflective practices to facilitate transformative insight.

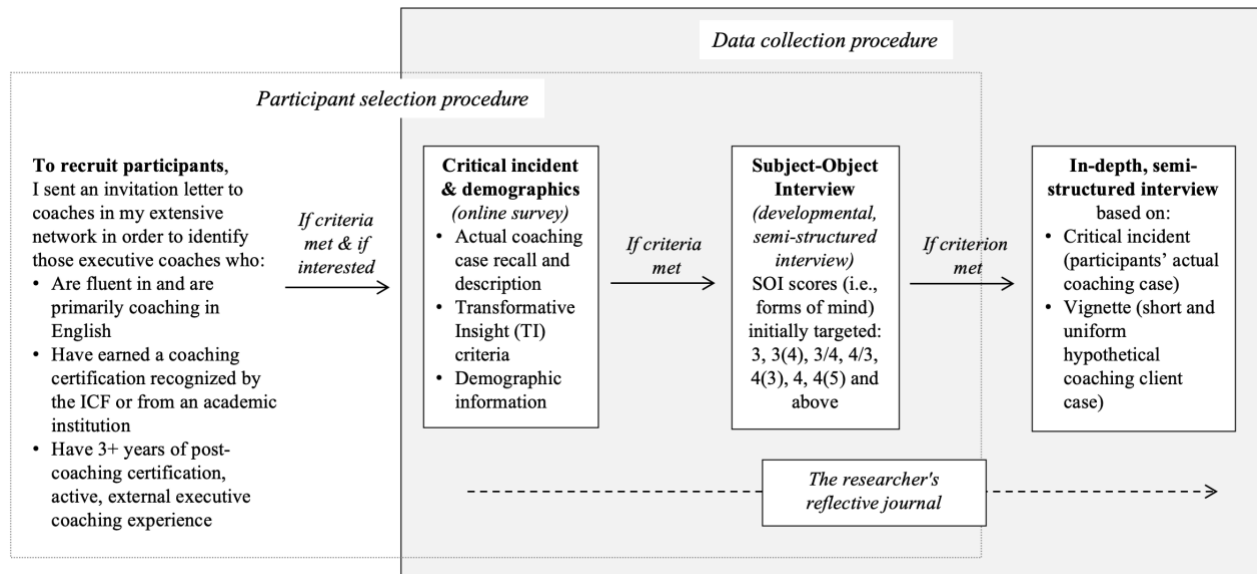
Recruiting Strategy

The first phase of the purposive criterion sampling strategy involved identifying the individuals who met the first three selection criteria: (1) being fluent in English and primarily coaching in English; (2) having a coaching certification recognized by the ICF or from an academic institution; and (3) having three or more years of post-coaching certification, active, external executive coaching experience (see Figure 3.1 below for a complete overview of this study's participant selection procedure). To implement this phase, I approached my extensive network of coaches via LinkedIn, email, and phone. All potential participants received a letter via an email inviting their participation, outlining the purpose of the study and the criteria for participation, describing the activities (including time commitments and duration) in which the potential participants would take part, and asking them to respond with their additional contact information. Those who met the first three selection criteria and agreed to participate received detailed information about the study in the informed consent form. To reach an ideal sample as much as possible, in this email, the recipients were asked to forward the invitation to others in their network who might meet the inclusion criteria related to coaching certification and experience (i.e., snowballing).

Additionally, to entice interest, this letter invited all who participated in the selection process or the study itself to participate in a post-dissertation, the study-based knowledge-sharing event of approximately 1.5 hours facilitated by the researcher and hosted by a webinar. This event would be used to share high-level research outcomes and have an interactive discussion on the implications of the findings for executive coaching. I hoped this event might also motivate coaches to commit their time and energy to this study.

Figure 3.1

The Participant Selection and Data Collection Procedure



For the group of interested coaches who met the first three selection criteria, I continued exchanging information with each participant via email during the second phase of the sampling procedure. This allowed me to establish a rapport with potential participants while sharing a more detailed description of the research outline, including the related participant requirements covered in the informed consent form and allowing the potential participants to ask any question they had. This was meant to aid in the participants' understanding of the research goals, build an understanding of the nature of the exploratory inquiry and approach, and manage participant expectations about what would be asked of them as participants in the study. Additionally, the standards for maintaining participant privacy and confidentiality that I adhered to throughout the study were discussed in more detail to reassure participants about the security of their contributions.

Next, I announced that the participants would receive an invitation to complete an online survey in which they would be asked to provide additional demographic information regarding their backgrounds and fill in a critical incident form in which their coaching client case would be

captured. This survey allowed them to prepare one actual coaching client case that would be discussed in the semi-structured interview with those participants that met all five selection criteria. It would also trigger preliminary thinking and recall about the coaching practices they use to facilitate transformative insight considered relevant and helpful in that client's case. The critical incident data collected via the online survey also ensured that the participants' coaching experience met the fourth selection criterion (see Appendix B). That criterion relates to the extent to which the coach can recall, identify, and discuss the specifics of an actual executive coaching client case in which, in their perspective, the client experienced a transformative insight and the coaching practices used at that time. In the critical incident online survey, the coaches were asked to describe one such client case (i.e., "What specifically do you believe changed in the client's understanding in terms of how they see themselves, their relationships with others, or how they understand the world around them?") and their coaching practices at that time (i.e., "In your coaching at that time, what were you doing that was helpful for facilitating this client's insight or 'turning point,' i.e., change in understanding or belief? Please elaborate as concretely as you can.").

In the third and final phase of the sampling procedure, after the coach participant had met the fourth selection criterion, the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) was introduced and described. The date for the SOI with Dr. Popp was scheduled. As previously mentioned, the SOI was conducted to determine if the coaches in question met the fifth selection criterion and, specifically, to which of the defined form of mind groupings they belonged in an attempt to reach the ideal number of participants per grouping. As described earlier, the final form of mind grouping was: (1) Socializing transitioning *toward* a Self-authoring form of mind (i.e., coaches with the SOI scores of 3(4) or 3/4); (2) Self-authoring transitioning *away from* Socializing form of mind (i.e., coaches with the SOI scores of 4/3, or 4(3)); and (3) *fully* Self-authoring form of mind (i.e., coaches with the SOI score of 4). Once I was told by Dr. Popp that an equal number of coaches within each of the three

final form of mind comparison groups was identified, and thus that the ideal number and composition of participants needed for this study were reached, I stopped recruiting new participants. The participants' SOI scores were not revealed to me until after the data collection and initial analysis were completed. After the SOI was completed, participants were invited to participate in the semi-structured interview.

Given the qualitative nature of this study and its research questions, I had to, in a way, enter the lived experience of the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) to step into—and understand—the perceptions, perspectives, tactics used, and decisions made to determine coaching approaches and practices and relate them to the facilitation of transformative insight. Doing so included understanding specifically how these coaches engaged their clients in facilitating transformative insight. Thus, inclusion in this study meant that participants engaged with me in an in-depth exploration of their personal and professional perspectives, understandings, and experiences of facilitating transformative insights in their coaching practice as they perceived it. Semi-structured interviews are often considered “intimate encounters that depend on trust” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 145). I hoped the coaching background I shared with the participants and being a part of the professional coaching community would increase their comfort with this type of exploration and disclosure of thinking, feeling, and reasoning during the semi-structured interviews. Another in-depth process of exploration and disclosure occurred during the Subject-Object Interviews, where an investigation into a form of mind, or how an individual constructs their reality or makes meaning (Lahey et al., 1988), brought a new perspective on how coaches' approaches and practices are shaped.

Data Collection Methods

This section details the data collection methods necessary for answering the research questions. Before collecting the data, I submitted my dissertation proposal. I attended the related proposal hearing virtually on January 19, 2019, from Des Moines, Iowa, led by my committee members, Dr. Marsick and Dr. Faller. Also, I submitted my dissertation documentation to the Teachers College Institutional Review Board (IRB), including the study's purpose and research questions, protocol and study description, research risks and benefits, and confidentiality and data security procedures. Once the IRB had approved my proposal, I started collecting the data (see Figure 3.1 above for a complete overview of the data collection procedure). The data were collected from multiple sources, including: (1) an online survey where participant demographics and the qualitative critical incidents addressing an actual coaching scenario per coach were collected; (2) the Subject-Object Interviews (SOI) (Lahey et al., 1988) for identifying the participants' form of mind, for those participants that met the critical incident and demographics criteria (see Selection Criteria section above for more detail); (3) after the SOI, the in-depth, semi-structured interviews were scheduled with the researcher, during which the data on each coach's practices for facilitating transformative insight were captured; (4) a vignette (a short and uniform hypothetical client case), which was discussed during the semi-structured interview; and (5) a reflective journal kept by the researcher throughout the study, starting during the participant selection phase to capture and examine any personal assumptions or goals, belief systems, insights, and subjectivities (Ahern, 1999, as cited in Russell & Kelly, 2002) relevant to the research process and the data analysis at a later stage.

My goal was to collect various data via different methods to analyze the understandings and perspectives held by coach-participants on the same phenomena of interest. Table 3.3 below provides an overview of the information needed for answering the two research questions by the data source.

Table 3.3

Information Collected by Data Source

Information	Data Source				
	Online Survey <i>(Includes critical incident)</i>	The Subject-Object- Interview (SOI, <i>developmental interview</i>)	Semi-structured Interviews <i>(Includes critical incidents and a vignette)</i>	Researcher' s Reflections <i>(Includes analytical memos and journal)</i>	Literature review <i>(Includes previous studies)</i>
Demographic					
<i>Gender</i>	x				
<i>Age</i>	x				
<i>Nationality</i>	x				
<i>Completed education</i>	x				
Background					
<i>Coaching education background</i>	x				
<i>Years of active coaching experience</i>	x				
<i>ICF credentials</i>	x				
<i>Coaching certification/ education</i>	x				
<i>Main coaching lenses used (e.g., behavioral, developmental)</i>	x		x		
<i>Client base characteristics in terms of management roles and responsibilities</i>	x				
Developmental information					
<i>Coach form of mind</i>		x		x	x
Conceptual information					
<i>Definition(s) of reflective thinking</i>			x	x	x
<i>Definition(s) of non-reflective thinking</i>			x	x	x
<i>Definition(s) of content reflection & coding criteria</i>			x	x	x
<i>Definition(s) of process reflection & coding criteria</i>			x	x	x
<i>Definition(s) of premise reflection & coding criteria</i>			x	x	x
Perceptual information					
<i>Coaching client's challenge</i>	x		x	x	x
<i>Coaching client's transformative insight</i>	x		x	x	x
<i>Coach practices for facilitating transformative insight</i>	x		x	x	x
<i>Coach understanding of transformative insight</i>	x		x	x	x
<i>Role of client assumptions and beliefs in coaching</i>	x		x	x	x

Critical Incidents (and Demographic Data)

In the first data collection phase, I collected participants' demographic information and critical incident input regarding an actual coaching client case that would be reviewed as part of the selection process and discussed later during the semi-structured interview. A Critical Incident

Technique (CIT) (Flanagan, 1954) is an established qualitative research approach for collecting rich

and contextual data that reflect significant real-life instances of a specific activity as experienced or observed by the participants (Hughes, 2007, pp. 49-50). This approach enabled me to “identify similarities, differences, and patterns and to seek insight into how and why people engage in the activity” (p. 50). While individual interviews and direct observations are preferred CIT approaches for data collection, written responses may also be collected, especially if the participant group is large (Flanagan, 1954; Hughes, 2007), as was the case in this data collection phase.

The demographics and critical incident information were gathered via an online survey (see Appendix B). In this survey, the participants were asked to provide demographic information relevant to the final analysis (e.g., age, gender, nationality, education level, coaching education/certification background) and as a way of providing context. More importantly, the survey contained a small number of open-ended questions asking the coaches to think of a recent executive coaching client case where, in their perspective, the client experienced a transformative insight and to identify, describe, and provide the specifics of that case. That is, they were asked to identify where a client had had a “turning point” during coaching, whereby the client experienced a “turning point” and has a profound change in their understanding of how they view themselves or their relationships with others, how they understand or view the world around them, thereby changing their deeply held beliefs, developing a greater sense of responsibility and perspective-taking, changing their goals for the future, or making major life changes.

More specifically, they were asked to provide their perspective on their client’s challenge (i.e., “From your perspective as the coach, what do you see as this client’s main dilemma or challenge?”), as well as their perception of the kind of transformative insight experienced by their client (e.g., “From your perspective as the coach, related to the client’s dilemma or challenge, what specifically do you believe changed in your client’s understanding in terms of how they see themselves, how they see their relationships with others, and how they understand the world around them?”). They

were also asked to provide examples of their coaching practices (e.g., “In your coaching at that time, what were you doing that was helpful for facilitating this client’s ‘turning point,’ i.e., change in understanding or belief?”) and their reasoning for choosing these practices; and what they believe makes this specific coaching practice helpful for facilitating transformative insight (e.g., “What specifically about this approach do you believe was the most helpful for facilitating this client’s ‘turning point,’ i.e., change in understanding or belief?”).

There were multiple goals for the data collection during this phase. First, these data aided the participant selection process by helping identify the final set of coaches that had the necessary background and could clarify and discuss the specifics of an executive coaching client case where, in their perspective, a client experienced a transformative insight. It added structure and standardization to the initial collection of participant responses, serving as an explorative canvassing of (potential) participant beliefs and experiences related to transformative coaching practices. As such, it provided helpful, general, and participant-specific input for further and deeper exploration of the participants’ relevant experience and coaching practices during the semi-structured interviews. Completing the online survey was a prerequisite for participating in the Subject-Object Interview. Additionally, the data from the critical incidents and online demographic survey acted as a background and complement to the semi-structured interview data regarding coach practices for facilitating transformative insight.

Subject-Object Interviews

To answer the second research question, it was necessary to ascertain the participants’ developmental capacity or form of mind. For this purpose, Subject-Object Interviews (SOI) (Lahey et al., 1988) were conducted. The SOI is a semi-structured, 60- to 90-minute interview through which a person’s form of mind can be assessed. That is, the SOI provides a method for examining what someone’s experiences mean to them as a way of determining their “subject-object

development” (Kegan, 1982, as cited in Lahey et al., 1988) or meaning-making, based on Kegan’s constructive-developmental theory (1982, 1994). The SOI interrater reliability or the agreement between two scorers on the SOI scores has been found to range from .75 to 1 (as reported in Lahey, 1986; Lahey et al., 1988; Popp, 1993), test-retest reliability, as reported in one study, is .83 (Lahey, 1986), and there is preliminary support for the SOI’s construct validity (as cited in Lahey et al., 1988).

The SOI was conducted before the semi-structured interviews with each potential participant who had met the first four selection criteria and after the critical incident and demographic data had been gathered. During the interview, the interviewee is given ten different word prompts (e.g., angry, success, change, important to me) and asked to think about a time when he/she recently experienced something related to one of the word prompts. For example, for the prompt “change,” the interviewee is asked, “As you look back at your past, if you had to think of some ways in which you think you’ve changed over the last few years or, even months, if that seems right, are there some ways that come to mind?” As the interviewee tells his/her story, the interviewer conducts a “respectful inquiry” by asking questions intended to ascertain “how a person structures or organizes his or her meaning-making” (Lahey et al., 1988, p. 210).

It was important to identify those participants whose form of mind met the criteria and distribution of the form of mind groupings necessary for the study—and to do this before the semi-structured interviews took place. That is, in the final step of the selection process, participants were selected based on their SOI scores. After the challenge of identifying various forms of mind during the participant selection process, the final categories I was able to obtain and that I deemed helpful for answering the research questions were: (1) Socializing transitioning *toward* a Self-authoring form of mind (i.e., coaches with the SOI scores of 3(4) or 3/4); (2) Self-authoring transitioning *away from* Socializing form of mind (i.e., coaches with the SOI scores of 4/3, or 4(3));

and (3) *Fully* Self-authoring form of mind (i.e., coaches with the SOI score of 4). The SOIs were conducted by Dr. Popp, a highly experienced SOI interviewer, scorer, and certifier.

The In-Depth Semi-Structured Interviews

In this final data collection phase, the primary source of data was collected in the form of 90-minute, one-on-one, in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted and recorded via Zoom, a cloud-based virtual communications platform, with 21 coaches selected and included in the final sample, all of whom had met the necessary selection criteria described in the Research Sample section. This type of qualitative interview was the most appropriate method for gathering the data needed to meet the primary research purpose and answer both research questions, that is, the purpose of exploring and identifying coaching practices perceived by the executive coaches as helpful for facilitating reflection toward achieving transformative insight, as well as describing the differences in those practices as understood and described by the executive coaches making meaning with various forms of mind. The purpose of this study is closely aligned with the purpose behind a qualitative research interview, that is, “to gather descriptions of the interviewee’s life-world with respect to the interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena” (Kvale, 1983, p. 174), and to “see the research topic from the perspective of the interviewee and to understand how and why they come to have this particular perspective” (N. King, 2004, p. 11). While this qualitative interview was structured around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, it was still open and flexible enough to allow additional and unexpected questions or ideas to emerge from the dialogue with the participant (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 315; Robson, 2002).

The semi-structured interview was structured around two focus areas (see Appendix C for full interview protocol). The first part of the semi-structured interview was anchored in the Critical Incident Technique, a flexible set of principles for gathering data on “certain important facts concerning behavior in defined situations” (Flanagan, 1954, p. 335). More specially, in-depth data

were collected about the coaching practices used with clients (i.e., “important facts concerning behavior”) in those client cases where, from the perspective of the coach, a client experienced a transformative insight (i.e., “defined situation”). By the time of the interview with each of the selected executive coaches, I had collected and reviewed their written critical incidents from the online survey, and we used those as input to our conversation. This way, I was in a unique position to explore the phenomenon of interest in this study with much more depth and focus than would have been the case without these previous steps in the data collection. This, in turn, facilitated the collection of the higher-quality data necessary to answer the research questions.

The second part of the semi-structured interview was anchored in the vignette, a hypothetical and uniform coaching client case (see Appendix D, based on Howard, 2010). Including the vignette enabled me to collect more specific, in-depth, individual, and collective participant data in a standardized way. The vignette allowed all participants to describe their coaching practice in the moment, in response to the same “client,” rather than just answering questions about coaching practices used in their various client cases and doing so retrospectively. I probed around what kinds of approaches coaches would take in this hypothetical case (e.g., “Which practices would you consider as being helpful for facilitating this client’s possible turning point(s)? What would you do in this case? And why?”).

Since the semi-structured interviews were the primary data source, a version of a semi-structured interview protocol was piloted with two executive coaches from my network before the actual data collection. These coaches’ characteristics closely resembled the select sample of certified executive coaches from which the final data were collected. Testing the interview questions and protocol with these two coaches to check if they generated the kind of data necessary for answering my research questions enabled me to revise the line of questioning (i.e., question content) and the interview process, which I subsequently utilized with the participants included in the final sample

(Maxwell, 2005; Robson, 2002; Yin, 2009). More specifically, during the pilot phase, I noticed several things that needed to be adjusted. First, it became clear that both interviewees had difficulty staying focused on the questions asked and, in general, following the interview flow. Following the coaches' suggestions, I adjusted the interviewing process by projecting the questions (as well as the vignette content) on the screen during the Zoom interview sessions. Second, even though I provided the definition of transformative insight to the participants before the interview took place (both in the online survey and at the onset of the interview) to ensure the clarity of the interview focus on the coaching outcomes I was looking to explore, it became clear, after reviewing the data of these two pilot participants, that they still had quite a different idea of what these moments of transformative insights were. To account for such potential differences in understanding during the data collection phase around the meaning of transformative insight, I added two additional questions to my interview protocol (i.e., "How do you make sense of what these moments are?" and "How do you make sense of how these moments come about?"). As these questions were posed at the very beginning of the interview (before going into the actual coaching client case and the vignette), I was not only able to capture how coach-participants understood transformative insight but was, when necessary, also able to bring our conversation focus in alignment with the transformative insights I set out to investigate. Finally, when conducting part 2 of the interview, where the vignette was discussed, the pilot participants indicated that they needed more contextual information about the outlined hypothetical client case (i.e., Richard, based on Howard, 2010). For example, they wondered if Richard was paying for coaching himself and whether an initial kick-off coaching meeting had already occurred. I provided this information in my final protocol to enable a deeper and more meaningful reflection on this hypothetical client case (see Appendix D).

The Vignette

To explore in a more standardized how each participant describes and understands their coaching practices for transformative insight (across one single coaching client case, as compared to multiple client cases, as was the case with the critical incidents), a vignette, or a hypothetical and uniform coaching client case, was used (see Appendix D, based on Howard, 2010). Vignettes help move away from exploring the more retrospective and, possibly, espoused approach made possible by the critical incident coaching cases. They allow for features of a specific situation to be concretely specified and standardized so that the respondent is invited to express his/her opinions and perspectives around a set of particular circumstances instead of expressing his or her “beliefs” or “values” in a vacuum (Finch, 1987; p. 105). The vignette, embedded as an activity in the semi-structured interview, described a coaching client named Richard. Richard is a no-nonsense type of manager who has contributed significantly to his organization but receives feedback from his peers (feedback he does not really understand) that his personal interaction style is affecting the sourcing of candidates for his teams and causing friction in interdepartmental collaboration. This, in turn, is making it increasingly hard for Richard to accomplish his projects and is standing in the way of his promotion. For those reasons, Richard has decided to seek help from an executive coach. The following contextual information was also provided: (1) Richard has sought coaching to prepare for this next phase of his career; (2) Richard is paying for this coaching engagement himself; (3) a kick-off coaching meeting with Richard has already been held in which his coaching objectives and the feedback he has been getting were discussed; and (4) now is the time for the coach to prepare for the coaching sessions themselves and identify how to approach his case. The participants were asked to imagine that they were Richard’s coach and to think about and elaborate on what they think Richard’s dilemmas/challenges are, what kind of “turning points” (i.e., transformative insights)

might help him in resolving his dilemma/challenge, and which coaching practices could facilitate those transformative insights (and why).

The Researcher's Self-Reflective Journal

As a final method used during data collection that brought a perspective to my own process within the research, I kept a written record of my observations, experiences, evolving thoughts, and feelings in the form of a reflective journal during the study, starting with the participant selection process. In this way, I acknowledged and explored the potential influence of my assumptions on the research process, ranging from my interest in the research questions and the way the research was designed and conducted to the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data. Keeping a reflective journal is a common practice in qualitative research (Ortlipp, 2008, p. 695). This is not surprising given that in qualitative research, the researcher is the research instrument making sense of everything that is happening (Maxwell, 2005, p. 79). As a result of this inherent researcher bias, the validity of qualitative conclusions is threatened (Maxwell, 2005, p. 108) if not made transparent and acted upon. Since the issue of researcher bias is particularly applicable in interview-based qualitative research (Ortlipp, 2008) such as this one, and given the fact that it is impossible to eliminate my own theories, beliefs, and perceptual “lens” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 108), keeping a reflective journal throughout the study to understand how the “researcher lens” influences the research and draws conclusions served to help me avoid some of these negative consequences (Maxwell, 2005, p. 108) and maintain transparency throughout the research process (Harrison, MacGibbon & Morton 2001; Ortlipp, 2008).

For the purposes of making this process explicit, I have included the examples of various forms of journaling I used throughout the research process, such as creating drawings, writings, tables, or Dedoose memos in the appendices. I have included the reflections and evolution of my thinking on the theoretical lenses and related concepts used (Appendix K), my conceptual

framework (Appendix L), data analysis (Appendix M) and synthesis (Appendix N), clarifying certain concepts (Appendix O), as well as reflection on my assumptions through conversation with others (Appendix P).

Data Analysis

This section includes an overview of the data analysis methods used to answer the research questions. The data analysis was carried out in three main phases. First, in order to (a) finalize the participant selection process by determining if the participants' forms of mind were within the desired SOI score range and (b) generate the information necessary for answering the second research question about the role of coaches' forms of mind on the practices they use for facilitating transformative insight, the Subject-Object Interviews (SOI) (Lahey et al., 1988) were analyzed. Second, a primarily descriptive analysis of the data from the in-depth, semi-structured interviews, anchored in qualitative critical incidents (addressing an actual coaching scenario per coach) and a vignette (a short and uniform hypothetical client case), was conducted to identify various coaching practices for facilitating transformative insights. Third, comparative developmental analyses of qualitative and quantitative semi-structured interview data were carried out using the outcomes of the Subject-Object Interviews (i.e., the participants' forms of mind). During this phase, I explored the association between the coaches' forms of mind and their experience, perceptions, and descriptions of the coaching practices perceived as helpful for facilitating transformative insights.

As data collection and analysis are interrelated processes (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Creswell, 2007), as soon as the actual data collection began, so did the data analysis process, enabling me to adjust the process as it evolved and ensuring that nothing of relevance was omitted. This reflects an approach of “discovery and one which grounds theory in reality” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; as cited in Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 6).

Phase 1: Form of Mind Assessment—The Subject-Object Interviews

To identify those executive coaches whose forms of mind met the criteria necessary for the study and, specifically, to answer the second research question, it was necessary to ascertain the participants' current form of mind. To do this, Dr. Popp conducted and recorded the SOI interviews. The SOI recordings were transcribed and sent for scoring to two highly experienced, reliable SOI scorers, including Dr. Popp.

The basic unit in the SOI analysis and scoring process is called a “bit,” or an interview excerpt in which there is structural evidence indicating from which position in the evolution of subject-object relations the person constructs his/her reality, allowing the range of possible SOI scores to be narrowed (Lahey et al., 1988). There are 21 possible SOI scores or distinctions in the evolution of subject-object relations covering all five developmental stages, as outlined by Kegan (1982, 1994), and the various, more finely-grained developmental positions. They are: 1, 1(2), 1/2, 2/1, 2(1), 2, 2(3), 2/3, 3/2, 3(2), 3, 3(4), 3/4, 4/3, 4(3), 4, 4(5), 4/5, 5/4, 5(4), 5. Each subsequent score indicates a more complex way of meaning-making (i.e., a more complex form of mind). As outlined by Lahey et al. (1988, p. 26), there are six qualitative transformations from one subject-object balance to another, designated as X, X(Y), X/Y, Y/X, and Y(X). A score of X (i.e., the SOI scores 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) indicates a subject-object balance that is in complete equilibrium, where a person is making meaning fully from that stage. A score of X(Y) indicates that X is the structure organizing a person's experience while a new structure Y is emerging (e.g., the SOI score 3(4)). Scores designated X/Y or Y/X (e.g., the SOI scores 3/4 and 4/3, respectively) indicate developmental positions in disequilibrium where two subject-object structures are operating in close relation to each other. That is, a person with that score is making meaning from both forms of mind (or both stages) at the same time. More specifically, the score of X/Y indicates that while both stages are operating, stage X is dominant, and the score of Y/X indicates that stage Y is dominant. Finally, a score of

Y(X) indicates that Y is the main structure organizing a person's experience with the vestiges of the old structure X still remaining (e.g., the SOI score 4(3)).

To ensure inter-rater reliability, all 21 SOI transcripts were independently analyzed and scored by two experienced and certified SOI scorers (including Dr. Popp). The reliability was defined as agreement within a single substage on both sides of the original score (Lahey et al., 1988). The agreement level between the two scorers on all SOIs using Lahey et al.'s reliability criterion was 100%. The exact score agreement was 90.5%. More specifically, scorers slightly disagreed on two out of 21 SOI scores, both of which were within one single substage or 1/5 of a stage apart (i.e., 4 and 4(3)). The final SOI scores for those two interviews were discussed in detail between the two scorers until the final score for each was agreed upon, the one that was deemed as best representing the interviewee's meaning-making. It was those scores that were used in the data analyses.

This analysis and scoring process allowed me to determine the participants' forms of mind and to which of the three form of mind groupings they belonged. In this way, I was able to conduct a cross-case analysis and compare all the data collected on participants' descriptions of the coaching practices they perceived as helpful for facilitating transformative insight based on shared perspectives from the distinct form of mind groupings I defined.

To minimize any potential intrusion of my assumptions or expectations (i.e., researcher bias) into the data analysis, the participants' SOI scores were only communicated to me by the SOI scorers *after* phase 2 (see below) of the data analysis was completed. During the participant selection process that had to happen before collecting the semi-structured interview data, I was only informed if the participants had the required form of mind, without knowing which SOI score was associated with which participant. I was also informed of the general progress toward filling the form of mind groups to determine whether or not I needed more participants to acquire the ideal sample size and the equal SOI score distribution needed.

Phase 2: Descriptive Qualitative Analysis—In-depth Semi-Structured Interviews (Including the Critical Incidents and the Vignette)

The 90-minute, one-on-one, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the participants were recorded and transcribed. I analyzed the collected data “blind” to the participants’ form of mind (i.e., SOI score). In the first phase, following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) recommendation, I read all 21 participant interviews to familiarize myself with the data and to note any initial ideas that emerged (p. 87). Next, all interviews were uploaded into Dedoose, an online software package for mixed-methods research. I was somewhat acquainted with Dedoose based on my earlier participation in the Action Research class at Teachers College. This allowed me to start the second phase of the thematic data analysis, the initial coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of the coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight, which coach-participants discussed during the interviews. These included the coaching practices from their actual coaching client case (i.e., critical incident) and a short and uniform hypothetical coaching client case (vignette).

Given that the first research question’s focus was on exploring coaching practices at three different levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise), I turned to the existing literature (e.g., Mezirow, 1991; Kember, 1999; Cranton, 2013, 2016; Kember et al., 2000; Kember, McKay, Sinclair, & Wong, 2008; Wallman et al., 2008; Oosterbaan et al., 2010) to clarify the definitions/criteria I would use to guide my coding (see Appendix G for complete coding guidelines). Using those guidelines, I assigned each practice discussed by coach-participants to one of the three levels of reflection and assigned an In Vivo code to each to stay close to the participant’s own words in describing and making meaning of the practice (Saldaña, 2016). With the codes, my focus was on capturing the *intent* of the practice as described by the participant, that is, the practice itself and the reasoning behind using that practice. While this process was based on my review of the literature, at the same time, I was also looking for unusual codes, not initially

anticipated, or codes that addressed a larger theoretical perspective related to the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2009, p. 186).

As the coding progressed, it became clear that not all coaching practices could be considered reflective based on Dewey's (1933) and Mezirow's (1991) definitions of reflection and hence did not belong to any of the three levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise). Also, some practices were not meant for the coaching client (reflection) but were meant to aid the coach herself/himself in navigating the coaching process. For those two sets of practices (i.e., *client-focused*, *non-reflective*, and *coach-focused* practices), I used open coding, a traditional approach in the social sciences (Creswell, 2007, 2009). Open coding is an inductive approach for breaking down and segmenting the data and generating categories of information where the researcher allows the codes to emerge, looks for similar properties, and labels them tentatively (Creswell, 2007, 2009; Saldaña, 2016; Smit, 2002). During this first coding cycle, to aid the data analysis process and to facilitate the process of analytic insight into ideas or any emerging patterns or themes, after each of the interviews, I wrote down my reflections or observations in the form of analytic memos (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005).

During the second coding cycle, I reviewed the initial coding of the data set. First, I made sure that the boundary between *reflective* and *non-reflective* coaching practices (Mezirow, 1991; 2000; Oosterbaan et al., 2010; Wallman et al., 2008) was clear and strictly maintained, as well as the boundary between the practices that were meant directly for the coaching clients themselves (i.e., *client-focused* practices), and those for the coach (i.e., *coach-focused* practices). Second, for reflective practices, using the memos and learning generated during the first coding cycle, I revisited the categorization of practices into the three levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise) and recategorized them where necessary. Finally, I looked at the codes assigned to each practice and adjusted them where required so the main features of each practice were clearly captured.

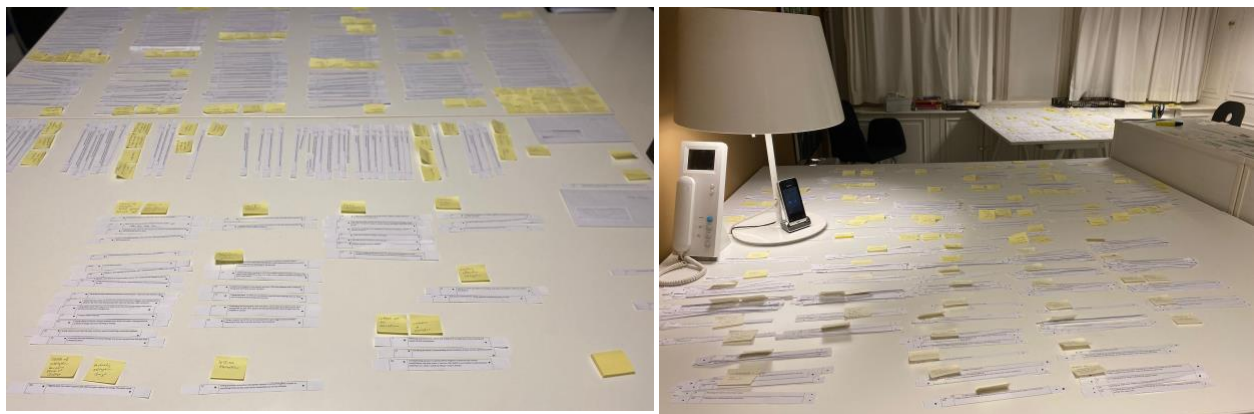
Following the second coding cycle, during which a long list of codes was generated across the data set, I moved on to the third phase of the thematic data analysis—searching for themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Given the large data set (21 participant interviews) and a high number of codes (819 codes were assigned to the various coaching practices across all categories), to aid the process of sorting codes into themes and theme identification, I printed and cut out all the codes so that each individual piece contained one code representing one coaching practice. And while the main focus of the first research question was on exploring client-focused coaching practices at three different levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise), I wanted to make sure to capture and analyze *all* coaching practices participants discussed, including the non-reflective ones (but client-focused) and the ones that were not directly meant for/directed toward the client but were meant to aid coaches themselves during the facilitation of coaching (i.e., coach-focused practices). Therefore, I also included those two sets of practices in this theme identification phase.

To find commonalities and differences between codes and to move codes around into potential overarching theme “piles,” I laid out all the codes per category: (1) *client-focused reflective* coaching practices—(1a) content, (1b) process, and (1c) premise reflection coaching practices; (2) *client-focused non-reflective* coaching practices; and (3) *coach-focused* practices, one category per table (see Figure 3.2 below). In this way, distinct themes emerged per each of these categories. Some codes that initially did not fit into any of the themes were set aside in a “miscellaneous” pile and revisited and clustered later (Braun & Clarke, 2006). All the themes and sub-themes were reviewed and refined multiple times (phase 4 of Braun and Clarke’s thematic analysis—reviewing themes). This iterative process helped me find higher-level synergies between the initial themes. Sometimes, I found a new way to name the (sub)theme to represent the data better, and I sometimes found a reinterpretation that better fit the interview excerpt itself. This way, another filtering of (sub)themes took place; the findings began to sharpen, and new and stronger themes emerged. Once I had found

a satisfactory thematic map of all of my data, I narrowed in on the final, concise title for each of the (sub)themes, which well represented each code included in that thematic cluster. I wrote those titles on post-it notes above each of the (sub)theme clusters (phase 5 of Braun and Clarke’s thematic analysis—defining and naming themes). Finally, to provide an initial overview of the findings, I constructed a report (phase 6 of Braun and Clarke’s thematic analysis—producing the report) listing each of the final (sub)themes, their definitions, and summaries, the specific practices the coaches used, as well as the intent behind them.

Figure 3.2

The Thematic Coding Process of Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight



This thematic coding process led to a more granular understanding of the guidelines I used during the coding, the specific definitional spaces that emerged, and a reduction in the number of themes and sub-themes. During this process, I was constantly checking the data against the theoretical definitions and taking notes in my researcher’s journal about how I was making sense of them based on the examination of the interview data.

Upon completing the thematic analysis of the interview data, I translated these groupings into a representative hierarchy of the final coding scheme in Dedoose. While reassigning hundreds of codes into thematic clusters was a time-consuming, tedious process, it was a necessary one that

allowed me not only to look at the data qualitatively in terms of themes but also explore the prevalence of data within each thematic category within and across participants. I also anticipated this as relevant for answering research question 2, in which the influence of a coach's form of mind on the kind of coaching practices they use for facilitating transformative insight was explored.

Phase 3: Developmental Analysis—Forms of Mind

During the third and final data phase of data analysis, the two independent SOI scorers finalized their analyses of the SOI transcripts and shared the participants' SOI scores with me. This allowed me to conduct the developmental analysis necessary to answer the second research question, that is, an analysis of the relationship between the coaches' forms of mind and their descriptions of the coaching practices perceived as helpful for facilitating transformative insights. The developmental analysis was based on the analysis of all the descriptive qualitative data (i.e., the data analysis phase 2) related to the outcomes of the Subject-Object Interviews data (i.e., the data analysis phase 1).

To identify any patterns in the ways in which coaches' forms of mind related to the main variable of interest, the cases (i.e., the coaches' data) were grouped into the four final form of mind categories: (1) Socializing transitioning *toward* a Self-authoring form of mind (i.e., coaches with the SOI scores of 3(4) or 3/4); (2) Self-authoring transitioning *away from* Socializing form of mind (i.e., coaches with the SOI scores of 4/3 or 4(3)); and (3) *Fully* Self-authoring form of mind (i.e., coaches with the SOI score of 4). I looked for both the emerging patterns *within* the form of mind category groups and the differences *across* coaches from different form of mind categories. More specifically, I looked for qualitatively different ways these coaches understood and described their transformative insight coaching practices and how their experiences, perceptions, and descriptions might relate to their forms of mind. Example analytic questions included: Are there any differences in the coaches' descriptions and understanding of transformative coaching practices across various forms of mind?

If so, what are those differences? Are there any similarities? However, not all analytic questions were prespecified to allow for unexpected patterns to emerge and to let the data and the discovery guide the analysis process.

Validity, Reliability, and Threats

Inherent to conducting a qualitative research study such as this is the fact that the researcher is rarely in a position to “control for” plausible threats to validity before the start of the research (Maxwell, 2005, p. 107). This is compared to what is possible in quantitative studies through, for example, using “standard” means such as quantitative measurements and statistical manipulations or direct replication (Maxwell, 2005; Robson, 2002). Nevertheless, “determining reliability and validity remains the qualitative researcher’s goal” (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 168, as cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 41), and there are a variety of methods available for ensuring the rigor, trustworthiness, and usefulness of a qualitative study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Maxwell, 2005; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Yin, 2009).

To ensure the qualitative reliability or consistency of my approach and procedures, I prioritized several reliability procedures to minimize errors and biases (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2009). First, I operationalized and documented as many steps of the research process as possible, as I am doing here, to allow the procedures to be replicated with the same results (Yin, 2009) in a later study. As Yin suggested, the data collection phase involved using case study protocols containing procedures and general rules to be followed when collecting the data from every single case. Also, an overall case study database was maintained in the form of case study notes and memos, warehousing any observations, narratives, interview notes, or documents, all of which were organized per case to ease search and retrieval. Following Gibbs’s (2007; as cited in Creswell, 2009) recommendations, all the interview transcripts were checked for mistakes, and I worked with one additional coder to open

up my analysis to scrutiny (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) and to allow for cross-checking of codes and ensuring intercoder agreement.

In terms of qualitative validity or “the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 106), I took measures to minimize the two types of threats to validity that are often raised in qualitative research: researcher bias and reactivity (Maxwell, 2005). Researcher bias refers to a researcher’s subjectivity in terms of his/her background (e.g., gender, culture, socioeconomic origin) (Creswell, 2009, p. 192), as well as any existing beliefs, theories, assumptions, rationale, or preconceptions held by the researcher, which can influence the selection of data that “stands out” to them in some way (Maxwell, 2005, p. 108). To ensure there was a clear understanding of how my bias influenced the study (i.e., in conducting the study, collecting and analyzing the data, as well as conclusions drawn), as previously mentioned, I kept a reflective journal throughout the study. This journal contained my open and honest narratives of how my beliefs, values, or perceptual lenses might shape and influence the study. Keeping this journal throughout the study was particularly important given my previous knowledge and the use of the main theoretical lenses involved (i.e., transformative learning, Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000; constructive-developmental theory, Kegan, 1982, 1994) and the practices I currently privilege in executive coaching. Additionally, given the potential similarity in coach background I shared with participants, as well as my more than ten years of active executive coaching experience, all of which could potentially bias the study, keeping the journal helped me be critically self-reflective in maintaining transparency throughout the research and highlighting any issues that could exist.

A more direct way of guarding against researcher bias involved being “blind” to the participants’ forms of mind throughout the data collection. That is, the participants’ SOI scores were not communicated to me until the data collection phase and the first phases of data analyses were completed (e.g., descriptive analyses of participants’ descriptions of coaching practices relevant for

facilitating transformative insights). Being “blind” to the participants’ forms of mind served to help prevent any potential influence, intentional or subconscious, or expectations related to how the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted.

The threat of reactivity refers to my influence as a researcher on the coaches participating in this study (and vice versa) (Maxwell, 2005). While reactivity is less of an issue in participant observation studies, in studies such as this one, where interviewing is the primary method of data collection, reactivity is “a powerful and inescapable influence” as the researcher enters the world of the participant (Maxwell, 2005, p. 109). As such, the most meaningful goal in managing reactivity is understanding how the researcher potentially influences the information participants provide (Maxwell, 2005). Here too, the reflective journal was of help to me. Also, being “blind” to the participants’ forms of mind removed any influence of that knowledge on a potential variability in how I interacted with the participants.

A few other strategies, suggested by Creswell (2009), were implemented to assess the accuracy of the findings and reduce validity threats. First, I used rich, detailed descriptions when communicating the findings, allowing the study outcomes to become more realistic, a process that can add to the validity of the findings (p. 192). Second, peer debriefing was included in the research to support the credibility of the data and establish the trustworthiness of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Spall, 1998). Two peers, both certified Subject-Object Interview scorers and knowledgeable about executive coaching and this study’s theoretical lenses, undertook a critical review of the research and my approaches and were involved in the study. Those peers were explicitly invited into the process of reviewing all parts of the research process and challenging my perspectives, approaches, and interpretations.

Chapter 4: Participants' Introductions and Context

This chapter aims to provide information for framing the understanding of the research findings in Chapter 5 (descriptive findings) on coach practices for facilitating reflection toward transformative insights. As a reminder, transformative insight is defined as those moments in coaching where a client experiences a “turning point” and has a profound change in their understanding of how they view themselves or their relationships with others, how they understand or view the world around them, thereby changing their deeply held beliefs, developing a greater sense of responsibility and perspective-taking, changing their goals for the future, or making major life changes.

More specifically, the purpose of this chapter is three-fold. The first purpose is to introduce this study's coach-participant group through their demographics and individual coach profiles to clarify the coach-participant group from which the practices reported in Chapter 5 originate. The coach profiles include the researcher's reflections on their personalities based on how I experienced them during the semi-structured interviews. The profiles also provide the reader with basic coach background information, including nationality, education, coaching credentials, and their general approach to coaching.

This chapter's second purpose was to provide the backdrop from which the coaching practices for facilitating transformative insights occur. Specifically, I give a collective coach portraiture summarizing what this group of 21 executive coaches believed to be important in the process of facilitating reflection toward transformative insight. As such, with this section, I intend to

provide the reader with an overarching context within which coach-participants describe using practices for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight.

Finally, I briefly describe each participant's coaching client case (i.e., critical incident) brought into the discussion of coaching practices based on the online survey and the semi-structured interview data. This was meant to provide (a) the context from which the practices were discussed and (b) a way of confirming that the client cases brought into the study by each coach-participant met the criteria for a transformative insight as defined in this study. This overview includes an anonymized and generalized version of the client's challenge and the related transformative insight the client experienced as a relevant context through which the coaches discussed and shared their coaching practices.

I first present this study sample's relevant demographic information, followed by the coach participants' professional profiles. Next, I provide a group-level portrait of participants' beliefs about what is important in the process of facilitating reflection toward transformative insight. I close this chapter by shortly outlining each participant's coaching client case (i.e., critical incident).

Study Participants' Demographic Information

This study's participant group consisted of a purposive sample of 21 certified external executive coaches with at least three years of active coaching experience who coach primarily in English. They have earned a coaching certification recognized by the International Coaching Federation (ICF) or completed a relevant coaching education or training at an academic institution. They could identify and discuss the specifics of a coaching client case where, in their perspective, the client had experienced a transformative insight.

Key personal and professional demographic characteristics collected from the 21 participants via the online survey at the onset of the data collection process are presented in Table 4.1 below. A pseudonym was used to protect the participants' confidentiality, and the professional organization or

academic institution where the coach did their coach training is not named. To make it easier for the reader, participants are listed in alphabetical order of their pseudonyms, as they will continue throughout the dissertation.

Table 4.1

Participants' Demographic and Professional Information

Pseudonym	Gender	Age Group	Nationality	Highest level of education obtained	Years of Coaching Experience	Academic coach training/ education, or ICF credential (ACC, PCC, MCC)
Albert	M	55–59	Australian + British	Master's degree	12	Academic
Alexandra	F	60–64	Canadian + Dutch	Doctorate	10	PCC
Aleyna	F	45–49	Lebanese	Bachelor's degree	3	ACC
Anita	F	55–59	American	Associate degree	13	PCC
Audrey	F	60–64	Israeli + South African	Bachelor's degree	15	PCC
Catharina	F	60–64	Dutch	Master's degree	15	Academic
Charlotte	F	45–49	Dutch + British	Master's degree	11	Academic
Daivat	M	45–49	Indian	Master's degree	9	Academic
Dara	F	70–74	American	Doctorate	22	Academic
Elizabeth	F	30–34	American	Doctorate	11	Academic
Eva	F	50–54	American	Master's Degree	8	PCC
Gabriella	F	45–49	American	Doctorate	18	Academic
a	M	70–74	American	Master's degree	25	PCC
Hải	M	50–54	Vietnamese	Doctorate	19	PCC
Justine	F	50–54	American	Bachelor's degree	5	ACC
Margaret	F	70–74	Dutch	Master's degree	25	MCC
Robert	M	55–59	American	Doctorate	11	PCC
Sandra	F	55–59	American	Bachelor's degree	7	PCC
Valéria	F	45–49	Portuguese	Master's degree	5	Academic
Viola	F	50–54	American	Master's degree	10	MCC
William	M	55–59	British + Swedish	Doctorate	20	Academic

As Table 4.1 shows, the sample of 21 participants consisted of 15 female coaches (71.43%) and 6 male coaches (28.57%). As for their age categories at the time of the study, one

coach was between 30–35 years of age (4.76%), five coaches were between 45–49 years of age (23.81%), four coaches were between 50–54 years of age (19.05%), five coaches between 55–59 years of age (23.81%), three coaches between 60–64 years of age (14.29%), and three coaches between 70–74 years of age (14.29%). This means that 15 coaches, or 71.43% of the research sample, were 50 or older.

Various national cultures were represented in the research sample. As can be seen in Table 4.1, the national cultures the coaches identified with were Australian, British, Canadian, Dutch, American, Indian, Israeli, Swedish, South African, Lebanese, Portuguese, and Vietnamese. Approximately half of the sample were American nationals (47.62%). Five coaches indicated they identified strongly with two national cultures.

In terms of the highest educational degrees completed by the coaches, one participant had completed an associate degree (4.76%), four participants had completed a bachelor's degree (19.05%), and nine had completed a master's degree (42.85%). Out of these nine, two participants had two master's degrees, one of whom was also a doctoral candidate working on their dissertation, and one participant had completed an MBA. Finally, seven participants held a doctorate (33.33%). Overall, 16 participants (76.19%) had completed a graduate level of education (a master's degree or higher).

Looking at the years of active coaching experience in the research sample, the coaches had an average of 13 years of experience, ranging from 3 to 25 years. More specifically, three coaches had 3–5 years of experience (14.29%, where three years was the minimum necessary to participate in the study); five coaches had 6–10 years of experience (23.81%); seven coaches had 11–15 years of experience (33.33%); three coaches had 16–20 years of experience (14.29%), and in the final category, three coaches reported having 21–25 years of experience (14.29%).

Another view on the professional background coaches bring to coaching can be seen in the credentialing coaches reported having. To participate in the study, coaches had to either have earned a credential from the International Coaching Federation (ICF) or completed their coach training or education at an academic institution. A review of the participants' coaching credentials data showed that nine participants had completed their coach training or education at an academic institution (42.86%). For privacy reasons, those universities' names will not be associated with the individual coach profiles. However, to provide context, the participants completed their coach training or coaching(-related) educational programs at the following academic institutions: The University of Sydney (Australia), INSEAD (France), Columbia University (United States of America), Fielding Graduate School (United States of America), Oxford Brookes University (United Kingdom), Henley Business School (United Kingdom), and the University College Cork (Ireland).

These nine participants reported that they had not pursued a professional-level credential from the International Coaching Federation (ICF). The other 12 participants (57.14%) reported having achieved at least one level of professional credentialing with ICF: two had earned the credential of Associate Certified Coach (ACC, 9.52%); eight had earned the next-level Professional Certified Coach (PCC, 38.10%) credential; and two participants reported holding the highest-level credential of Master Certified Coach (MCC, 9.52%). In Table 4.2 below, the requirements for each of the three ICF credentials are described as they were listed on the International Coaching Federation website on November 18, 2022.

Table 4.2*International Coaching Federation Credential Levels and Requirements*

Credential Level	Requirements
Associate Certified Coach (ACC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 60 hours of coach-specific education or training - A minimum of 100 hours of client coaching experience - 10 hours of mentor coaching over a minimum of three months - The applicant has passed a performance assessment of their coaching and a computer-based written exam delivered by ICF Credentials and Standards.
Professional Certified Coach (PCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 125 hours of coach-specific education or training - A minimum of 500 hours of client coaching experience - 10 hours of mentor coaching over a minimum of three months - The applicant has passed a performance assessment of their coaching and a computer-based written exam delivered by ICF Credentials and Standards.
Master Certified Coach (MCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 200 hours of coach-specific education or training - A minimum of 2,500 hours (2,250 paid) of coaching experience with at least 35 clients, following the start of your coach-specific education or training - 10 hours of mentor coaching over a minimum of three months - Performance evaluation (two audio recordings and written transcripts of coaching sessions to be uploaded with your application) - The applicant has passed the ICF Credentialing exam

Coach Professional Profiles

In this part of Chapter 4, I introduce the 21 coaches in my research sample in more depth by providing a profile of each coach. These descriptions include key personal and professional characteristics to bring understanding and clarity to the coaching focus or “style” a coach uses.

Albert

Albert is a relaxed, curious, and contemplative executive coach, with British-Australian nationality, in his early to mid-60s. He has been coaching for 12 years. Albert has a master’s degree in a coaching-related discipline and, as such, draws on his academic education as a credential in the field.

In describing his approach to coaching, Albert emphasizes the need for co-creation between the coach and client and the key roles played by context, safety, readiness, and scaffolding in the process. He speaks of how both the client and he, as a coach, must show “willingness,” “bravery,” and “courage” to “hold and not release the tension” but to allow the tension to “push us without actually distressing the coachee.” In doing so, he identifies how clients “explore ways of making sense of things that they previously haven’t” and how, as a result, there is “something emerging, a kind of solution, a way of looking at things, that neither of us brought into the room.” However much a coach may create this context and process, Albert states that productive use of that tension depends on the client, saying, “In the end, they have to have the courage to walk into it. You can’t have that on their behalf.”

Alexandra

Alexandra is a generous, indomitable, and forthright female coach, with Canadian-Dutch nationality, in her early to mid-60s. Alexandra has been coaching for ten years and has a doctorate. She has also earned the PCC credential from the International Coaching Federation (ICF).

In describing her approach to coaching, Alexandra emphasized using a process-based approach, describing her role as a coach as “helping [the client] achieve goals; that’s kind of my mantra.” To do this, she taps into a “large toolbox” she has built over the last 25 years, using a few tried and true elements in a responsive, client-tailored process. How she customizes the engagement “really depends on what the client’s goals are, what I perceive to be some of the areas that they need to work on and really kind of focusing and honing [sic] in on that.” In setting the context for coaching, Alexandra shares the challenges with clients as them “wanting the coach to do the work” or being “emotionally afraid” or hesitating because “they don’t want to be someone else as a result of working with a coach” are important for her to address. Reflecting further on her approach, she expresses that in some cases, she shows up for clients by being a “sounding board” or taking more

of an “advisory role” when a client requests that, even though it is “not your traditional coaching,” she feels it is “up to the client to determine agenda ... and value,” which she is okay with, although “maybe some coaches won’t be.” In all cases, she focuses on “trying to take the conversations deeper” to facilitate the “conversation or the change in understanding or belief to a certain point.”

Aleyna

Aleyna is an energetic, assertive, and winsome female executive coach, of Lebanese nationality, in her mid to late 40s. Aleyna has a bachelor’s degree. She has been coaching for three years and has earned the ACC credential from the ICF.

In describing her coaching approach, Aleyna sees her role as “the catalyst that allows the client to flourish into his full potential,” sharing the example of a client who needed her “to really turn on the lights. [The client] felt she had shackles on her foot, and she could not move.” Moving into coaching after 25 years of corporate experience, Aleyna draws on her own C-suite and corporate experience. Coach-client rapport and chemistry are important to her, and she refers clients elsewhere if she doesn’t sense chemistry. While compassionate, funny, and intuitive, Aleyna can also be firm with clients in challenging them to step out of their comfort zone. She strives to develop a relationship of trust, show compassion, and include attention to growing a client’s confidence and ability to empathize. Less comfortable working with emotions, she will address them but finds that by parking them, the course of coaching often resolves the emotional issues.

Anita

Anita is a sincere, approachable, and sensitive executive coach of American nationality in her mid to late 50s. Anita has an associate degree. She has been coaching for 13 years and earned the ICF’s PCC credential.

In describing her approach to coaching, Anita describes working “outside-in” with the client and not having a goal in mind during coaching. Instead, she allows the client to “guide me, letting go

of my agenda, trusting whatever I am feeling and bringing into that session” in line with the tactical space that is important to the client and clarifying that she is “giving [the client] permission to be who he was.” Anita believes in keeping session intervals consistent and having time together full of silence and space so the client can hear himself talk. She is curious to understand where a client is “at, what they have been processing, what they are noticing, what has shifted.” Concerned with the actual person, she addresses the need for coherence between action, heart, and mind, asks how clients “feel knowing the perception held about them,” and asks them to connect with how they would instead want to feel. Calling herself a “purist” regarding coach development and coaching presence, Anita is conscious of needing to practice what she preaches as a coach, committing herself to the belief that “there’s no end to the depth of our ability to be present. We can never learn that enough; the scales are so deep. So how much are we still learning and developing?”

Audrey

Audrey is a discerning, composed, and gracious executive coach, with Israeli/South African nationality, in her early to mid-60s. Audrey has a bachelor’s degree. She has been coaching for 15 years and earned the ICF PCC certification.

In describing her approach to coaching, Audrey shares her primary focuses as “providing a safe space for exploration and vulnerability with complete trust,” “being a true partner with the client, allowing the emergence of new pathways and maintaining equality,” and “holding the mirror and using direct communication when appropriate.” Audrey further explains: “I think I’ve learned more and more how important it is not to give, but to ask and let things emerge rather than bring my knowledge in.” Bringing focus to her role in the process then relates to “sitting back without analyzing,” “being humble,” and her “motto of showing up around being completely present and giving the client [her] full attention,” using “encouragement, empathy, and minimal judgment.” She discusses how she sees coaching as “not a polite conversation over coffee. This is a conversation

with a goal. And so that's the container.... My goal is to be my best for them, to be the best coach I can be for them....”

Catharina

Catharina is a poised, pragmatic, and straightforward executive coach, with Dutch nationality, in her early to mid-60s. She has a master's degree and has been coaching for 15 years.

In describing her coaching approach, Catharina has a strong focus on a client's goal achievement. In her experience, trust and rapport are key between the coach and the client. She further describes that a client's ability to open up, handle confrontation, and feel motivated are key ingredients a client brings to coaching. As for facilitation, Catharina describes having developed a “sort of blended learning” style, focusing strongly on understanding “what makes a client tick” and, as much as possible, working on balancing confidence as it relates to the learning process, which can mean “building up” confidence or being “confrontational” to break through too much confidence. Catharina describes her preference for experimentation and evaluation, applying learning in other situations, and supplementing coaching with skill-based learning from an external executive workshop or class. Catharina has further found that blending the coach role with that of an advisor is helpful because “sometimes it's not just about listening and letting people come up with solutions, but it's giving them solutions yourself, which I tried to avoid in the beginning, but later, I just started to doing it because it really helps people, shouldn't be the only way, of course, but it can be very practical.”

Charlotte

Charlotte is a witty, down-to-earth, and eloquent female executive coach, with Dutch-British nationality, in her mid to late 40s. Charlotte has a master's degree in a coaching-related discipline and has been coaching for 11 years.

In describing her approach to coaching, Charlotte keeps the client's agenda top of mind, asking herself, "How does this link to the agenda? Is the agenda still valid? Do we need to reexamine it? Do I need to go back to it for them and say, 'You know, are we working towards the right thing here?' It has to be in the service of what they need to achieve, not what I think is possible for them to achieve." Charlotte characterizes the process she uses as being driven by "going by my gut" and "a really big toolkit of things. I just match them to [client] preferences as much as I do to their need and their relevance and timeliness of them; I guess it is experience, yeah, so there's no formula." She sees her role as creating a space for trust and psychological safety. She does this in order to "really go the whole way into the question and allowing all options to come out and consider them truthfully and wholly." This includes supporting and following a client in their process, "so not pushing, not coming across as if you have expectations of them and just encouraging them and also holding them to account."

Daivat

Daivat is a quick-thinking, no-nonsense, and earnest executive coach of Indian nationality in his mid to late 40s. He has a master's degree and has been coaching for nine years.

In describing his approach to coaching, Daivat states that his style is based on his experience in sales, leadership, and consulting and his belief that the personal relationships he builds with clients are critical to the success of coaching. He is willing to travel to meet a client to set the stage for trust and context before he "takes [coaching] to the next level" of discovery and understanding the client's needs, practices, and dilemmas. He sees his role as focusing less on the goal itself and more on the client's progress toward their goal, saying,

I don't necessarily follow a playbook like many other coaches. So, how I look at a goal is to say, "Have they gone from step one to step two, and then from step two to step three, and have they got success?" So, I help them define those. And to me, if they are making progress, and they're not going back, to me, that's a good goal to go after, and it gives a lot of satisfaction to the coach that the client is transforming.

Cutting to the chase with clients and understanding they have a need and desire “to be the hero of the conversation,” much of his focus is on targeted support and positive reinforcement for clients. As part of his practice of helping clients focus on the process of change around their goals, he includes a bit of advice in his approach, saying, “and that’s where I also think that I put on a bit of a consulting hat as well and just not stay as a coach. And I think that in my practice, I do that, and that has helped a lot to really accelerate the process of testing things out.”

Dara

Dara is an empathic, diligent, and value-oriented female coach, with American nationality, in her early to mid-70s. She has a doctorate and has been coaching for 22 years.

In describing her approach to coaching, Dara reveals that “99%” of her clients “feel restricted by how they are” and that her focus, going into coaching, relates to the idea that “every time I show up, am I showing up with ... the belief [that] people can change, I believe in all this stuff.... And I have to be present enough to be able to capture that in the moment” and “coach them right at that very minute.” Seeing coaches and herself as instruments has been a key shift for her, and she relates that this requires “a high level of attention.” She focuses on “anticipation,” “holding the conditionals,” and “not jumping to conclusions or solutions” and brings a focus to energy, influence, contextual awareness, and somatics as additional “data points.” Dara states that in the last few years, she’s adapted her style from privileging appreciative forms of inquiry to expanding a client’s perspective to now, also bringing the change process into her coaching engagements as a key component of her approach. Dara also focuses less on the idea of goals themselves “because goals usually go with a problem-solving approach” and is instead inviting and addressing client priorities and vision during coaching.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth is a virtuous, conscientious, and steadfast coach, with American nationality, in her early to mid-30s. She has a doctorate and has been coaching for 11 years.

In describing her approach to coaching, Elizabeth sketches a very clear and client-centered picture of walking side-by-side with her clients, of not getting ahead of them. She describes the clear and disciplined measures she takes to educate herself about and reduce the influence of the coach on the coaching process: “I take my role very seriously and feel that I’m always needing to be one step ahead of myself and my own temptations to best serve my client.” While on occasion she may share some of her own experience in a client conversation, she makes disciplined use of meditative, grounding, and priming practices to let go of her experience and open her mind and heart to fully hosting the end-to-end coaching process. Elizabeth describes inviting the client to share their needs and preferences, explore the signals and portals that may hold vital information for their process, and empower themselves to create a process driven by their needs, preferences, interests, and energy. Prioritizing inquiry, reflection, and ethical practices, Elizabeth describes the many ways and principles upon which she builds safety, commitment, and involvement and shows empathy and compassion, thereby earning the right to bring to light the key—and often painful—dilemmas related to what her client wants and needs to bring focus to.

Eva

Eva is a strong, initiative-taking, learning-oriented coach, with American nationality, in her early to mid-50s. She has two master’s degrees. Eva has been coaching for eight years and has earned the PCC certification from the ICF.

In describing her approach to coaching, as client-driven practices she finds helpful in expanding awareness in coaching, Eva tells the interest she has in understanding and mitigating the influence she has on the coaching process, for example, by being aware of the need to be silent in

support of the client process or the possibility that exists to check in with her own inner voice or ego. She remembers those moments in her early years of coaching when she was searching for the “right question,” and she reports that they come naturally now.

Gabriella

Gabriella is a charitable, resourceful, and versatile coach, of American nationality, in her mid to late 40s. She has a doctorate and has been coaching for 18 years.

In describing her approach to coaching, Gabriella emphasizes the importance of having a coaching stance of “presence” and “pure intent” to create a trusting relationship, sharing that “genuinely caring,” “genuinely not judging,” and genuinely “wanting the best” for clients is something clients pick up and is key to the focus she brings to coaching. She shares,

I do think there is a generosity of spirit and a commitment to, sort of, someone leaving with their self-worth intact and holding their goodness, which doesn't mean that they can't act badly, or that you're not critical, but there's something that's deeper about, you know, something that, that I would say is important.

In facilitating the coaching process, Gabriella gives attention to finding a balance between a client's need to talk through experience and be acknowledged for their perspective and her role of challenging them to look at other perspectives as well.

George

George is an artful, authentic, and warm-hearted male coach of American nationality in his early to mid-70s. He has two master's degrees and a PCC credential from the International Coaching Federation. George has been coaching for 25 years.

In describing his approach to coaching, George speaks about building on the seasoned experience he had developed in using a more traditional coaching approach. He adds that, more recently, he has been integrating a more explicit focus on development and a fuller version of his own authenticity in coaching. Seeing coaching as a “healing and wholing” profession that helps people, George balances how he facilitates a structured process, rhythm, and momentum and

prioritizes creating the coappendtext and opportunities for psychological depth and perspective to emerge and be attended to. In George's experience, "pushing" a client can be tricky. He feels, "in most instances, I think the nudge is better than the push, and then it just, uh, and people can discover it for themselves better." He is "occasionally provocative" and "probably made some mistakes in that area" because if clients don't have the background to deal with conflict or provocation, "they'll just resist it silently; it would be a passive-aggressive thing." In his more recent coaching, George takes more liberty to bring his own flavor to coaching and is open with clients from the outset about his signature style, including "I use more poetry. I'll quote poetry more often" and "I've always used narrative techniques, but I might have them expanded more.... I work with those deeper emotions of betrayal, forgiveness, permission, you know?"

Hải

Hải is a peaceful, perceptive, and unwavering male executive coach with Vietnamese nationality in his low to mid-50s. He has a doctorate and has been coaching for 19 years.

In describing his approach to coaching, Hải shares his particular focus on facilitating "mindful leadership" and the practices of breathing, mindfulness meditation, paying attention to where the emotional blocks are in the body, moving from the thinking mind to the feeling body, and using gentle but direct inquiring and curiosity to provide clients with this type of coaching process. Hải describes compassion, empathy, "non-attachment," willingness to take risks, vulnerability (which he defines as "the capacity to feel painful feelings"), willingness to experiment, having a willingness not to know what is going on, willingness to engage in a "surprising question" that comes "from out of left field" as being important for the coach, and the client, to embody in coaching. As a coach, he feels having "a certain level of sensitivity of both witnessing and listening" is key, for example, in how he needs to be "willing to sit there and be with the pain that the client is in? You know, not to rush the client through, not to push the client through, uh, or when the client

is going through a painful ‘aha’ have the capacity to be with that pain and not pull the client out of it.” Hâi says that a coach’s training is important to the process, as “when we go into uncharted territory with the clients, we cannot rely on just some techniques. I think it requires a combination of deep empathy, deep compassion, a lot of patience, the willingness to accept the client as he is and, uh, and not go too quickly into the doing.” He shares his belief in the need a coach to “do deep work with herself or himself. Not just relying on coaching skills, but actually, go to oneself; then one can really truly be of service.”

Justine

Justine is a considerate, compassionate, and social justice-driven female executive coach with American nationality in her low to mid-50s. She has a bachelor’s degree. Justine has been coaching for five years and has an ACC credential from the ICF.

In describing her approach to coaching, Justine identifies her style as strengths-based, pragmatic, and appreciative. Justine’s approach is strongly inquiry-focused, driven by an open-minded curiosity, and actively celebrates the “humanness” in the diverse client journeys she is part of. Holding space and witnessing another individual’s lived experience is a key and meaningful approach for Justine in her coaching. Justine has also been actively integrating her personal interest in anti-racist learning into her professional practices in coaching, and this holds important meaning for her. “I mean ... for me, my own personal journey professionally and personally has been more, what’s the word I’m looking for, practical and experiential versus academic. And so, my coaching style is much more that way.” Justine describes developing her approach at this point in her career as “I tend to explore the world in a way that’s nonlinear and seek knowledge through podcasts.” And

I mean, like I said, my most recent exploration through an actual educational class is related to my anti-racist practice building, and it was about Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome and with Dr. Joy DeGruy. And so, that is part of my journey of tools, which is, if I’m working with a woman, holding the space for their experience with sexism in their career development. And if I’m working with a person of color, holding the space of yes, structural

racism in America is real. And how has that impacted you, and what are ways to move through that?

Margaret

Margret is a mindful, kind-hearted, and secure female executive coach with Dutch nationality in her early to mid-70s. She has a master's degree and has been coaching for 25 years. She has an MCC credential from the ICF.

In describing her approach to coaching, Margaret describes the relationship between coach and client as being fundamental to practices for facilitating turning points, with trust and co-creation at the heart of this process, sharing, "It is by thinking together about the process that things shift. It's fascinating, but yeah, that's how it works," as well as "patience," "firmness," and "confrontation" being expressed by the coach. While clients "formulate a goal," Margaret sees her role as a coach in this process as "more to let them shine, fuel, feel strength, feel what's important, feel what really matters. Get to the essence of things." Sharing the difference between her role now as a coach, in this being her "second career," and her first career as a clinical psychologist, Margaret explains how in coaching, you have to trust "the client has the answer, that you have to be able to keep listening and stay silent until it unfolds," while in psychotherapy, the role is more from "an expert point of view" who has "more kind of an idea of what should happen."

Robert

Robert is a valiant, venerable, and thoughtful male executive coach with American nationality in his mid to late 50s. He has a doctorate. Robert has been coaching for 11 years and has a PCC credential from the ICF.

In describing his approach to coaching, Robert explains the attention he brings to the process, the context, and the person offers portals to a greater understanding that operates under the surface of what a client shares as their initial challenge, situation, or self. Robert feels that showing up in his role with trust, being non-judgmental, showing unconditional positive love, giving things

time, and providing structure to access the deeper challenges and opportunities help clients move away from the “template” they have been using to learn about a new environment and work, understanding how “wedded” clients are to old ways, and what loss they associate with change. He works with clients to identify what is working and not working for them; attending to “backsliding or some re-engagement of old behavior” are key examples of practices that then get “weaved” into the client narrative of “getting what they desire or want to resolve.” He expresses that these practices aim to have the client “see” and not for him to direct the client “to get to that place” and for the client to ask themselves, “Where is this going to get [me] in the end?”

Sandra

Sandra is an innovative, hard-working, and high-minded female executive coach with American nationality in her mid to late 50s. She has a bachelor’s degree, a PCC credential from the ICF, and has been coaching for seven years.

In describing her approach to coaching, Sandra speaks of how much of it has been borne by adapting the practices and tools that she has had personal experience with. She describes the philosophy behind her approach as having been borne after years of giving corporate training to leaders and managers. She explains that she went into coaching after realizing, “All right. This training was absolutely excellent. Why doesn’t it stick?... How is it that I could just spend all that money on executive leadership training, and we still have the same problems that we had, you know, five years ago?” She goes on to describe how she has learned that making things stick sits in “this little space, the space between I know what I want to do in this situation and the situation is actually happening in front of me. There is a space in there, and that is where coaching works.” Elaborating more on where that space is, she shares her understanding that digging deeper behind what the client initially “thought was the problem” is an important practice because, in the end, something else will emerge, making the initial problem “not the problem, after all.”

Valéria

Valéria is a gentle, inquisitive, and respectful female executive coach with Portuguese nationality in her mid to late 40s. She has a master's degree and has been coaching for five years.

In describing her approach to coaching, Valéria shares her philosophy that “the goal ultimately is always to grow. There is a more surface-level goal, which ties in with whatever problem the client brings to you, and however they describe it. And then there is a more profound goal, which is to just grow as a person.” Valéria describes the importance of trust, compassion, attending to vulnerability, safety, and “making sure not to overwhelm” as cornerstones of her practice.

She describes facilitating turning points through inquiry, values work, role-playing, role-reversal, envisioning, metaphors, life history, somatic breathing, and asking a client to vent and express themselves fully. In these and other practices, Valéria speaks of bringing awareness to context, contrasting parts of a client, a client's body language, by reflecting themes back to them, pointing out contradictions, and breaking through logical thinking. Her own experience and awareness are also key themes for her. She emphasizes that “the biggest shifts that I have been making in my practice have to do with being more conscious of what I am noticing,” “identifying it and then just using it, giving it back to the clients and asking questions about it.”

Viola

Viola is a passionate, brave, and charismatic female executive coach with American nationality in her early to mid-50s. She has a master's degree in business. Viola has been coaching for ten years and has an MCC credential from the ICF.

In describing her approach to coaching, Viola describes her signature style as being energetic, somatic, and spiritual. Infusing her engagements with a selection of developmental tools, Viola's approach draws strongly on emergent and experiential practices that trigger self-awareness, experimentation, and reflection around investigating “truth,” an approach and style Viola is honest

and forthright about with clients from the very beginning. Viola speaks of her intention to help clients connect with “excitement,” “motivation,” “intensity,” “vulnerability,” a feeling of being “seen,” and the feeling of being “open and hungry for learning.” She brings attention to “presence” and “intensity” during dialogue, both in checking in about the client’s experience and sharing how she is receiving the client’s presence and intensity and the coach-client relationship.

William

William is a strategic, adept, and benevolent male coach with British and Swedish nationality in his mid to late 50s. He has a doctorate and has been coaching for 20 years.

In describing his approach to coaching, William shares that the goal he has in mind during coaching is “to create as much opportunity for reflection as possible.” Using practices that he describes as being inviting, understanding, semi-therapeutic (for which he has education and training), “provocative,” and instinctual, William shares how he doesn’t shy away from “taking quite a lot of risk” in his practices but with consideration and steadiness focused on “psychological development.” William focuses on exposing the space where his client’s beliefs and behaviors do not add up. It is in this space of vulnerability, “self-sabotage,” and “self-deception” that it becomes evident to a client (the client is “cornered”) that a transformative insight can shine a light on the path forward. He also finds it important to take time to build trust, connection, a deeply personal relationship (without “colluding,” he points out), vulnerability, and discussion around ambivalence and unconscious defaults.

Participants’ Beliefs on What’s Important in the Process of Facilitating Transformative Insight in Coaching

In this part of Chapter 4, I summarize what this group of coaches believes is essential in the process of facilitating reflection toward transformative insight. This is meant to provide a collective coach portraiture and a backdrop behind the reflective practices they are using, which I will report in Chapter 5 across the three levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, premise). I created this

summary by analyzing and synthesizing all 21 participant coaches' responses to the question: "How do you make sense of how these moments [of transformative insight] come about?" This provides an overarching and supplementary context for understanding the findings in Chapter 5.

Preparing the Soil so that the Plant Can Grow

The first main important belief coaches hold about creating a fertile space for facilitating transformative insight related to the need to "prepare the soil if you want the plant to grow" (Valéria), indicating that it is more of an evolving process rather than an isolated event that happens in a given moment. As Margaret puts it, working in this space is about "waiting for the step-by-step unfolding" as people find "wisdom about their own lives." Alexandra, too, believes that there should be an "emphasis on the process, not a moment," something echoed in Valéria's perspective as well:

And it is a little bit like you are putting something in that piggy bank, as a coach, you are trying to put, add things to that piggy bank, hoping that the client gets to a point where they are like, "Oh, okay, I got it now."... In my case, I tend to be more listening and supporting and compassionate, other people use a more challenging style, which suits their clients well, but the building up kind of, it is like, you need to prepare the soil if you want the plant to grow.

Being the Midwife: Stay in the Process and Trust that Good Things Will Happen

Coaches also discussed the stances they believe are important to take in facilitating transformative insight. They shared their view on the partnership of coach and client being one of co-creation where the coach stands alongside the client, seeing the process and allowing the client process to unfold "towards a finish line to find something that was previously unavailable to them" (Albert). As Margaret said,

In coaching, it is really asking and also trusting that the client has the answer that you have to be able to keep listening and stay silent until it unfolds. I always compare it with being a midwife ... you have to stay there and don't push too much but stay in the process and trust that good things will happen.

Taking an approach of more challenge with his clients, George works from a similar process of trust and distance, yet sits in the client experience differently, "allowing and igniting and

provoking and evoking and drawing out those energies that are there always right under awareness, but ready to be brought to awareness” in order to bring the process to fruition. Alexandra talked about “dancing in the moment with the client” in co-creation, and William spoke about “getting the job done together,” which is a key expression of these themes. This idea of the coach showing up for the client and being in the process along with the client to “help them make the finish line” in their process or (re)conceptualization was compared to a marathon by Albert:

When I feel that they are starting to conceptualize something in a way that they hadn't been able to conceptualize before, it's almost like a nudge to me to be like the person that runs onto the running track when someone's coming into the marathon, and they're just struggling to make the finishing line, and someone says, “Oh I should get in there and just help them with this.” And then I start to respond that way, that's when I start to sort of think, yeah, this is, you know, they are actually in the process of finding something previously unavailable to them.

Turning the Light On

Coaches find that helping clients look at themselves and the resonance within in new and different ways is an important aspect of their role in facilitating reflection toward transformative insight; that is, to help the clients, as Aleyna calls it, “turn the light on.” Anita expressed this, with both a soft and firm touch, in describing how she actively “hold[s] that deeper space” for clients. Eva and Margaret shared how they use silence to do this, with Sandra describing how difficult silence is in the beginning and how she used to “think that something was wrong” (when she and a client were silent), saying she changed her mind and “now I realize that something is right” in how silence turns the light on. Daviat brought up the shadows “behind the reaction” when he and a client step into what had not yet been visible: “It is the feelings, emotions that come out ... the surprises, frustrations or sometimes even defensiveness.” Working toward an integrated inner light can also benefit from support in looking past one's experience (Valéria) or past cognition, as Hâi explained: “It's so important to be in touch with one's own body and coach not at an intellectual, cognitive level, but also coach at the emotional, psychological, spiritual level.”

George added here the need to keep both coach and client “minds and imaginations truly curious,” an intent complemented perhaps by the references coaches bring to this space when describing the values of asking questions (Catharina, Anita), probing (Daviat), and staying objective and non-judgmental (Sandra). Sharing the importance of knowing it is OK to step out of the flow and focus of coach conversation and step into this space, Justine described this “flexibility” as:

being open to understanding that there’s a different agenda at this point, right? Being able to hold those two, maybe three, four different spaces for the person at the same time so that they can both look back, look forward, look ahead and then stay in that moment of discovery.

Challenging the client to dig deeper into this different agenda helps them “unearth the story or the limiting beliefs that they’re holding,” according to Audrey. In doing so, Viola shared that she has learned, with a client, to “hold up these little, you know, these little like nuggets of deeper meaning making in front of her as we started to look at it together, I could see like her excitement building.” And illustrating that “turning the light on” is more than an act initiated by a coach, but instead an ongoing (inter)action; Viola shared how in this process, she is also “adding my own understanding, um, which is just more an expansive understanding of themselves and the world around them and wherever they are. I just see what’s sort of my sense of what’s needed next.”

Having Your Heart in the Right Place

Finally, coaches believed there needs to be a trusting, safe, non-judgmental relationship between a coach and client in facilitating reflection toward transformative insight. They all shared George’s sentiment of having to hold a “place of goodness and purpose” and “good intention” where “your hearts are in the right place.” Another aspect of this kind of safe relational context is, in Alexandra’s words, the ability “to be vulnerable with somebody, that person needs to have built that trust, not just logically ask them the right questions, but also have a certain presence.” Robert also emphasized the importance of “trust,” “being there for [the client],” and “not being judgmental”:

I think a lot of it has to do with some previous stuff that has gone before and getting to a place where there is trust ... the client really understands that you are not out for anybody's welfare, you know, outside of theirs,... you are out for what is good for them. That is really what you are keeping in mind is, is, is getting them to really trust you to do that and for you to actually do that. Um, so I think that is it on a long-term level, on a tactical or a day-to-day level, it is really preparing yourself ahead of time. You know, even if it's five minutes before meeting with that client, just prepare your mind and be there for them, not to be judgmental, not to bring in other stuff, to really focus on what is best for them.... So, the keys to success are thinking, uh, verbalizing, action that really helps me do my best job or helps the client do their best job.

Participants' Coaching Client Cases

In this final section, I briefly describe each participant's coaching client case (i.e., critical incident), including the descriptions, from the participant coaches' perspectives, of each client's challenges brought into coaching and the related transformative insight experienced by the client (for an overview, see Table 4.3 below). As already mentioned, this information is meant not only to provide the context within which the coaches discussed and shared their coaching practices but also to serve as a check of whether the transformative insight-related critical incidents that were brought as input into the semi-structured interviews by participant coaches were aligned with the definition of transformative insights used in this study—specifically, transformative insights as relating to those moments in coaching where a client experiences a “turning point” and has a profound change in their understanding of how they view themselves or their relationships with others, how they understand or view the world around them, thereby changing their deeply held beliefs, developing a greater sense of responsibility and perspective-taking, changing their goals for the future, or making major life changes.

Table 4.3*Participants' Coaching Client Cases: Client Challenges and Related Transformative Insights*

Coach/ Participant	Client Challenge	Client Transformative Insights
Albert	Finding ways to embody the company's values in his interactions with the staff while at the same meeting their diverse needs.	This client's transformative insight was about a change in self, in growing the complexity he brings to the definition and application of his values. Specifically, this client started understanding that he needed to take a bigger picture and contextual perspective on the experiences of those around him and that at the same time, it was possible for him to remain true to his (company's) values if he could find new ways to define and express those values.
Alexandra	The client realized she needed to do things differently if she was to grow in her career (i.e., reach a higher level, gain more industry respect, become better paid, and work more selectively with clients). However, she was feeling stuck as she wasn't sure what she needed to change to get there. She didn't understand her motivations and unique value proposition.	The turning point for this client was realizing that there was another way to stand out in a field, that subject matter expertise was not enough, that there was a choice, and that she could choose to pursue the work and clients she felt were ideal for her. She also realized that one also needs to attend to the relational aspects of the business. Additionally, the client realized that she was showing some of the same dominant behaviors at home as well as at work and understood that there is a lot of personal, emotional intelligence, and other-awareness work that she needed to do. This helped the client get a better understanding of herself, which, over time, helped her with making decisions, seeing more options, more expansively living her values, and how she added value to her work.
Aleyna	The client was feeling underappreciated at work, but also lacking focus, being in poor communication and connection with those around him. He was unable to fully "show up" personally or professionally.	This client's turning point occurred once he realized that he lacked boundaries in his relationships and that it was his responsibility to set and maintain those boundaries. The client went from blaming others for his circumstances to taking his own responsibilities, setting boundaries, learning to put himself first more often, and generally starting to operate more in alignment with his values.
Anita	The client lacked awareness of the impact of her approaches to communication, presence, and empowering others.	The client started to understand how her own behaviors impacted her and others. As a result, the client gained empathy for others and was empowered to make positive changes for herself and her team.

Table 4.3 (continued)

Coach/ Participant	Client Challenge	Client Transformative Insights
Audrey	The client was looking to (re)define what it was he needed to do next and find ways of more intentionally choosing his own future. He was not able to articulate what he wanted except not wanting to feel the way he did.	This client started understanding that he was operating on an “autopilot,” had kept in a “narrow lane” afraid to move aside and had no ownership of his choices and decisions. This has led the client to stop and reflect, and eventually to move away from a rigid narrative and goal-orientation and into a more intentionally chosen future where he felt he was the author of his own life.
Catharina	This client’s challenge was related to understanding and being understood by her team. During a major strategic change, the client did not understand how she would get her team to a point where they could lead this change.	The client went from believing that the source of the problem were the members in her team to realizing that it was she that needed to change. She adapted her whole approach to communication and went from not listening, telling, and denying she needed to do things differently to listening to her team members, sharing information, and making sure they had sufficient understanding.
Charlotte	This client was in the context of transitioning and scaling a business. She had difficulty moving away from the tactical and operational aspects of her work and adjusting to the idea of becoming a leader with followers and a strategic focus.	The client recognized that different people operate in different ways and that this diversity is a valuable resource she should tap into, and that she could benefit from developing her interpersonal skills in engaging with those differences.
Daviat	The client’s challenge related to the way she was perceived in her professional relationships: as an “order-taker” and a “doer,” which was standing in her way of getting a promotion and leveraging the good professional relationships she had.	This client’s biggest turning point was when she realized that she was always saying “yes” to all requests that came her way even when she had no time for it. The client started changing this dynamic by learning to say “no” to tasks and requests vs. uncritically saying “yes.”
Dara	The client was challenged by the need to adapt to his new, more strategic role and the need to learn new executive and interpersonal skills for delegation and setting boundaries.	This client’s insight occurred once he realized that the “issues” were with himself, and not others, and has moved from blaming others to taking responsibility for himself. He understood that he was putting everyone else first, trying to do everything on his own, not taking care of himself, and not capitalizing on his own strengths.

Table 4.3 (continued)

Coach/ Participant	Client Challenge	Client Transformative Insights
Elizabeth	The client’s challenge was related to interpersonal dynamics and building trusted relationships with multiple key stakeholders in support of achieving strategic and financial goals.	This client changed his understanding related to his relationship with others. Specifically, he came to understand some of the root causes (i.e., threats and triggers) and core values behind his behaviors in the interpersonal sphere. The client moved from having a fixed way of reacting to adversities to developing a new set of beliefs that opened up more options for engaging in a more productive relational dynamic.
Eva	The client was looking to find ways to develop himself as a leader while operating within an organizational system that does not offer a culture of growth or practical resources for development.	The client started understanding that he could—at the same time—be honoring larger organizational objectives and become his own kind of leader, which he wanted to be. The client started becoming an active observer of self, others, and the environment, helping him create a vision that was not limited by his experiences of the external world, allowing him an enhanced focus, and the expansion of possibilities for him to engage in his work differently while continuously identifying leverage points for new behaviors.
Gabriella	The client had need for approval from authority figures while at the same time being very skeptical and distrusting of authorities. This, in turn, caused conflicts and her tendency to engage in somewhat black and white thinking.	The client started having more empathy and understanding for other functional needs and perspectives and got more connected to her own values all of which allowed her to act more from a place of generosity vs. approval-seeking.
George	The client’s main challenge was about her feeling stuck and her perceived inability to grow in her career and past her current role.	This client recognized there are certain parts of the self that she lacked confidence in and that she needed to find new ways to lean into her own potential. The client’s “inner game” shifted from having lack of confidence she could successfully enact the next role to deciding that she was worthy and capable of growth in leadership with impact.
Hải	This client felt overwhelmed and stressed and experienced the loss of meaning and purpose in her work.	This client moved from having to prove herself to others to realizing that she is enough and to finding self-acceptance for what she has accomplished already. This, in turn, helped her find a deeper meaning in her work but also in taking better care of herself.

Table 4.3 (continued)

Coach/ Participant	Client Challenge	Client Transformative Insights
Justine	The client's lacked a sense of self-worth and was unable to control "negative self-talk" and the self-doubts he was experiencing.	A turning point for this client occurred once he realized the impact that his "negative self-talk" was having on how he was perceiving himself; that is, that he had an inaccurate perspective on his own skills, abilities, and talents. The client understood he needed to "confront" his negative voice so that he can see himself as a successful and an accomplished professional he was.
Margaret	The client did not have trust in herself to make the next step in her career as a woman in a "men's world."	The client started taking perspective on the male/female stereotypes in her surroundings and moved from having a lack of trust in her ability to move forward within this environment to taking herself more seriously, finding her voice in big meetings, and a work-life balance that worked for her.
Robert	The client has just moved into a role with more responsibilities but was fixed on certain outcomes and his methods of obtaining them. He was focused on the "end game" without having too much attention for the process. This caused him stress as well as internal and external conflicts.	The things shifted for this client once he realized that a common denominator behind a lot of the issues he was experiencing was himself and that the only person who can change things is himself. He was then also able to take perspective on how his approaches and an "end game" focus was impacting those around him as well as the realization of the objectives he needed to meet.
Sandra	The client had poor relationships at work due to her highly competitive nature.	The client's perspective shifted once she had a "powerful realization" that there was a pattern of destroyed relationships over the course of her life and that her challenge was not only work-related, and that it was she who played a big part in those dynamics. She was then able to step back and examine her own intentions behind the behaviors and reactions allowing her more choice in her interactions going forward while at the same time moving away from blaming and judging others to self-accountability and responsibility.
Valéria	The client was too strict with herself and was not allowing herself to make mistakes out of fear of failure. All of this was standing in the way of her making a career decision she needed to make.	The client recognized at a deeper level that she had the "right" to try out new things and to make mistakes. Also, she understood that there was a more creative part of herself that wanted to be "allowed" to try out new things without fear of failure, and that that was an essential part of her growth process.

Table 4.3 (continued)

Coach/ Participant	Client Challenge	Client Transformative Insights
Viola	The client was engaging in leadership behaviors that disempower him and others in different ways and needed to learn to sit back more in his leadership.	The client recognized and understood the need to move away from engaging in directive behaviors towards the collaborative ones and towards deriving meaning and satisfaction from putting development in place for his people.
William	The client had a dominant and transactional leadership style which was bringing great results but was at the same time creating fear and causing attrition in her team.	What changed for this client was her understanding that what she was defining as “successful” leadership was having a negative impact on those around her. She also started understanding that this approach she was taking was rooted at her seeing herself as a warrior and the world around her as something to defeat.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided the context from which the 21 executive coaches that participated in this study discussed facilitating reflection toward transformative insight. I offered this context by introducing (a) this study sample’s relevant demographic information, (b) coach participants’ professional profiles, (c) group-level portraiture of participants’ beliefs on what’s important when facilitating transformative insight, and (d) each coaching client case (i.e., critical incident) brought into the discussion.

Chapter 5: Descriptive Findings

As a reminder, the purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which executive coaches facilitate transformative insights to create the expanded perspective that leaders need to develop themselves and navigate their challenges and contexts in new ways. More specifically, through the explicit lenses of adult learning theory (i.e., transformative learning—Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000) and adult development theory (i.e., constructive-developmental theory—Kegan, 1982, 1994), I explored the coaching practices that 21 executive coaches found helpful for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight in coaching. Also, using the lens of constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994), this study seeks to understand how, if at all, those certified executive coaches with various forms of mind, or developmental capacities, differ in their descriptions, reasoning, and use of those coaching practices. The following research questions were explored:

- (1) How do coaches describe and understand what they do in their coaching practices to facilitate transformative insight, and why? More specifically, how do coaches describe and use practices for different levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise reflection) to facilitate transformative insight?
- (2) What relationship, if any, exists between the coaches' forms of mind and how these coaches describe what they do in their coaching practices to facilitate transformative insight?

Chapters 5 and 6 are organized around these two research questions. In this chapter, I present and report the descriptive findings in response to the first research question, and in

Chapter 6, I present and report on the developmental findings related to the second research question. In this chapter, I report the findings on the coaching practices for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight based on the data from the semi-structured interviews where coaches discussed their practices based both on their actual coaching client case (i.e., critical incident) and a uniform, hypothetical coaching client case (i.e., vignette). As a reminder, transformative insight is conceptually defined as those moments in coaching when, from the participant coach's perspective, a client experiences a "turning point" and has a profound change in their understanding of how they view themselves or their relationships with others, how they understand or view the world around them, thereby changing their deeply held beliefs, developing a greater sense of responsibility and perspective-taking, changing their goals for the future, or making major life changes.

The main findings on the practices for facilitating transformative insight across different levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise) are presented in the main themes and subthemes that emerged during the thematic coding process. These themes represent sets of practices within each level of reflection in terms of their shared intent around facilitating reflection toward transformative insight. That is, in each theme, shared patterns of characteristics were identified as the main focus of each set of practices (e.g., increasing contextual understanding [content reflection], resolving stuckness [process reflection], and exploring alternative assumptions [premise reflection]), differentiating various aspects of practices belonging to each level of reflection. Additionally, to indicate the prevalence of various practices across the sample, I report on the frequencies and percentages for each of the main themes and subthemes in order to see if any patterns of interest would emerge. I have included these findings not to bore or disengage the reader, so please attend to the summaries and review the thematic data for the parts that are most helpful to you; it was by going back to the data time and time again that I was able to see the data in greater depth to detect its patterns. Through iterative review, I could challenge those patterns in

support of descriptive analysis. For me, this was a process of stepping in and stepping out. The clarity and depth in the details also provide me with a clearer view for later investigation and understanding. I hope that by making frequency-level findings available as part of my process and including them here, in some way, pieces of the data can help the reader in their own investigations and reflections.

As mentioned in the Data Analysis section of Chapter 3, a broad range of coaching practices emerged during the analyses. Not all the practices that emerged were directly relevant to answering the first research question on coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight across the three levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise), nor were they explicitly directed at the coaching client. Looking at the *intent* of these coaching practice categories, I saw that some were not meant to be brought into a coach-client dialogue but instead directed at helping coaches self-regulate their influence to facilitate the coaching process more successfully. And while these practices, as such, do serve the coaching clients indirectly, they are not the kind of client-focused reflective coaching practices I was looking to explore. Nevertheless, given the exploratory nature of this study, I decided to start this chapter by creating an overview of all the coaching practices that emerged to provide a big-picture perspective on the total array of practices and the boundaries between the practice categories that coaches found helpful in their process of facilitating transformative insight. This included providing the high-level findings on the *client-focused, non-reflective* coaching practices (i.e., context and conditions) and the practices that were not explicitly directed toward the coaching clients themselves but were *coach-focused* and meant for helping the coaches navigate the coaching process itself (i.e., self-as-instrument). I then provide an overview of, as well as the in-depth findings specifically focused on, the content, process, and premise reflection coaching practices as dictated by my research questions. Finally, and along the way, I share my interpretation of the findings and conclude with the interpretation, synthesis, and summary to convey a big-picture perspective on the

findings and how they relate to the high-level integrative system of coach practices facilitating transformative insight.

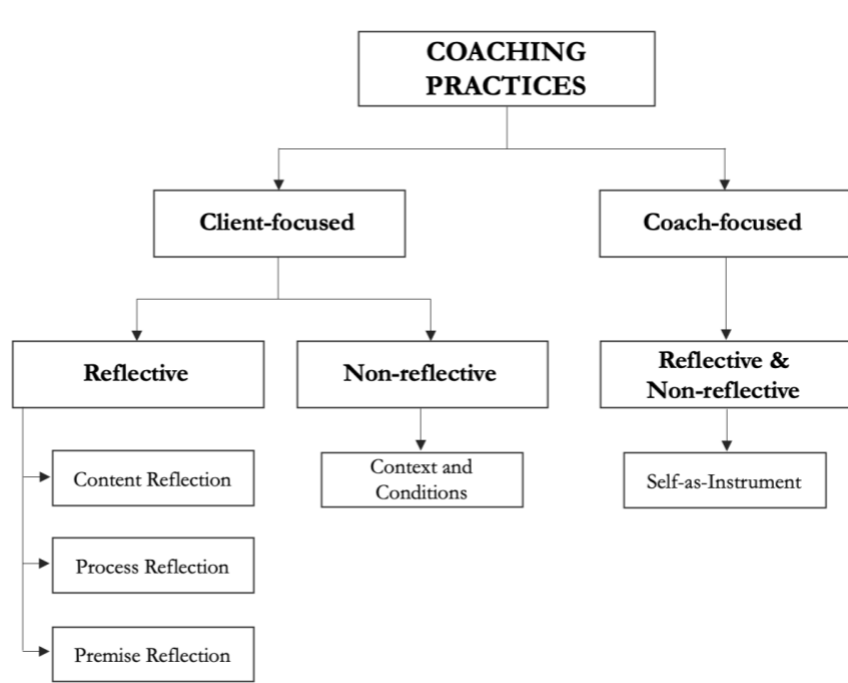
Section 1: The Big Picture: Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight

Given that my focus in the first research question was on exploring coaching practices for facilitating *reflection* toward transformative insight at three different levels (i.e., content, process, and premise), I started analyzing the semi-structured interviews conducted with the study's 21 executive coaches to identify those coaching practices. However, it soon became apparent that not all these practices could be considered reflective and hence did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the three levels of reflection categories (i.e., content, process, and premise). A whole array of practices that emerged did not align with Dewey's (1933) definition of reflective thought as "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends" (p. 9) or Mezirow's (1991) definition of reflection as "the process of critically assessing the content, process, or premise(s) of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to an experience" (p. 104). Some of these practices were more in line with Mezirow's (1998) definition of non-reflection, which involves "simple awareness of an object, event or state, including awareness of a perception, thought, feeling, disposition, intention, action, or of one's habits of doing these things" (p. 185).

Specifically, in addition to the *client-focused reflective* coaching practices (i.e., content, process, and premise reflection) I was looking to explore (and that met the requirements given by the definitions of reflection), two additional categories of coaching practices emerged. The first was the *client-focused, non-reflective* coaching practices category "context and conditions," and the second was the *coach-focused* coaching practices category "self-as-instrument," which included both reflective and non-reflective practices that were not explicitly directed at the coaching client (see Figure 5.1 below).

Figure 5.1

Overview of the Main Coaching Practice Categories that Emerged from the Data Across the Sample



While these two additional coaching practice categories were not directly relevant to answering my research questions, I decided to capture and report on them at a more general, higher level to provide a bigger picture of what coaches are saying about facilitating transformative insight in coaching. These practices can be seen as a part of the greater context within which the reflective practices explicitly aimed at facilitating reflection toward transformative insight occur. As such, I also wanted to convey the extent to which coach participants were focused on each of these three main coaching practice categories that emerged (i.e., *client-focused reflective* practices, *client-focused non-reflective* context and conditions practices, and *coach-focused* self-as-instrument practices).

As can be seen from Table 5.1 and Figure 5.2 below, out of a total of 819 coaching practices captured/coded from the semi-structured interview data across 21 participant coaches, approximately half of the practices that the participants discussed were *client-focused reflective* practices across the three levels of reflection—content, process, and premise (50.06%). The *client-focused*,

non-reflective category of “context and conditions” represented 29.43% of the total practices, and the *coach-focused* “self-as-instrument” practices covered 20.51% of all coaching practices discussed. As a reminder, the focus here on coding the practices that coaches shared was on analyzing the practice itself in terms of the coach’s *intent* to impact the learning process by holding it up to the criteria used to define the three levels of reflection in theoretical (Cranton, 2013, 2016; Mezirow, 1991) and empirical research (Oosterbaan et al., 2010; Wallman et al., 2008; based on Mezirow, 1991; see Appendix G).

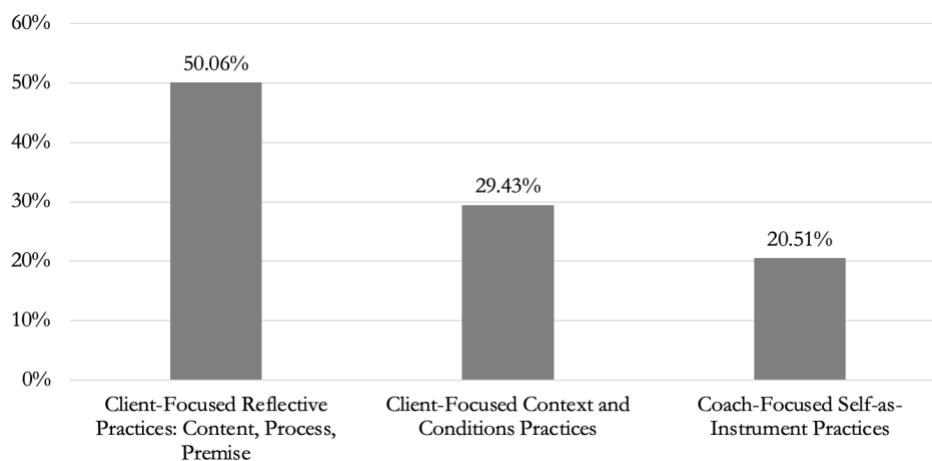
Table 5.1

Distribution of All Main Coaching Practice Categories Across the Sample (Frequencies)

	Client-Focused Reflective Practices: Content, Process, Premise	Client-Focused Context and Conditions Practices	Coach-Focused Self-as-Instrument Practices	TOTAL
Frequency	410	241	168	819

Figure 5.2

Distribution of All Main Coaching Practice Categories Across the Sample (Percentages)



The dissertation findings generally point to the range and extent to which coaches see these different practice categories as being essential for facilitating transformative insight, even though

they are *non-reflective* in nature (i.e., context and conditions practices) or not even directly engaging the client (i.e., *coach-focused* self-as-instrument practices). In analyzing the sheer volume of the practices shared, further reinforced by the felt-sense granularity, in my researcher notes, of “hearing” the earnest intents and thoughtful actions shared by coaches in the semi-structured interviews and “seeing” the attention and intent shown in the focus they bring to a certain practice and its impact, my takeaway is that coaches clearly see practices for transformative insight to be not only what we would definitionally consider as reflective client-focused facilitation, as seen through Mezirow’s levels of reflection, but also as an ultimately, over time, self-correcting system of various checks and balances that implicates the coaches, too. Seen together, the data present a picture of coaches attending to and navigating a larger system around the transformative insight. Together, these coaching practices tell us a bigger story about, for both client and coach, the hardships inherent in growing awareness of and reducing struggles for power; the fixations, limitations, and boundaries of current ways of knowing; the brave and cathartic expressions of authenticity and autonomy in light of (inter)dependencies; as well as responses to conflict ranging from various forms of dis-engagement, to navigating it, to moments of (external) conflict as a catalyst for unleashing and aligning toward (internal) change and innovation. While I will mention this in the analysis and synthesis, there is so much more that I want to be able to share but cannot address within the time and word constraints of a dissertation. Indeed, as the reader will see, starting with this introduction, which will continue to be explored, one significant finding is that what coaches need to know about the kind of practices that lead toward the facilitation of transformative insight is how these different parts play important roles in the process.

Before proceeding with reporting the findings on *client-focused, reflective* practices at content, process, and premise levels as dictated by the research questions, in the following two subsections of this Section 1 big-picture overview of various coaching practices that emerged, I find it necessary to

introduce, at a high level, both the *client-focused, non-reflective* “context and conditions,” and the *coach-focused* “self-as-instrument” practices to share more about this system of facilitation, to more clearly frame and honor the findings on the levels of reflection practices, and also pass them on for others who are researching coaching and may find these data helpful in some way.

Section 1a—The Big Picture: Client-focused, Non-reflective Practices—Context and Conditions

The first category of coaching practices that fell into the *client-focused, non-reflective* coaching practice category and emerged next to the reflective practices I aimed to investigate were general coaching practices named “context and conditions.” The central focus of these coaching practices was on creating a coaching environment (i.e., context and conditions) within which the reflective practices for transformative insight could occur in a safe, conducive way that best meets the coaching client’s needs, preferences, and circumstances. Reminiscent of a humanistic perspective, such as Rogers (1957) has written about, or Kegan (1982) writes about in describing Winnicott’s (1965) concept of a psychosocial holding environment as being critical to human evolution (p. 116), these practices help establish a trusting and respectful coach-client partnership from which the actual meaningful work can begin.

What follows is a high-level overview of context and conditions practice themes to convey the overall look and feel of the practices that emerged and the sample coach voices that go along with them. As mentioned, this practice category will not be pursued further analytically or interpretively, as it falls outside of the scope of this dissertation, that is, looking at client-focused reflective practices for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight. Its inclusion here follows the shape and content of the themes that emerged as non-reflective practices coaches use to facilitate transformative insight.

Clarifying a Client's Current State of Being and Situation

In the first context and conditions theme, this group of 21 coaches discussed the importance of clarifying a client's current state of being, situation (organizational context), on-the-job support, as well as the extent to which coaches felt clients were "coachable" and motivated to engage in the process. Catharina nicely summed up her practices as:

Well, in the beginning of my coaching, I followed more sort of steps, like sort of process check: check the will, check the environment, make sure there is a support system, etc.... The will is very important, how motivated is the client?... The more motivated the person is, the more will, the more it is really happening, a change happening, which is useful.

Understanding and Aligning with Client Needs and Preferences

Second, coaches emphasized the need to understand and align with the client's needs and preferences. This relates not only to the client's agenda and goals but also to understanding a person and their life circumstances and their learning style and preferences. Catharina described how she takes into account the way her clients learn and adjusts her approach, explaining that in her experience, "Everybody has his own way of learning things," giving as examples, "with some people, it's talking, and with some other people, it's demonstrating, and other people need to see something on paper. With [this client], it was learning by doing." Seeing it not only as instrumental to his process, she goes further, sharing the client's own appreciative insight about the connections she was able to make with his preferred learning style, "I could have told him this by just talking to him and explaining it, I think he wouldn't have picked it up in this way. And he still remembers this ... while he forgot all of other things, this was his learning moment." In aligning with client preferences, coaches also pay attention to the learning needs, such as timing, directiveness, client language, load, safety, approach, and meeting preferences. More deeply, they speak of noting what is evoked in a client during coaching, such as changes in breathing, facial expression, or tone of voice.

Communicating Coach Background and Style

Coaches discussed explicitly communicating important elements of their background (e.g., having relevant expertise in coaching) as well as information about their “signature style” to help the client understand, commit to, and consciously select the coach’s specific approach as a key criterion for successful engagement. Aleyna talked about the importance of having chemistry with the client as “in the first few minutes of the call, you would see if there is a rapport between you and the client.” George shared how during such a call, he discusses his “signature style” with the new coaching clients openly, sharing that he will bring in poetry as a space of expression and reflection.

Applying General Coaching Practices

The importance of providing structure, accountability, and managing expectations about what coaching is (or is not) was discussed as bringing clarity, definition, and alignment between coaching methodology, relational expectations, and possible outcomes. Viola, for example, explained that she had instances where she needed to help clients, who were expecting more-consulting-like advice, to actually experience what coaching is to make sure they really got the difference. Understanding coaching, she explained, is essential to forming a partnership where the client understands “we’re working through this together with you being the lead.”

Ensuring a Conducive Holding Environment

Finally, all the coaches found it important to ensure a conducive holding environment in terms of building trust and intimacy, creating and protecting psychological safety, building chemistry and rapport, and maintaining coach-client boundaries. Charlotte shared that facilitative practices for psychological safety and bravery are both critical in this process:

I think for a client to really get to a turning point and then, and then having it, experiencing it, has to be a very high level of trust. So then, I need to have created with them the psychological safety to really go the whole way into the question and allowing all options to come out and consider them truthfully and wholly. Um, so this, this safety, a lot of clients say that I’m very curious, and that is, that is really helpful to them. Uh, and um, brave. You

need to be brave. So, you need to model that to the client and acknowledge that, you know, this is how it is.... Those things, they seem to help.

Analyzing the thematic findings in this category identified that client-focused, non-reflective coaching practices focusing on different aspects of the client's readiness for coaching are important elements of what coaches do to facilitate transformative insight in coaching. Coaches' efforts to create—and the need of the client to have—among the recognizable general practices of setting up a “successful” coaching engagement, a learner-centered, appreciative, and structured coaching environment, relationship, and process clearly emerge in a first review of the data from this dissertation. What does this mean for transformative insight? On the one hand, I interpret these findings as a validation of the assumption that, individually and together, these context and condition practice themes speak of coach practices that provide support for “meeting clients where they are” *and* for a change and growth process in coaching. These same practices have appeared as fundamentals for transformative insight. Interestingly, however, when you look at all three categories from a system perspective on the facilitation of transformative insight (i.e., *client-focused reflective* practices: content, process, premise; *client-focused non-reflective* practices: context and conditions; *coach-focused*: self-as-instrument practices), instead of simply seeing the range of practice within categories as standing alone, and you instead look for bigger intent and reasoning connecting them, then you start to see the dynamic interplay between these coaching practice categories. In doing so, you would find that something beautiful and different emerges—that is, as related to transformative insight, it becomes at least as significant for coaches to be able to use a deeper understanding of these very client-specific contexts and conditions to meet the clients *where they are*—as in, for example, what they perceive, prefer, receive, feel safe about, feel motivated by, feel engaged by—as it is for coaches to use this same understanding to understand “where” clients *are not!*

Understanding where a client *is not* helps coaches identify useful client experience and resources to bring into coaching. For example, understanding which learning styles are out-of-

preference, the constraints and limitations of current perception on the self, other, or world, exposing hard-wired and deeply entrenched psychological defenses, finding the edge of ambiguity in a current way of knowing. To find spaces of non-learning, coaches are also looking for spaces of disinterests, disengagements, and indifferences. They are also understanding and giving attention to the very personal threats to stability that transitioning away from a current way of knowing represents for a client, as much as that transitioning could hold greater stabilizing value as recognized by an external observer (i.e., coach) of a client process and the clients themselves.

For this reason, and for matters of being succinct right now with so much more to come in this dissertation and even more after, I see context and conditions as more than representing best practices for meeting a client “where they are.” In terms of the greater system and reflective spaces necessary for transformative insight and for coaching practices that facilitate developmentally-driven learning of the transformative kind, I see context and conditions also as a resource—let’s also give it life and say, an incubator of sorts—that holds the vital signs for and can give oxygen to yet unseen or undisclosed insights into new ways of knowing that can transcend and include a given current capacity and its challenge, insights of the transformative kind that can act in support or defense of what a client is becoming, and in a very pragmatic application, of how they resolve the challenges they encounter and bring to coaching.

Section 1b—The Big Picture: Coach-focused, (Non)Reflective Practices—Self-as-Instrument

A second additional coaching practice category that emerged during data analysis and was unrelated to facilitating coaching *clients’ reflections* was the category of *coach-focused* “self-as-instrument” practices. I saw these practices as being related to the self-as-instrument understanding coaches employ to navigate their own internal process (e.g., thoughts, feelings, attention) so they can facilitate coaching with a client more successfully. As such, these practices can also be seen as important for creating a context or coaching environment within which the coach’s (negative) self-

impact is reduced so that client-focused reflective practices can occur more optimally. The self-as-instrument designation for this coaching practice category reflects the coaching concept that coaches themselves are one of the main instruments of coaching and that they need to be attuned not only to the clients and their stories but also to (the influence of) their own experience, feelings, and thoughts during facilitation (Bachkirova 2016). These practices, too, are beyond the scope of this dissertation, and the emerging themes will be shared below at a high level, providing an additional context for answering the research question on reflective coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight.

Meeting My Own Needs So My Best Self Can Emerge for Clients

In the first self-as-instrument theme that emerged, the coaches discussed coaching practices related to the importance of meeting their own needs so they can show up “at their best” for their clients, meaning that coaches learned to prepare themselves, the meeting context, and their days by organizing meeting settings and schedules that work for them, scheduling space between client meetings to give themselves breaks, thinking about where to sit, what to have near them, ensuring decompression time after the meeting, eating healthily and exercising regularly, maintaining a spiritual practice, and ensuring personal quiet time.

Eva describes the kind of “self-management” practices she engages in to set herself up for success in facilitating learning toward transformative insight as including nutrition, exercise, spiritual practice, scheduling appointments, “taking time to decompress,” and even making sure she’s sitting comfortably. Another way in which coaches work to ensure they show up “at their best” for their clients is by focusing on achieving and maintaining an ideal level of full attention and presence by centering, connecting to their body, opening their minds, and priming themselves for the values and feelings they want to be able to access in the moment. Dara described her process as wanting to “hold the conditionals, I just want to anticipate, you know, really I want to be there for them.” She

went on to describe this as “being present,” and “not jumping to conclusions,” explaining that this self-correction is necessary and natural because “you know, I’m human, you know, sometimes I’m better than other times at that.”

Paying Attention to Developing Myself as an “Instrument”

The second set of self-as-instrument practices related to the coaches’ explicit attention to developing themselves as “instruments” to benefit their work and clients, showing an understanding of the impact and influence their own fine-tuning has on the coaching process and their wish to learn and develop themselves. Various methods were described for achieving that goal, for example, seeking the kinds of collegial, therapeutic, and supervisory support and feedback they need for their development as individuals, professionals, and business owners. Elizabeth, for example, mentioned having “a coach I work with to soundboard” and a professional practice community of coaches she can call when she “needs to think through something” as she actively navigates how being “emotionally charged in some way could spill over to my clients later on.”

Coaches also discussed what they do to raise awareness of and respond to the personal reasoning and influence they bring to a coaching session so they can develop themselves by engaging in active coach self-reflexivity. Coaches do this by reflecting on what they would do differently next time, working out what led them to ask a specific question, asking themselves what enabled the most constraint in themselves, and assessing how they make decisions during coaching. Albert described how this means attending to those kinds of things that “were twirling around” in his head while he was “struggling to make sense of them.” While this led him first to question his role as a facilitator, such as asking himself “did I listen well enough?” or “What was my posturing like? What was the subtext of my body language and all those sorts of things?”, he later reported that he “started to move away from that. Not that those things are unimportant, but I’m trying to work out what’s actually really going on here.” Working through this phase of disorientation, he found

new questions that helped him understand even better what was constraining him in the coaching, asking himself, for example, “Say, you know, like, how do you kind of make the decision to ask that question?”

Bringing My Whole Self into Coaching

The third focus area that emerged related to the coaches’ desire to bring their whole selves into coaching, drawing on coaching specialties that have long histories but a more recent mainstream presence in the field of executive coaching. As recounted in Chapter 2, this particular area of coaching has strong roots in business and organizational contexts at its core. The 21 coaches who participated in this study showed numerous examples of bringing themselves, and their whole selves, more into coaching. This could mean staying consistent with their values, beliefs, experience, personality, and spirit when bringing the self into coaching by telling personal stories, not pretending they know more than they do, showing vulnerability, being genuine, and being themselves. The coaches expressed that they tap into other ways of knowing than the cognitive-rational, giving themselves permission to engage in dialogue that is more emotional, creative, and rich.

George spoke about the permissions he now gives himself to do this. Look at the words he chose to share how he experiences this shift of bringing more of himself into coaching, for example, mentioning the words “freedom,” “richer,” “imagination,” and “feeling.” Then, examine the very different words he used to describe the concerns he had about sharing such things previously, using harsh and heavy words like “violating” and “imposing myself” to describe the degree to which he felt doing so would be negative to the client. In his own words:

But, and so those are kind of permissions I give myself now that I wouldn’t in the past because I thought it was outside of the realm of executive coaching, and I also thought I might be violating and imposing myself on my client. But I make sure that I have more freedom now to go to places that are richer, more full of imagination, more full of feeling.

For Eva, bringing herself into coaching more fully has meant examining how authenticity in herself and in the clients could be better hosted through less formal, theory-based tools and through

more powerful emergent coach practices. Another way some coaches bring their whole selves into coaching is by trusting their gut instinct and intuition to lead them forward in coaching conversations, stepping outside of a traditional coach role to help a client when necessary, and trusting whatever they are feeling and bringing it into the sessions. Gabriella described her intuition as her main guide, sharing that she doesn't actually "think about practices that I use," which then "makes it a little challenging to sort of say, well, okay, what is the practice? Cause that's certainly not the way I'm thinking about it in the moment." Robert, on the other hand, is actively experimenting with the choices he has around using his gut instinct and intuition. For him, the process of leveraging his inner understanding is a positive choice that differentiates him from those who coach solely "by the book":

Sometimes we have to go with our gut. Um, sometimes we have to go with what we think is best for this person. I mean, we always have to go with that, but sometimes we have to go out on a limb and take a chance. Um, and I think there may be times at the moment I was like, "Maybe I should not have done that," but every time it has worked out, it has just worked out.

Yet another example the coaches talked about was leveraging what is evoked in them (e.g., emotionally, somatically) as a source of information to bring into coaching. This includes being conscious in their responses to the client and paying attention to energetic boundaries with the client. Coaches notice their own somatic responses/what they feel in their body, as well as their emotional, psychological, and spiritual levels, and try to tap into a client's intensity, processing it, and bringing it back into the coaching process. For Hải, a deeper exploration of his somatic experiences means being able to act as a mirror to the client on a verbal, physical, and emotional level. For him, it can be important to sense in his own body what is happening in the client, so he pays close attention to doing that to see what intuition comes up. He described this as "becoming like a mirror, an intuitive mirror for my clients" and a "mirror not only at a verbal level, but at a physical level and then a mirror at an emotional level."

Managing My Own Limitations and Blind Spots

In this theme, coaches discussed the importance of identifying and averting their own (emotional) habits, cognitive distortions, and non-constructive behavior during coaching because these factors influence the open-mindedness they can bring to coaching and therefore do not serve the client's process. Coaches do this by being willing to admit their blind spots and limitations and not using models and tools about which they don't feel confident. They do not engage in clients' emotional issues when they are still on the learning curve themselves. They try to focus on listening instead of jumping to conclusions, be aware of their assumptions, beliefs, and influence, and make sure to remain objective when a client's values are different. They work on staying non-judgmental and neutral, not interjecting biases, and walking alongside the client. They pay attention to not comparing one client and another, monitoring perceptions around social or cultural intelligence. They try to take special care not to have a goal for coaching and to stay curious about what will be revealed.

Viola, feeling that the best approach to culture and language is to hold no assumptions or judgment about them or about the client him or herself, found that difficult but important to do when she works with coaching clients with very different language skills and cultural backgrounds. In her work coaching Southeast Asian clients, at a certain point, she realized "it just didn't work for me to have assumptions or judgments," and she was able to work to better manage her own biases and blind spots.

Egos and emotions are two other aspects of the self that coaches try to mitigate to reduce self-serving tendencies, self-esteem issues, or a wish to achieve importance or dominance in coaching. They do this, for example, by practicing humility, naming and sharing feelings of nervousness before challenging a client, trying to let go of things out of their control, trying not to be a hero, and being mindful of their emotional triggers and reactions when the client doesn't "get

it.” Albert spoke about how he can now see how his struggle to let go of an “I’m right, you’re wrong” way of being was getting in the way of truly helping the client, and also “that that was part of my makeup, you know, up until quite recently” but that “ultimately this isn’t about being right, this is about helping [the client] make sense of things in ways that work for him with the problem that he’s brought to coaching.”

Managing My Discomfort

In this set of self-as-instrument practices, coaches discussed the importance of coaching practices for managing their discomfort. One particularly important one that was mentioned by many coaches was about using silence in coaching to be able to give clients the time and space they need to think. They mentioned that this is a challenge because silence makes them uncomfortable. Coaches have different practices for this, including physically reminding themselves to be silent (e.g., setting a timer, sitting on their hands, using a post-it note as a reminder); admitting and talking about how silence is the hardest part of coaching for them; reminding themselves of the importance of silence for being in tune with the client; and realizing that they have to be able to be okay with silence.

Having trust and confidence in themselves in navigating unknowns was another area of discomfort coaches discussed as being important to navigate, seeing it as a normal and productive tension in coaching that frees them to focus more spaciously on the client’s (ways of) knowing. The coaches work on developing a willingness not to know, to not have a “right” question ready, to feel confident about stepping away from tools, taking risks, experimenting, and trusting themselves more in this process so they can support clients more flexibly. Albert described the tension he feels in dealing with not following a known model or methodology in service of letting go or being “in the moment” and trying to “understand as best as I can what is happening,” even if that means accepting that he is “misunderstanding at least 50% ... and being comfortable with that.”

A final example of managing the discomfort around the client's "intensity" is about showing sensitivity to and engaging different kinds of clients' emotional and somatic energies naturally present in coaching without taking responsibility for them. Coaches do this by keeping their own resonance low, sensing and opening up to a client's intensity, and fully receiving the client's energy by witnessing, listening, and remaining silent. Hài described how vulnerability helps him achieve this, defining it as "the capacity to feel painful feelings. So, for example, like, am I willing to sit there and be with the pain that the client is in?" Viola spoke of a more active process of accepting and receiving a client's energy: "I'm not wanting to fight against it. I'm wanting to fully receive it and hold it up."

Taking My Expectations and Agenda off the Table

Coaches find it important to stay curious and increase the impact and influence of exploration and discovery in coaching conversations. The focus is on prioritizing open inquiry and learning as guidelines for coaching. Coaches do this by not making assumptions and by recognizing, prioritizing, and managing the presence and value of their curiosity in an emergent client process.

Justine explained:

Certainly, the most important and relevant part of coaching is to stay curious and not to make any assumptions. Because it never helps your client, and it's not ever going to necessarily transpire the way you think it's going to. Which, again, the basis of my training was staying be curious. Like being a coach is just like, be ever curious. And every single time in my mind a thought might slip in while I'm coaching about where the conversation might go, it always goes somewhere else. And so that's just, for coach insight, it's like monitoring thoughts that, making sure they don't slip out, assumptions.

Another specific way that helps coaches in the process of openness and curiosity is by keeping their expectations and advice for the client to themselves to avoid influencing the client's agenda, the client's process, priorities, pace, and solutions. Coaches do this by trying to allow coaching to unfold, taking time to check in with clients for cues about resonance, and resisting the urge to intervene when they see a client stumbling. They try to manage their boredom,

disappointment, impatience, preconceived notions, wish to “fix” the client, and the idea that their ideas, passions, beliefs, and feelings, that the clients are missing, are opportunities that should be pursued in coaching. As Anita put it, this is about “allowing the client to guide me.” Describing the upsides to a client process that seems to be faltering, one where Albert has to resist the urge to have “that understanding on [the client’s] behalf,” he shared his realization that when clients are “kind of like stumbling, groping, reaching,” his response is to feel:

I’ve got a new understanding, and I’m talking from the perspective of my coachee now, and what I’m resisting is the urge to have that understanding on their behalf. So, that’s when I know something is happening. When I feel that they are starting to conceptualize something in a way that they hadn’t been able to conceptualize it before, it’s almost like a nudge to me to be like the person that runs onto the running track when someone’s coming into the marathon, and they’re just struggling to make the finishing line, and someone says, “Oh I should get in there and just help them with this.” And then I start to respond that way, that’s when I start to sort of think, yeah, this is, you know, they are actually in the process of finding something that was previously unavailable to them.

Making Sure Not to Collude

In this final set of self-as-instrument practices, coaches described a need to sense and not agree with a client when it does not benefit the client’s process, but, in fact, use the opportunity it presents to discuss and explore what is going on. Coaches do this by admitting to themselves that they sense collusion, by managing admiration for clients, by getting supervision, and by knowing when to step away from a client engagement. Coaches focus on the understanding that they influence the client, and the client influences the coach. Gabriella described how she makes sense of and navigates “unsophisticated kinds” of collusion that mean she is not keeping a balance of her own truth and staying open for the client. She shared that collusion can show up by even simply reinforcing a client’s perception that another person could be “too sensitive,” illustrating the extent to which a coach is influenced and can influence a coaching process.

In a similar fashion to context and conditions, coach practices that were coded as self-as-instrument relate, in great part, to coaching practices supporting how and when coaches show up in

coaching and which practices help them do that, so they are of a contextual nature: there are times when a coach needs to lean in, and there are times when a coach needs to get out of the way of the client's learning process during coaching. What these coaches are saying is that instead of operating as neutral observers and facilitators, they should, at times, lean more with their presence into a co-created experience or as hosts of a client experience: for example, their attention, open-mindedness, energy, knowledge, skill, willingness, and state of being. And indeed, a coach should get out of the way when it comes to their biases, expectations, limitations, blind spots, preferences, judgments, and willingness to please, which generally do not serve the client process. But something else emerges from the data when you look at it from a perspective of facilitating coach practices toward transformative insight, that is, coaches are not just talking about the in-or-out dichotomy of their presence. Rather, two categories in particular pop out as being very helpful coach practices for facilitating transformative insight: bringing my whole self into coaching, and managing my discomfort in coaching.

Section 2: Overview of Client-Focused Reflective Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight—Content, Process, Premise

This section presents a distribution of *client-focused reflective* practices (i.e., content, process, premise) to convey the extent to which 21 coach participants privileged content vs. process vs. premise reflection in their discussion of reflective coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight during the semi-structured interviews, as seen from both their actual coaching client case (i.e., critical incident) and a uniform, hypothetical coaching client case (i.e., vignette).

As seen from Table 5.2 and Figure 5.3 below, out of 410 client-focused reflective coaching practices, approximately half of the reflective practices discussed were at the level of content reflection (49.51%). The second most prevalent category was reflective practices at the level of process reflection (41.22%). Finally, the least prevalent coaching practices were reflective practices

facilitated at the level of premise reflection, covering only 9.27% of all client-focused reflective coaching practices discussed.

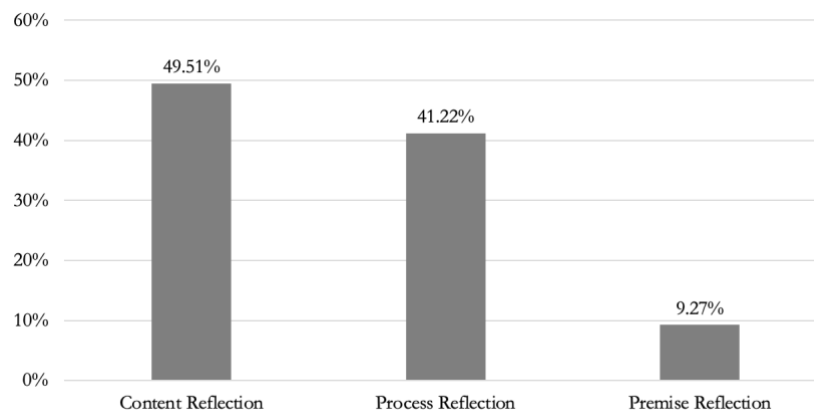
Table 5.2

Distribution of Client-Focused Reflective Coaching Practices Across Three Levels of Reflection (i.e., Content, Process, Premise) Across the Sample (Frequencies)

	Content Reflection	Process Reflection	Premise Reflection	TOTAL
Frequency	203	169	38	410

Figure 5.3

Distribution of Client-Focused Reflective Coaching Practices Across Three Levels of Reflection (i.e., Content, Process, Premise) Across the Sample (Percentages)



In Table 5.3 below, I report the distribution of the client-focused reflective practices (i.e., content, process, premise) per each of the 21 participants. In this table, the ascertained frequencies are reported for each of the three levels of reflection, representing the number of times each participant discussed content, process, and premise reflection practices during the semi-structured interview, as well as the total number of reflective practices addressed. To get a clearer idea of the extent to which each participant reported using content vs. process vs. premise reflection coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight, the related percentage was calculated by dividing the

total number of practices for each of the three levels of reflection by the total number of all reflective practices each participant discussed.

Table 5.3

Distribution of Client-Focused Reflective Coaching Practices Across Three Levels of Reflection (i.e., Content, Process, Premise) per Participant

	Content Reflection Practices		Process Reflection Practices		Premise Reflection Practices		Reflective Practices Total
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency
Albert	7	30.43%	10	43.48%	6	26.09%	23
Alexandra	16	48.48%	13	39.39%	4	12.12%	33
Aleyna	4	17.39%	19	82.61%	0	0.00%	23
Anita	4	40.00%	4	40.00%	2	20.00%	10
Audrey	11	61.11%	6	33.33%	1	5.56%	18
Catharina	6	40.00%	9	60.00%	0	0.00%	15
Charlotte	6	66.67%	2	22.22%	1	11.11%	9
Daivat	4	44.44%	4	44.44%	1	11.11%	9
Dara	15	57.69%	9	34.62%	2	7.69%	26
Elizabeth	6	66.67%	3	33.33%	0	0.00%	9
Eva	6	50.00%	4	33.33%	2	16.67%	12
Gabriella	9	60.00%	6	40.00%	0	0.00%	15
George	10	35.71%	13	46.43%	5	17.86%	28
Hải	3	60.00%	2	40.00%	0	0.00%	5
Justine	15	83.33%	3	16.67%	0	0.00%	18
Margaret	9	60.00%	4	26.67%	2	13.33%	15
Robert	20	58.82%	12	35.29%	2	5.88%	34
Sandra	12	57.14%	7	33.33%	2	9.52%	21
Valéria	14	40.00%	20	57.14%	1	2.86%	35
Viola	18	66.67%	9	33.33%	0	0.00%	27
William	8	32.00%	10	40.00%	7	28.00%	25

As seen in Table 5.3 above, participants very much varied in the extent to which they engaged in coaching practices across the three levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, premise). Coaching practices, and the attention and intention that go into choosing and facilitating them, are a unique expression of the particular coach involved. The prevalence of content reflection coaching practices reported by the participant coaches ranged from 17.39% to 83.33%, in process reflection

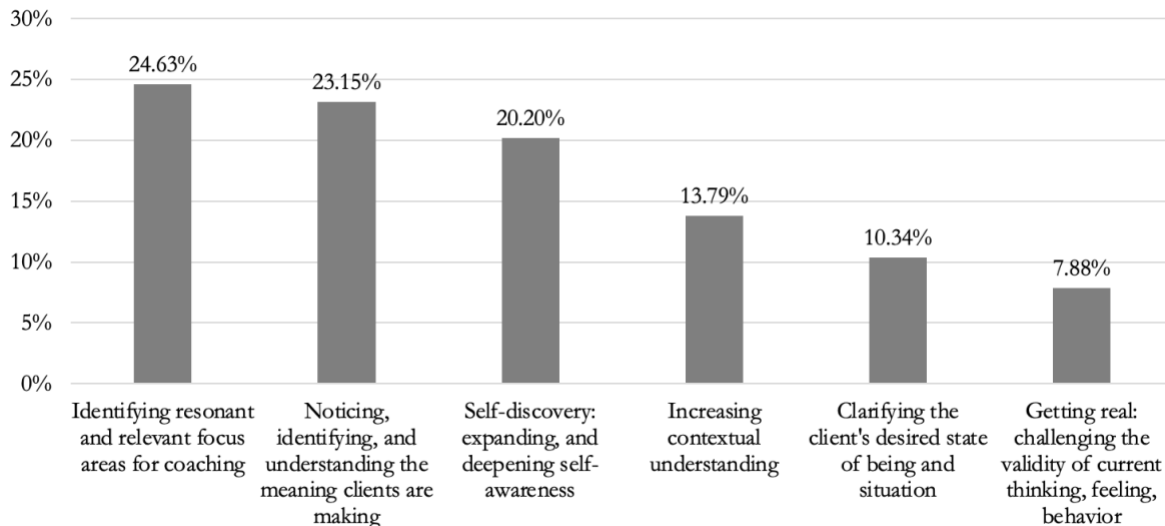
from 16.67 % to 82.61%, and in premise reflection from 0.00% to 28.00%. Interestingly, one-third of the sample (seven coaches) did not mention using reflective coaching practices at the premise reflection level at all, with another five participants mentioning those kinds of reflective practices at below 10% of all of the reflective practices they discussed.

Section 3: Client-Focused Reflective Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight—Content Reflection

In this section, the main analytic themes and related subthemes for *client-focused reflective* practices at the content reflection level are presented, as well as illustrated in the distribution of the main themes across the sample. This conveys the extent to which the 21 coach participants privileged each content reflection theme in their discussion of coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight during the semi-structured interviews. The data pictured in Figure 5.4 relate to both the content reflection practices that emerged in a discussion about the actual coaching client case clients brought into coaching (i.e., critical incident) and the uniform, hypothetical coaching client case (i.e., vignette) introduced to all coaches in the second half of the semi-structured interview.

Figure 5.4

Distribution of Content Reflection Coaching Practices Across Main Themes



As seen in Figure 5.4 above and Table 5.4 below, the most often mentioned reflective coaching practices at the content reflection level were the ones related to identifying resonant and relevant focus areas for coaching (24.63%). Closely following was noticing, identifying, and understanding the meaning clients are making (23.15%) and self-discovery: expanding and deepening the client's self-awareness (20.20%). Notice that these first categories all relate to finding resonance of some kind: as the client relates to the world (resonant and relevant focus areas), as the client relates to what is meaningful to them, and finally to deepening the understanding of this self. Also of interest, then, is how contextual understanding (13.79%), clarifying a desired state of being and situation (10.34%), and challenging the validity of a current frame of reference, of current thinking, feeling, and behavior (7.88%) were mentioned less frequently. It seems that coaches, in content-level reflection practices for facilitating transformative insight, more often mention using practices that could be seen as solidifying a client's interest in pursuing learning and its applications, finding meaning in the learning, and making a greater connection with the self.

Table 5.4*Distribution of Content Reflection Coaching Practice Themes and Subthemes Across the Sample*

	Frequency	Percentage
1. Identifying resonant and relevant focus areas for coaching	50	24.63%
1a. Clarifying the coaching focus and goal	13	6.40%
1b. Getting feedback	22	10.84%
1c. Identifying the challenge behind the challenge	15	7.39%
2. Increasing contextual understanding	28	13.79%
2a. Exploring the external context	9	4.43%
2b. Clarifying interpersonal differences and diversity	10	4.93%
2c. Reviewing life and work contexts to see the client more clearly	9	4.43%
3. Clarifying the client's desired state of being and situation	21	10.34%
3a. Connecting to the ideal state clients have self-knowledge about	15	7.39%
3b. Identifying desirable characteristics and criteria around clients to work toward	6	2.96%
4. Self-discovery: expanding and deepening self-awareness	41	20.20%
4a. Identifying strengths, blind spots, and shadows	24	11.82%
4b. Clarifying values	7	3.45%
4c. Revisiting a client's (hi)story to understand past experiences	10	4.93%
5. Noticing, identifying, and understanding the meaning clients are making	47	23.15%
5a. Encouraging venting	12	5.91%
5b. Connecting a client's inner experience to their outer experience	17	8.37%
5c. Understanding how clients define and make sense of things	18	8.87%
6. Getting real: challenging the validity of current thinking, feeling, behavior	16	7.88%
6a. Examining contradictions in thinking, feeling, behavior	6	2.96%
6b. Examining the evidence for and justification of current thinking, feeling, behavior	10	4.93%
TOTAL	203	

In what follows, the findings for content reflection practices are described in detail so the reader can get a better understanding of how coaches use these practices in facilitating reflection toward transformative insight. In the following sections, I will walk through these practice (sub)themes, include the excerpts from the semi-structured interviews, and bring some interpretation to the coach practices involved to bring greater understanding to the relationship this set of coach practices has to the process of facilitating transformative insight.

Finding 1: Identifying Resonant and Relevant Focus Areas for Coaching

1a. Clarifying the Coaching Focus and Goal

In this content reflection coaching practice theme, coaches encourage clients to identify what they want to achieve, change, or improve through the coaching process. The focus is on helping clients clarify the topics and objectives for the challenges they want to resolve or goals they want to achieve. Sandra explained her intent and the practices she uses:

So, my first goal with [the client], first of all, I would want to know what his objectives are.... want to know what feedback he has gotten. I want to know why now, does he think he needs coaching? And, um, what does he hope to accomplish by the end of our time together?

Coaches do this by asking clients to identify concrete areas they want to work on, describe what they see as the focus of coaching, and be explicit about what they want to accomplish and how they will know it has been accomplished. The focus in this set of practices is also on clarifying the priorities for moving forward, rating/prioritizing clients' most important goals, and making their goals SMART (i.e., Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound). Finally, coaches work with their clients on illustrating what a solution could look like, defining what success will look like when they have achieved their goal, and pinpointing the areas where a client needs to grow. Dara described discussing with her client their "picture of success" to narrow in on the "focus of the coaching" and articulate the desired "outcomes:"

And then at the beginning, I always, we together, identify what do they see as their focus of the coaching, what do they see as a picture of success? So, kind of a list of outcomes, but we articulate that, write that down.

One interpretation of this subtheme could most certainly relate to the value of bringing focus to individually specific and relevant content with desired impact in the world, content that is available for hosting and facilitation in coaching. Looking at it from a perspective of reflective practices of the transformative kind, which can facilitate growth in capacity, one can see that examination of these areas can also lead to a more meaningful learning process itself, which would

support and motivate growth in a way of knowing. Examining these different pieces related to setting a coaching focus area helps the deeper layers to become clearer and lend themselves as scaffolds in a process where the client has a better understanding of and curiosity about the importance and significance of their goal to them.

1b. Getting Feedback

In this content reflection theme, coaches provide clients with third-party input, information, and criticism to review and consider. Coaches get external feedback by involving stakeholders, sharing results from the client's team or direct reports, doing 360°s with open-ended questions, sharing the outcomes of a psychometric assessment with direct reports to get relevant day-to-day insights, getting feedback on specific client skills, checking in on the client's self-understanding of how their effectiveness is viewed by others, getting input from the spouse and children, and using an imaginary external perspective of exaggeration, sarcasm, and humor to help the client see him or herself. For example, George stated that the feedback clients get is useful because it helps to identify where to "start" in coaching, especially since he doesn't "have access to the [client's] organization." Having an understanding of how a client's behavior is playing out in the world as perceived by others (for example, George mentioned a client's habit of interrupting others) provides coaches with a way to facilitate transformative insights. This helps their clients examine and implicate themselves as subjects of their narratives. The focus is on helping clients examine their current perceptions, thinking, feeling, and behavior in a situation through how others experience it. In doing so, they reflect this experience as a source of new understanding and a new source of personal resonance with the more pragmatic coaching objective.

1c. Identifying the Challenge Behind the Challenge

In this theme, coaches help clients explore and identify the possible deeper dilemmas around the challenge or goal clients bring into coaching. Coaches do this by asking clients to tell their story

to understand what needs to be worked on more deeply and clarify what *really* needs to be worked on, exploring the definition, meaning of, and reasoning behind the presenting coaching goal and triggering new understanding of the challenges and goals clients brought in initially. The coaches ask their clients about the thinking and behaviors that are not serving them well and explore presenting emotions, vulnerabilities, self-worth, disengagement, feelings of being thwarted, and clarifying pain points and motivators. They help clients address fears that development means changing oneself and use visualizations to identify spaces of change. Coaches also use mirroring techniques to reflect back their own somatic experience and have clients go deeper by asking them what they notice in the feedback they get. This idea that the *what* of coaching is often not what clients “originally” bring in, but that there is a deeper, “main challenge,” a “real dilemma” underneath what is on the surface that needs to be “uncovered” and worked on in coaching, was nicely explained by Sandra:

When I think about this client...he had just been placed in a CFO position, and I do not believe that he thought he deserved that position.... And so it was working through that personal discovery and that personal uncovering of what was making him have those thoughts, um, that we got down to the real dilemma, which was his self-worth, what his, what he felt his self-worth was.

Here, coaches use practices to examine a presenting problem, which then becomes the path to understanding which dilemmas are directly related to the perception of what is happening in a client’s experience and form an unproductive tension and challenge, resulting in a pattern of thinking or behavior that first led the clients to coaching. Sandra, for example, further described this dilemma with her client by relating that in working through the presenting challenges described by the client in their original conversations, the client spoke of his “trouble with anger management in board meetings with the CEO” and how “some of his outbursts were now causing relationship issues.” She related that he worried he was going to lose his job after getting into the CFO position; her client had not yet realized that it would be the trust in himself that would be his learning path forward. The intent of coach practices in this space of content reflection was to find underlying

areas of tension, learning, and development that, when addressed, could support the coaching process's overall aim of being pragmatic, yet related to the development of capacity. In terms of transformative insight, finding the challenge behind the challenge implicates the client as part of what is happening around them, as well as expresses the limitations of the client's current way of perceiving, thinking, feeling, or behavior in resolving the presenting challenges.

Finding 2: Increasing Contextual Understanding

2a. Exploring the External Context

In this content reflection coaching practice theme, coaches help clients explore and assess their external environments. Coaches do this by clarifying key relationships, stakeholders, and sponsorship; exploring the influences of organizational culture on the client; clarifying the relationship between current life circumstances and challenges and goals; and clarifying expectations from bosses or leadership. The coaches also get a read on clients' perceptions of others in their environment and discuss the quality of these relationships as (not) being productive, energizing, and trustworthy. Robert, for example, explained that various aspects of the client's "larger context," both interpersonal (e.g., private relationships) and more systemic (e.g., organizational expectations), are important for the client to examine in order to "come to a place where that can all be woven together" in what they see and understand is happening around them.

In exploring the external context, the focus is on clients expanding awareness of the specifics and presence of their contexts through expressions of what they (don't) perceive, think, and feel is happening. With these content reflections as input, clients develop a new understanding of what is happening in a certain context and how that relates to them. Additionally, they can later use this information to discern how they are perceiving, thinking, and feeling (process-level reflection) or why their perceiving, thinking, and feeling are filtering their realities and understanding in this way (premise-level reflection).

2b. Clarifying Interpersonal Differences and Diversity

In this theme, coaches help clients notice and develop a greater understanding of the diversity of preferences for thinking, feeling, and behavior. Coaches do this by asking clients to reflect on interpersonal differences and diversity, their own personal characteristics, and the group or team dynamics in which they have a role; by working with clients on clarifying what is happening in dysfunctional issues as they unfold. Coaches facilitate practices that explore preferences and diversity as represented in various psychometric assessments, archetypes, strengths, decision-making, thinking, or orientations to the world, as well as conceptualizing a bigger picture of the thinking, feeling, and behavior around them and where their own thinking, feeling, and behavior fits into it. Dara, for example, described having her client reflect on her “blind spot,” what the dynamics with the client’s new team might be based on, her preferred approach versus what the team is used to, and how the client might be “coming across to others” as a source of helping the client understand what else could be happening, and see this for its potential learning:

She’s got four strengths in the area of influencing. So, she’s new and her team, she came in, very different style from the person before her. And so, they’re all, you know, calling her harsh, and you know, they’re used to somebody not holding them accountable.... So really helping them see how, you know, how they’re coming across to others, things that they can capitalize on, that blind spot.

The focus here is on clarifying interpersonal differences and diversity by building a new awareness and, through assessment, understanding the variety and differences between the client’s own perception, thinking, feeling, and behavior and those of others. Through this process, coaches help clients see their preferences more clearly, and as clients, their strengths and limitations become implicated in what they perceive is happening around them. From a perspective of facilitating reflection toward transformative insight, this recognition and implication of the self contributes to a new perspective on what is happening and, later, to the process and premise reflection practices that

can help the client understand how these beliefs are implicated in one's approach or acts of perception, from where these assumptions come, and how they can be attended to differently.

2c. Reviewing Life and Work Contexts to See the Client More Clearly

With this group of content reflection practices, coaches help clients understand the influence of what they perceive is happening in different contexts or circumstances on their thinking, feeling, and behavior. Coaches do this by asking clients to describe how they see work, relationships, successes, and challenges; asking clients to share situations where they feel (not) confident and (un)comfortable or where they have (not) felt stressed; and asking clients to share and elaborate on times when they felt (un)successful as a leader. Coaches also ask clients to reflect on their personal hobbies and interests, asking what could be possible in another situation, asking for examples of where something similar played out in a client's life, and asking a client if the same challenge (or success) had happened in a different job to understand the circumstances that give rise to a client's experience. Aleyna described bringing her client back to the "places or incidents where they really showed up as confident people" to gain a better understanding of the various contextual factors that would allow them to also "show up" as confident in other contexts, hereby helping discern coaching focus:

[I use practices for] confidence, building confidence.... So we try to go back to the places where they were showing up as very confident people; everybody has their own list of places or incidents where they really showed up as confident people, most people, I mean. So, we try to take this energy and try to build on it. So, what is missing for you to show up really there? How can I help?

The focus of these practices is on uncovering information about the client's relationship to their life and work contexts through examining and comparing them. This examination helps the client locate what is happening in the self as these situations call up different modes of thinking, feeling, or behavior already available to the client. It also provides a client with access to personal

and perhaps safer spaces and contexts for potential later experimentation with new approaches or thinking.

Finding 3: Clarifying the Client's Desired State of Being and Situation

3a. Connecting to the Ideal State Clients Have Self-Knowledge About

In this theme, coaches help clients connect with what they already know about what the desired next step or the solution could ideally look like. Coaches ask clients to clarify their long-term and mid-term goals or vision; what their 75-year-old wise self would say or do. They ask clients to identify a picture of success, and express what they see as their future life, career path, and work environment. They work on identifying peak moments, what gives them life, and what they value most about themselves and others. They clarify aspirations and identify heroes, express which one or two things they would like more of in their life, and rate their priorities, goals, and satisfaction levels in different work and life areas. Alexandra described using a “client questionnaire” to capture these various aspirations as input to “subsequent coaching sessions”:

The client questionnaire talks about professional strengths, weaknesses, whom you admire, where you want to be in three to five years.... I use the client questionnaire just because I think it provides some context in terms of being able to use that information in subsequent coaching sessions.

The focus of these content reflection practices is on looking beyond the constraints of a current way of knowing to identify the desirable characteristics and criteria a client recognizes as important in developing a future state of being or improved situation or strategy related to their goals. In terms of facilitating transformative insight, these reflective practices serve to create tension with what is currently happening as driven by asking a client to imagine and examine other, more desirable possibilities for thinking, feeling, and behavior to outline the path to, down the line, the development of new a way of knowing.

3b. Identifying Desirable Characteristics and Criteria for Clients to Work Toward

In this content reflection theme, coaches invite clients to reflect on the thinking, feeling, and behavior they see and value in others and wish for themselves. Coaches ask clients whom they admire in their organization or life, and which attributes they appreciate about an important person, leader, or role model. Justine discussed how she would have her client reflect on the negative feedback he received about his leadership and think about “the leaders around [him] that [he] admires and respects” or other people in his life “that helped [him] grow and develop” to help him find better ways to engage “in a kind way” with others and “help center him on how he would like to be treated by people,” saying this is the “crux” of the practice.

From a perspective of transformative insight, the focus of these content reflection practices is to identify and examine what the clients find valuable and admirable in terms of the kind of development or capacity they would like to embody. In reflecting on the criteria in this alternative perspective, clients implicate themselves and their current way of perceiving, thinking, and feeling and, in doing so, start to visualize and understand development in a more ideal or desired direction.

Finding 4: Self-Discovery: Expanding and Deepening Self-Awareness

4a. Identifying Strengths, Blind Spots, and Shadows

In this theme, coaches introduce the clients to models, developmental frameworks, psychometric assessments, et cetera, to help them see and reflect on which self-knowledge clarifies their thinking, feeling, and behavior, as well as identify related strengths and areas of improvement. Coaches do this by helping clients see and identify personal strengths, blind spots, shadows, and limitations based on their own past experience and performance and by helping them recognize what does/does not characterize them in the variety of coach-selected models, methods, frameworks, or assessments they are introduced to. Audrey discussed the importance of finding ways to move conversations from concrete to more abstract focuses on self-knowledge, especially

with so-called “un-psychologized” clients who are not used to engaging in self-reflection as a resource for doing deeper work in coaching:

So, with that kind of client, sometimes it is necessary to bring in models and to try and show them, um, another aspect I find, because otherwise the conversation is very stilted, and it’s very superficial about, “I did. He did.” It’s about doing. With those clients, I might then kind of say, and that’s part of challenging for me, say, okay, there’s another way of looking at it. And if they say, well, I can’t see another way. Um, uh, no, no, no. This is, you know, they stick to their guns with everything. Then I might say, “Okay, can I share a piece of theory with you, or a model? Or can you read this?” And then depending on what we’re dealing with, I might ask them to look at something to see the other side.

The focus is on self-discovery for increasing the client’s understanding that they have the capacity for diverse modes of perception, thinking, feeling, and behavior. In this way, increasing a client’s self- and other awareness as well as a space to explore and examine the client’s overall reflexivity is implicated. In terms of facilitating learning toward transformative insight, coaches explain that clients who have an awareness of and understand the less fortuitous impact of their strengths, blind spots, and shadows are also open to using what is happening in them as a resource for understanding their perception of what is happening around them.

4b. Clarifying Values

The focus here is on asking clients to identify and articulate the values they feel are important to who they are and how they want to live. In this way, coaches help clients achieve greater self-awareness and alignment not only with what they make happen in the world but with who they are and what they see as significant and important. Coaches do this by asking clients which values come up in different situations and contexts as important to them or by doing value exercises. Valéria, for example, described how she first likes to have her clients express themselves and then “organically” connect to “the most important value that is coming up for [them],” something that she tends to “collect” over the course of coaching conversations to “put them all together”:

I like to work organically because I think whatever is most important will come up organically.... So I would just ask, “So what, what seems to be important to you then there, as you were saying that, what you think is the most important value that is coming up for

you?” And just keep it is like collecting those things from the conversation and putting them all together. “So, you have mentioned a few important things here. Um, so which one do you think is most important?”

In these practices, coaches help clients connect, through values, with what is important to them by talking about values to examine the meaning, reasoning, and priority behind the associations clients make between those values and their current life and work contexts. In terms of facilitating transformative insight, coaches help clients connect to the values of their internal selves and to recognize them for what they are in both what is happening in them and around them. Additionally, this understanding can act as input into process-level reflection, as in examining current or future associations with thinking, feeling, and behavior, or for a premise-level reflection on how these values have developed and can be redefined and redeveloped.

4c. Revisiting a Client’s (Hi)Story to Understand Past Experiences

In this content reflection theme, coaches ask clients to examine their life stories and histories to increase their understanding of who they are, where they come from, and what those (hi)stories have meant for what they perceive as happening around them. Coaches do this by asking clients to do a history or lifeline exercise that clarifies thoughts, feelings, events, and challenges and how the clients have come to understand themselves along the way; they explore clients’ turning points, their impact and progress made, definitions of success, accessing a client’s authentic voice for a perspective on how it has successfully guided them in the past. Sandra described using a “history template” in which she would have her clients reflect, in as “creative [a] way as possible,” on their past experiences and the “decisions they make,” which often helps expose some of the “patterns” that “were repeating themselves within [the client’s] history,” leading to “powerful revelations”:

What the “aha” moment was for him when he saw his history is that this had been a pattern of, of destroyed relationships over the course of his life. And not only was it just the CEO board relationship, but these same patterns of thoughts, same patterns of behavior, these same outbursts, even though they may have looked or been a little different, they were repeating themselves within his history. Um, and so just to have him step back and see that it was not only just this one relationship, but it was many relationships, was I think, such a

powerful revelation for him that he could then step back away from it and say, “Okay, now what, what do I do with this information?”

The focus of these practices is on understanding and interpreting the experiences, influences, and meaning of life journeys. Using a timeline as a comparative element driving retrospective content-level reflection, these practices examine the past and current ways of knowing. Coaches help clients see themselves, their environments, and learning in new ways. In terms of transformative insight, perhaps this not only reveals the relationships between the self and the environment, but it also shows very concretely how the beliefs behind the client’s current way of perceiving, thinking, feeling, or behavior came to be. By reminding the client that as what happens around us changes, what happens in us changes as well, one can infer that greater understanding and growth in ways relevant to the client can be tapped into or harnessed for growth going forward.

Finding 5: Noticing, Identifying, and Understanding the Meaning Clients Make

5a. Encouraging Venting

In this theme, coaches invite clients to share what is “bottled up” inside them to help them clarify their thinking and feeling, feel listened to, and filter through various topics to find what can be leveraged in coaching. Coaches do this by encouraging the client to “let loose” and talk through their experiences and struggles; by seeing what emerges for the client as particularly helpful, resonant, or really hard; and by asking the client to “lay out all the judgments” they have had about another person, to be open to what comes up organically in the moment, and to unload the emotional things they have been carrying (especially fears and vulnerabilities). William emphasized how “showing up in quiet mode” helps clients “spill their guts.” Further elaborating, he shared that he asks clients to “tell their story,” creating space for them to talk about “who they are and where they come from” as a “cathartic” process that creates trust:

I rely on creating this feeling of, you know—let’s talk a little bit about who you are and where you came from. So I have never not done that with any client. I think that the mere act of letting someone tell their story to you, you know, it gives them, it is cathartic in and of

itself, the restructuring and that if they trust you enough to tell you that story, you're manufacturing a very good relationship just by letting, by them doing it.

In these content reflection practices, clients share what is "bottled up" inside them to find the associations between the self and their experiences. As clients filter through various topics, they further find what is significant to them, which can be examined and leveraged in coaching. Coaches further feel that the process increases trust and the client's ability to show up in these ways in dialogue.

5b. Connecting a Client's Inner Experience to His or Her Outer Experience

These content reflection coaching practices encourage clients to connect with and understand their inner world and the associations they make when triggered by outer, real-world experiences. Coaches do this by looking for associations between outer world events and inner mental and emotional processes. Coaches facilitate the clients' noticing, naming, and giving language to their somatic or emotional states, ask the clients to reflect on their energy, emotions, and senses, and invite clients to reflect via guided visualizations. Coaches have clients tell stories they feel particularly connected to and strongly about, asking them to share inner questioning to try to get to the bottom of what is provoking or frustrating them. They use forms of simulation to have a client physically act out a scenario while recounting somatic experiences that emerge and imagining being in other people's shoes to notice sensations in the body, visualizing and identifying negative self-talk. Charlotte outlined a very interesting example of an "eMotive cards" exercise, which she uses to help her clients "develop a language around emotions" and normalize this form of expression and its nuances:

[I use] eMotive cards as well. Um, so they help people develop a language around emotions, especially for people who are of the school of "No, emotions have no place in the workplace."... You know, so eMotive cards can be really good for people who feel that it's quite difficult or say that they don't like to express emotion, and then they, they start with using cards like that and they see, "I use this language all the time. What am I telling myself here?"... It is a brilliant tool to get people to see something that um, has been playing on their mind, but I haven't really fully expressed it.

The focus of these practices is on helping clients become more conscious of the connection between what is happening simultaneously around them and inside of them. From the perspective of transformative insight, examining the relationship between beliefs and feelings helps clients put these two ways of knowing into perspective individually and together, growing the connection within the self, as well as understanding that the self is present in what is happening around them.

5c. Understanding How Clients Define and Make Sense of Things

In this theme, coaches invite clients to investigate and go beyond their daily language to more accurately understand the deeper definitions and significance of what is said. Coaches do this by purposefully creating spaces of pause and silence to create a “zone” that respects the weight and significance of something shared; allowing the emergence of insight by making things explicit (making them an object) to clients so that they can take perspective on them, for deeper exploration behind statements, to surface metaphors that can help them make connections; and by summarizing, paraphrasing, suggesting possible definitions to explore, and mirroring the client’s language. In this process, coaches also make sure to check on meaning, inquiring about definitions of values (e.g., “What does respect mean to you?”), actions taken or their success; asking what stands out for a client; and re-articulating what a client said. Elizabeth, for example, talked about the importance of “pausing,” “honoring,” and treating as a “gift” the moments when a client shares something “really significant,” which allows them to get into a “deeper space” of the client’s experience and meaning:

And so let’s, so I often say, “Wow, that’s big. Can we just pause there for a moment?” And I take a breath, and my breath is a signal to the client that they can take a breath and just create a safe space for that. And sometimes, they don’t say anything and then, you know, an emotion comes up or tears come up or, or they go on sharing. We’re deeper in that space in what they were just talking about.

The focus of these content practices is on exploring the underlying thinking, feeling, and behavior that can be accessed through the examination of language and communication patterns to bring more depth and understanding to what the person connects to an experience. In terms of

transformative insight, these practices help clients identify a concept, more discriminatively and meaningfully, that they had been holding consciously until that point, through expressing and examining new associations between what happens internally to what happens externally. In these ways, they are allowing the client to realize and experience the emergence of a need for a new and expanded way of knowing.

Finding 6: Getting Real—Challenging the Validity of Current Thinking, Feeling, Behavior

6a. Examining Contradictions in Thinking, Feeling, Behavior

In these content reflection practices, coaches assertively expose and explore client contradictions and inconsistencies in current thinking, feeling, and behavior. Coaches are doing this by asking clients to examine the beliefs they are avoiding when change feels difficult to them, by confronting the clients with the truth as coaches see it, or with explicit feedback from key stakeholders (e.g., to address unfounded fears a client has about their own performance). Coaches are holding up differences between what the client and his or her stakeholders see as results, seeing how a goal relates to counter-feedback the client is receiving, and exploring the uncertainty between the choices/options a client feels they have and those they actually have. Coaches also engage in mirroring a perspective on stagnated development when clients think they are developing. They challenge a client on whether his/her self-perception about the goals they want to achieve (e.g., wanting to be a supervisor) fits with their actual strengths (e.g., in supervising itself). For example, Robert described how a client needed to “stop and listen” to the feedback she was getting “over and over again,” to “set the stage” for coaching:

I mean, when we are hearing the same thing over and over again, from a variety of people, we probably should stop and listen to them. Um, and that is what I was trying to encourage her about this is, she was hearing the same thing over, “Why is this person saying this?”

Another important focus of these practices was nicely articulated by Valéria, who explained that when the client reflects on the feedback he is receiving, there needs to be a focus on making a distinction between what the client is “assuming” or “thinking” versus “what is the fact”:

So how much is he assuming, and how much has he actually engaged with people around him and trying to understand the relationships that he’s having, the system, the context in which he’s operating as well, and what might work in that context, because we also need to adapt to the context that we work in.... Um, and if there is, in fact, a discrepancy between how he’s thinking or seeing things, if he’s actually making assumptions....

In these coach practices for content reflection, coaches are holding up a reality where there appears to be a discrepancy in a client’s perception, thinking, feeling, or behavior related to what is happening and asking the client to examine that. As seen from the perspective of transformative insight, here it is significant that coaches have clients reflect on the congruence of these contradictions and inconsistencies in beliefs and, in doing so, test the validity of a current way of knowing that the client is perhaps not yet ready to relinquish. While the result of this might produce a broader perspective, it could also implicate the self in an awareness of outdated, worn out, or non-functional beliefs that the client has not vetted in a critical way, and client defenses around this way of knowing may also be challenged.

6b. Examining the Evidence for and Justification of Current Thinking, Feeling, Behavior

With these practices, coaches ask clients to share their justifications for current thinking, feeling, and behavior by examining the validity of their current thinking and explore the possible limitations of reasoning and evidence. Coaches do this by asking clients for objective evidence and asking them to provide proof for a belief (e.g., “I am a great mentor”) through providing concrete examples to support their claims (e.g., “tell me a number of times employees have asked to be mentored by you”). Coaches also ask clients for evidence of the perceptions and judgments they have about other people, asking them on what basis they are making a validity claim about their beliefs (e.g., being right about everything), and confronting clients with a request for reflection on a

set of clear patterns of feedback that contradicts the client’s expressed beliefs. Along those lines, Robert described how “digging into” evidence and justification helps him get real with clients:

I have him, I would have him tell me about those results [the client is getting]. I really want him to, so I would be prepared to be able to say, “Well, you know, from your peers, these are the results.” Right? I think that would be a good key question with those stakeholders: “From your subordinates. These are what they see as results from your boss... commonalities, and here are the differences.”... I think it was looking at defining results. And so, the results, you know ... seeing where that match and mismatch is, and then digging into that, I think is very valuable.

The intent of these practices is to be frank and transparent with clients about the reality of their current way of knowing from the perspective of evidence and reasoning that justifies beliefs in order to help clients better examine what is happening in them, others, or the world around them. As for the relationship to transformative insight, these coach practices help the client face the limitations of a current way of knowing, based on what is happening around them, in order to clear the way for a new way of knowing and perspective on what is happening to emerge.

Section 4: Client-Focused Reflective Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight—Process Reflection

In this section, the main analytic themes and related subthemes for *client-focused reflective* practices at the level of process reflection are presented, as well as the distribution of the main themes across the sample to indicate the extent to which the 21 coach participants, during the semi-structured interviews, privileged each of the process reflection themes in their discussion of coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight.

As can be seen in Figure 5.5 and Table 5.5 below, the most often discussed coaching practices at the process reflection level were the ones related to helping the client explore alternative perspectives (23.08%), followed by practices focused on “getting real” with the client by challenging the validity of their current approach (21.30%), and the practices for defining the client’s new approach (18.34%). Somewhat less frequently discussed were practices aimed at discerning the client’s current approach and its impact (14.79%), practices aimed at helping clients with

experimenting and integrating new approaches (11.83%), and practices for resolving a client’s stuckness (10.65%). Interestingly, coaches’ attention and intention at a process-reflection level seem to be about centering the coach-client energy on the need for an alternative and broader perspective and its associations in perceiving, thinking, feeling, and behavior toward a new way of knowing. Coaches are less frequently attending to resolving (emotional) stuckness and resistance to change, helping clients experiment with and integrate new approaches during and understanding what drives the clients’ current approach (see Figure 5.5 below).

Figure 5.5

Distribution of Process Reflection Coaching Practices Across Main Themes

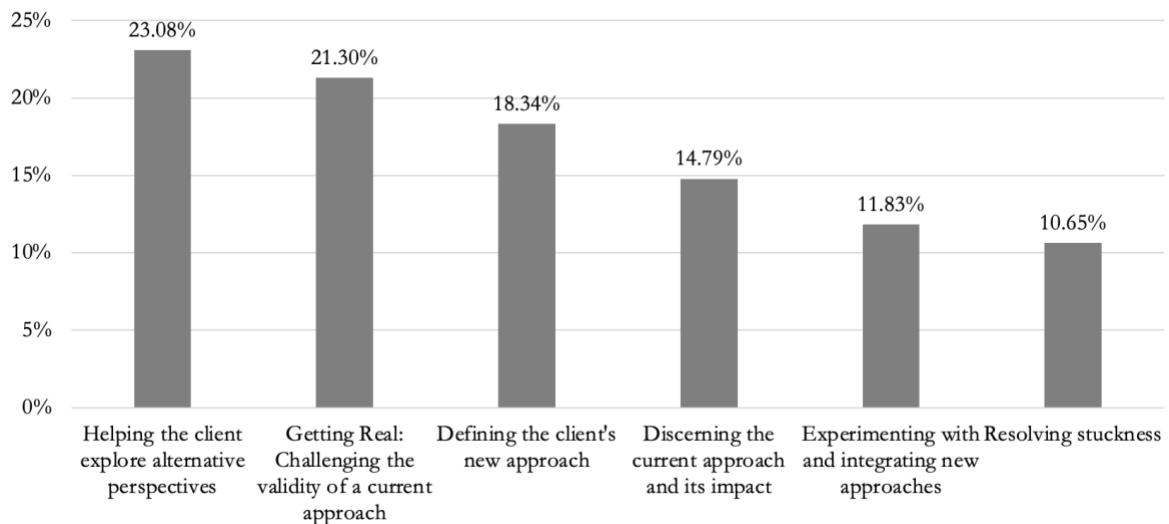


Table 5.5*Distribution of Process Reflection Coaching Practice Themes and Subthemes Across the Sample*

	Frequency	Percentage
1. Discerning the current approach and its impact	25	14.79%
1a. Exposing the (in)effectiveness of the current approach	17	10.06%
1b. Exploring the dependencies in and between the client's approach and context	8	4.73%
2. Resolving stuckness	18	10.65%
3. Getting real: challenging the validity of a current approach	36	21.30%
3a. Examining contradictions in the current approach	4	2.37%
3b. Examining the evidence justifying the current approach	32	18.93%
4. Helping the client explore alternative perspectives	39	23.08%
4a. Expanding the client perspective through facilitating the experience of multiple perspectives	12	7.10%
4b. Having the client experience their own approach through another person's perspective	8	4.73%
4c. Helping the client to take on a new perspective by accessing their own non-preferred ways of knowing	19	11.24%
5. Defining the client's new approach	31	18.34%
5a. Defining desirable approaches from an aspirational, future space	10	5.92%
5b. Exploring and designing new approaches	21	12.43%
6. Experimenting with and integrating new approaches	20	11.83%
TOTAL	169	

In what follows, the findings in the form of themes and related subthemes for reflective practices at the level of process reflection are described in more detail. For each subtheme, I also report on the findings from the perspective of transformative insight and the greater system that has emerged around transitions and support for facilitating it. As a reminder, along with the other levels of reflection practices, coaches sharing their experience in the study reported practices for context and conditions, as well as for themselves (self-as-instrument), as being areas of attention and intent in facilitating turning points in coaching.

Finding 1: Discerning the Current Approach and Its Impact

1a. Exposing the (In)Effectiveness of the Current Approach

In this process reflection coaching practice theme, coaches invite clients to explore, examine, and clarify their current approach comprehensively. As Robert put it, the focus is on facilitating the client's reflection on: "What applies here, what is working, what is not working, what needs to be retained, you know, with the client's input and expanded upon, what are we not thinking, right? And what can we bring in?" Coaches do this by introducing different external tools, concepts, and methods to bring perspective and focus to seeing, exploring, and understanding the current approach, for example, by applying the Immunity to Change model (Kegan & Lahey, 2009) or looking at polarities in their thinking. The focus is also on examining if a client is misapplying a strength they have in a situation that does not call for it, and here, it no longer acts as a strength; the coaches look for shadows, inconsistencies, (bad) habits, frames taken, how they manage themselves, et cetera. They leverage inquiry after a venting process to extract the one or two behaviors that come to the fore that relate to a current way of knowing, its perception, thinking, and feeling and hold that up as it associates with an approach. They look at where coping strategies are not working; they "shadow" their clients to see this thinking and behavior in action. Sandra described how she reflects back to her clients the "harshness" of their approaches to demonstrate its impact on others:

I had a female client most recently who was very technical and is now into a very people role. And, uh, so I did something similar to, to her to reflect it back, her harsh judgment of others. But when I did that, she was very taken aback, and she actually described it as a punch in the gut... It did turn out to be a turning point for her, but that initial reaction was, um, in her mind was quite bold.

In these process reflection practices, coaches help clients recognize a new understanding of a current way of knowing by way of the examination and development of its application and the (in)effectiveness of the current approach, outreach, or strategy. In terms of facilitating reflection toward transformative insight, coaches focus on helping clients view their current approach more

explicitly in light of its consequences in the world, how it affects, relates to, or implicates the self and the client's current perception, thinking, feeling, and behavior. In increasing awareness of and unearthing explicit discrepancies and ineffectiveness, coaches and clients can work together to bridge reality through the development of ways of knowing expressed in new approaches, outreaches, and strategies.

1b. Exploring the Dependencies in and Between the Client's Approach and Context

In this set of practices, coaches help clients reflect on personal contexts, for example, for life and work, to find the discrepancies and or areas for development in their current approaches and how they differ across contexts. As Gabriella described it, the focus is on exploring what underlies how, and in which situations, clients show up differently across contexts:

I want to know if [the client] was like this in every context, you know? So, if he had children or, if you know, in his marriage, like is he always this way or is it something that comes up at work?

Coaches do this by looking for situational incongruencies between life and work and inquiring about the feedback clients get from different relationships. They explore whether some approaches could be transferrable from one approach to another. Aleyna, for example, asked her client what it would look like if he “showed up fully” at home and work as he does during their coaching sessions: “So you are showing up fully in my session; how would it look like if you show up fully at work? How would it look like if you show up fully at your household?”

Further, coaches have clients reflect on the ways in which various contexts influence the extent to which they could be successful, identifying contexts in which they have been able to show up as their authentic selves. The exploration of the client's awareness around “who he is being in other situations,” and of the fact that “the same things seem to be happening” across contexts was described by Valéria:

It might be useful, as well, to explore outside of the work context and in a more personal context; if the same things seem to be happening, is he getting the same kind of

feedback? And does he have any awareness of, or has he ever had to, maybe there are contexts in his life where he does not operate the same way? So trying to explore those and see, who are you being in that other situation? How does that change in relation to when you're at work, and what does that mean for you?

In these coaching practices, coaches help clients examine the grounds and reasoning for and the relationships between the approaches they take and the situations and contexts they respond to. In terms of transformative insight, this subtheme exposes the beliefs held by clients in their current way of knowing and surfaces its dependencies. In localizing and freeing the self as it relates to its responsibility in light of these dependencies and in understanding the specific criteria, demands, and opportunities that exist around the client and how these are related, coaches work with clients to let go of a current way of knowing that no longer serves them in some way.

Finding 2: Resolving Stuckness

In this process reflection theme, coaches help clients reflect on the feelings of disorientation, internal inertia, or stagnation (“stuckness”) they are experiencing regarding an issue or situation they cannot resolve. Coaches explore a client’s defense mechanisms, negative self-talk, and responses to criticism and expose the underlying motivators and resistance to change. Coaches attend to issues with confidence and shadows, identify competing commitments, and help clients express inner voices. They discuss fears around the sense of loss of autonomy, control, or status. They examine what is at stake around changing a current approach. They gently bring clients into a space they try to avoid and try to carefully expose and resolve internal conflicts behind the approach currently in place. George described exploring deeper, more emotional issues with a client to get to the heart of understanding and keys to a current approach to move beyond it:

I work with those deeper emotions of betrayal, forgiveness, permission, you know? ... you know, the normal executive way of saying it is, “Have you given yourself permission to make that mistake, Bill?”

The focus of these practices for process reflection is to help clients find and start the process of releasing a defense, tension, or fixation around a current approach that is no longer working for

them, by examining the beliefs related to that approach and how it is serving them—and not serving them—in deeper, more psychological ways than they might recognize. As related to transformative insight, these practices investigate and create understanding around the current and new way of knowing (one’s thinking, feeling, and perception) and are tapping into multiple domains of knowing (e.g., emotional, somatic, spiritual). By helping clients find, see, and examine, for themselves, the discrepancies, contradictions, and disconnections embedded in a current approach, clients gain an important understanding of what keeps them entrenched in old approaches and current issues, dilemmas, and situations. This, in turn, reduces the need for and wish to continue with an old approach to knowing and beginning to move beyond that toward greater vitality and vigor.

Finding 3: Getting Real: Challenging the Validity of a Current Approach

3a. Examining Contradictions in the Current Approach

In this theme, coaches help clients reflect on the discrepancies and contradictions in their current thinking on the one hand and their behavior on the other. Coaches challenge clients to reflect on the discrepancies between their values, the role models they follow, the stories they tell themselves, and the behaviors expressed in their current approach. William described an approach he takes to confront and “corner” the client to “get real” about “self-sabotaging, self-defeating behaviors” standing in the way of getting a much-desired promotion:

And so, of course, to get him to talk about why he really wanted it, um, would be a way, which is, and I would assume that he really does want it and that he would have very coherent reasons for wanting it would mean that at some point later on I would be able to tell him precisely why he was never going to get it and why his, you know, his self-sabotaging, self-defeating behaviors, ruled him out for any senior position.... So we talk about the values, we talk about how important it is that he got it. And then the cornerstone of my approach, as I described to you before, would be to get him to talk a little bit about, um, why he does behave the way he does.

The focus of these process reflection practices is on exposing the inconsistencies in clients’ espoused beliefs and the reality of the approaches they take, in line with a challenge they want to resolve or a goal they want to achieve. In terms of transformative insight facilitation, coaching

practices in this space expose and examine the tension and deceptions around a way of knowing, which has been assumed, taken for granted, or unexamined to the extent that disjointed thinking and behavior could exist at the same time in the current approach. Through an awareness of these dynamics, the self becomes implicated in its own responsibility and search for coherence, which will lead to adjustments and growth in a new approach.

3b. Examining the Evidence Justifying the Current Approach

In this set of process reflection coaching practices, coaches facilitate reflection on evidence that relates to the justifications of a client's particular approach by exposing the consequences, effectiveness, and impact of that approach. Coaches ask clients to provide evidence and clarify their beliefs about the effectiveness of the approach. They challenge clients by pointing out self-sabotaging behaviors. Coaches expose values that are no longer working for the clients, challenge clients' conclusions about the outcomes of their actions, expose a mismatch between approach and goal through continuous feedback and by asking questions that help clients see and recognize tensions and impact more realistically. George shared practices focused on the "impact [that the client's approaches] have on others," and on making the client's role in "creating the very challenge" explicit:

You can always ask the simple question, what impact did that have on others? Because you can tell he doesn't care, his statement was "that's their problem." I would probably want to challenge that... "Well, how does their problem become your problem?"... I like to ask this question at some point.

The focus of these coach practices for process-level reflection is on exposing the deception, limitations, inefficiencies, and the illogical, counter-productive, and self-sabotaging nature of the current approach when a client does not yet see or take responsibility for it. As it relates to transformative insight, coach practices in this subtheme expose and support the examination of the limitations of a current way of knowing and implicate the self in that process. Coaches help clients see their approach and themselves more comprehensively and honestly.

Finding 4: Helping the Client Explore Alternative Perspectives

4a. Expanding the Client Perspective Through Facilitating the Experience of Multiple Perspectives

In this theme, coaches invite clients to experiment with different perspectives on their current approach. Coaches do this by exploring a client's perspective-taking capacity and willingness, introducing the idea that perspectives expand thinking, and by sharing appreciation for the value that multiple perspectives bring. Coaches ask the clients to take another angle; they imagine other approaches and share them with the client to trigger new perspectives and ask the client to imagine which additional outcomes different perspectives and approaches could bring. Albert discussed using "dialogue mapping," a visual tool for capturing multiple perspectives as a way to help clients expand their own:

I find it really, really useful in helping people conceptualize a much, much bigger picture and where their perspective fits into the overall and multiple perspectives that are in an organization around a particular problem. Often just putting it up on the screen in real-time, that's when a conversation emerges, often changes the way people look at it, you know?

The focus of these practices is to help clients see, envision, or make contact with other perspectives in order to examine, more fully and granularly, the limitations and merits of their own way of knowing. In doing so, and as related to transformative insight, the focus here is on helping clients take perspective on the tensions between an external view and their current way of knowing and become more critical of their own approach and appreciative of other approaches. These comparative process-level practices help clients see their own approaches and the related consequences in a more realistic and critical light and serve to implicate the self in the process, as well as provide alternative perspectives lighting the path forward to a new way of knowing and its approaches.

4b. Having the Client Experience Their Own Approach Through Another Person's Perspective

In this process reflection theme, coaches ask clients to see themselves through the lens of another person's perspective. Coaches do this by engaging clients in listening exercises, confronting the client with the kind of approach they take with others, and by putting the client in the roles of stakeholders around them. Most coaches mentioned engaging in role play as an effective way of having their clients more deeply see, reflect on, and experience their own approach. Audrey described asking a client to "like put [himself] in the other person's shoes" so that he can "get some insight about how [the other person that irritates the client] sees you from where he is at," sharing that clients respond with interest:

Do you think you can do it? Most clients can. It's amazing how interested they are to actually go into the other person's shoes. It's incredible. I don't, I can't recall once where somebody couldn't say they couldn't, even with people that really, really are difficult for them. They almost invariably can. And then for a few minutes, we will have a conversation, then I'll stop, and I'll say, okay, anything, did you get any insights? Anything that you noticed that might be new or shifts your perception?

The focus on process-level reflection facilitated through these practices relates to how coaches help clients examine and explore new perspectives on their current approaches and themselves. In terms of facilitating a process of transformative insight, coaches lead the client through an experience and understanding of how others experience their approaches. Through the personal experience of empathy for another in receiving one's own approach, clients learn to see and take responsibility for their approach and develop a desire to change it and, in doing so, grow into a new way of knowing that will transcend the current way they see and respond to their environments.

4c. Helping the Client Take a New Perspective by Accessing Their Own Non-Preferred Ways of Knowing

In this theme, coaches challenge clients to go outside their comfort zone by having them imagine or experiment with angles and approaches the client would not normally be inclined to use or may not have an awareness of as being useful. The intent is to help clients take perspective on the

limitations of their current way of knowing. One can assume, based on the counter-balanced offerings mentioned by coaches, that many have clients with a strong orientation to the cognitive-rational. Process-level practices for understanding and building on a repertoire of multiple approaches are facilitated by coaches to help clients access their less preferred other ways of knowing, including non-analytical, intuitive, emotional, and somatic ways of knowing. Coaches are doing this by engaging right-brain thinking in left-brain clients; engaging polarity thinking for “black-and-white” thinking clients; having a client tell a complex story in simple language; and getting clients out of their heads and into their hearts to disrupt their thinking and expose their automatic, preferred approaches (and the limitations thereof) and get them to move toward accessing their other options, already present (but underused). Alexandra, for example, described facilitating such a practice with a client who is “used to being dominating,” and tends to talk a lot, by having him “sit in silence” with his “eyes closed” and “feet on the ground” and share his reflections on this, for him, out-of-comfort-zone experience:

Another example, I guess, would be one client, a potential client; we met, and I asked him a question, and he talked for 20 minutes. And so, part of it is just interrupting, like really interrupting things. And I know coaching schools won't recommend this, but he's talking, he's talking, he's talking, and I'm getting more and more tired, and I can't interject, and I'm really good at that usually, but I just can't get in. Anyway, I just finally went, STOP! He looked kind of startled, and he kept talking, and I said, no, stop. Stop talking. Please, stop talking. And he just kind of, like, it totally interrupted the pattern, right? It's just kind of like, holy cow, what's going on? And I shared my feeling with him, and I said, I'm feeling really tired. I don't know if you realized, but you answered this question four times in four different ways. You haven't allowed any space for me to interject. And he said, well, you asked me a question. I said I did, but I really wanted this to be more of a dialogue, so are you prepared to play a bit? And he said yes, and I said, okay, we're going to sit here, you're going to put your feet on the ground, on the floor, you're going to put your arms on the chair, you're going to close your eyes, we're going to close our eyes, and we're just going to sit in silence for a minute. I could see the fear in his eyes, he's like, “Oooh,” but he did, and he played that was only about 45 seconds. And afterwards, I asked him, how do you feel? He's like, oh I was just really scared, like really scared. I just went, okay so what made you scared? Well, I'm sure he hadn't been quiet for a minute for a long time, and he was used to being dominating and he was a big man, and he took up a lot of space.

The focus of these practices is to help clients examine, gain awareness of, and experience the impact of their acts of perception, thinking, feeling, and behavior on others and what exactly they are trying to (re)solve through them. As for facilitating practices for transformative insight, coaches introduce clients in very visceral and experiential ways to the impact and limitations of their current approaches stemming from their current way of knowing. In doing so, they help clients find the challenges behind the challenges of approaches they take and find that space of development and transition to a new way of knowing and its connection with new approaches and impact in the world.

Finding 5: Defining the Client's New Approach

5a. Defining Desirable Approaches from an Aspirational, Future Space

In this set of coaching practices, coaches invite clients to imagine, connect with, and identify the desired and ideal characteristics of a new approach that, once implemented, will help them resolve their challenges more in line with their values and aspirations. Coaches facilitate such practices with a focus on external reference points in order for clients to identify role models (e.g., leaders they “appreciate” and “admire” and see as “successful”) in their lives, who are doing something they cannot yet do but who can be an example for identifying possible approaches clients could take. Another intent that coaches have is to help clients “move” into the future to bring to the surface the ideals and knowledge they have, but are not attending to in the present, in line with the goals they want to achieve. Justine described using one such aspirational approach to help her client define a new approach that would help him get to where he wants to be in his career:

One of the other areas I would ask about would be for him to reflect on somebody that he wants to move up [to], so to whatever the next level is. To have him kind of consider the people that he knows in his company that are already in those roles, and share with me what their role modeling, and what their style, their approach, is to managing the business, who he sees as successful in these roles. Having him reflect to me, and to himself, obviously more importantly, how they are successful, why they're successful, what do they do? What does he appreciate about how they show up?

Here coaches support clients in examining values and ideals as guidelines for developing new approaches and toward the development of the ways of knowing they relate to. As for facilitating transformative insight, here coaches focus on supporting clients in the process of creating the contours and content of new approaches in line with a new way of knowing. They tap into a client's imagination, experience, and less conscious modes of understanding to find resonant examples that the client feels could be helpful to them in their situations.

5b. Exploring and Designing New Approaches

In this theme, coaches help clients think through internal reference points and understanding for input to designing new approaches that could work for them in resolving their challenges and achieving their goals. The focus in these coaching practices is to reduce the constraints around visualizing new possibilities, as well as reduce the resistance to a “new approach,” by helping clients connect to and design an approach that feels natural, doable, helpful, value-oriented, and engaging. Coaches do this by asking clients to imagine what their new approach would look like if they were to privilege something, for example, a value, that is important to them. They ask clients what they would do if they were not trying to hide from their “saboteurs” (Chamine, 2012). Coaches have clients look into other aspects of possible approaches that are important to their success (e.g., if I want more connection, I need to not only change the quality of my approach, I also need to see people more frequently). They use metaphors and analogies that resonate with a client to explore or design an approach with a greater purpose in mind or to find and incorporate success criteria in the heart of a new approach. Daivat described using “examples and stories and anecdotes” of other peoples’ approaches for the client to think through and try out, all along following what that process is like for the client:

So I would give him examples and stories and anecdotes of “Oh, others have done that. I have done it these stages.” And ask him, “Would you like to try any of these?” And he would go and try and uh, come back and share his emotions saying that this worked, that didn’t work, or I hesitated, um, you know, and uh, but he said that I can see some changes in

me and I would say, “how are you feeling about it?” Initially, he would say, “Not much. I feel like I’m, I’m trying to do something which I am not used to. It is not natural.” So it is a process.

In facilitating process-level reflective practices in this theme, coaches help clients look for new ways to address their challenges to build new approaches. In terms of how coaches facilitate learning toward transformative insight, coaches tap into a client’s values and authentic preferences and privilege the use of imagination and intuition in helping them connect with and examine potential new ways of knowing. With this clarity and connection in place, coaches create a situation where new perceptions, thinking, feeling, and behavior will align around a new approach. Engaging positive client emotions and reducing the constraints of current ways of knowing are key aspects of these practices that coaches are using to help clients see and work toward a new approach through a new way of knowing.

Finding 6: Experimenting with and Integrating New Approaches

In this set of process reflection coaching practices, coaches facilitate clients in the cycles of experimentation and evaluation of their new approaches. The focus is on keeping the experimentation doable and safe and examining the outcomes, shortcomings, and benefits of new strategies and behavior for more information helpful to finding and finalizing the new approach. Coaches ask clients to see this phase as a process of warming up, not a “bomb going off,” keeping steps and tests incremental, micro, and subtle. Coaches check in with clients between sessions and acknowledge and attend to stuckness, vulnerabilities, and fallback as they occur. They work with clients to design or refine approaches that are not yet working, investigate other aspects of an approach (e.g., language and demeanor) that could be improved or introduced, and facilitate the practice of affirmation to increase the client’s confidence through experimentation. In continuation of Daivat’s descriptions of using “examples and stories and anecdotes” of what other people have

tried as an anchor, it is interesting to see that she also elaborated on what the process of experimentation around the implementation of these new approaches was like, by asking the client:

“What happened in the last couple of days we have not spoken?” And I’d ask him, “Tell me one or two examples where you applied this or situations where things happened.” And he would tell me the examples of situations where he tried to apply, or he would just even come and jump out and tell it himself with a lot of excitement. Sometimes not even wait for a coaching lesson. I have had calls in between as well, saying, “Hey, something interesting happened. I need to talk to you.” Those were the moments where I could clearly understand that he’s changing, his behaviors are changing, and he’s able to start to apply some of these things and see the changes and be able to clearly, you know, uh, look at the mirror and say that, okay, I got to do this for my own long-term benefits.

Coaches facilitating these practices report that, with them, they continue engaging a client after an initial definition of a new approach and in the process of integrating that new approach. Relating this to the process of facilitating learning toward transformative insight, coaches say that the process, including a new approach and its related beliefs in one’s repertoire and of growing into a new approach, is one that needs time and attention. Coaches continue working with a client on getting feedback and information beneficial to the examination of how successful a new approach is both in impact as well as the fit with who the client is. In this way, coaches continue to facilitate how the client develops into a new way of knowing that supports that approach. Coaches value how reflection and examination continue to produce new learning along the way in support of integration.

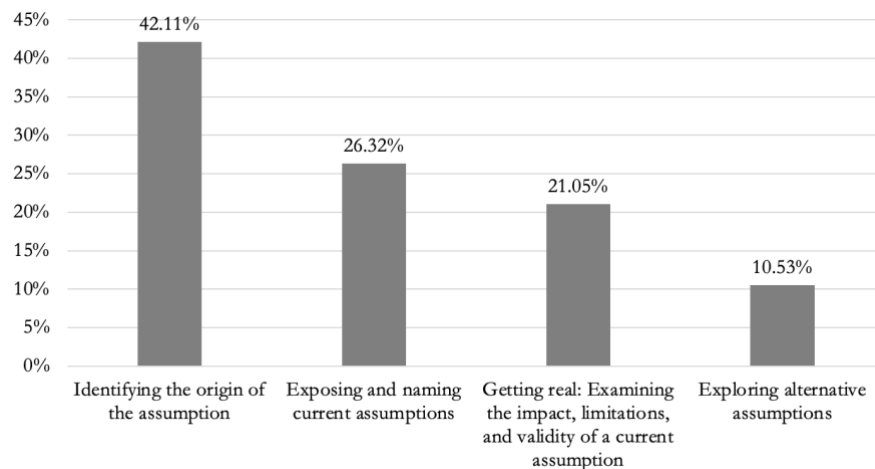
Section 5: Client-Focused Reflective Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight—Premise Reflection

In this section, the main analytic themes for client-focused reflective practices at the level of premise reflection are presented, as well as the distribution of main themes across the sample to convey the extent to which 21 coach participants, during the semi-structured interviews, privileged each of the premise reflection themes in their discussion of coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight.

As can be seen in Figure 5.6 and Table 5.6 below, the most often discussed reflective coaching practices at the premise reflection level were the ones related to helping the client identify the origin of their assumption (42.11%), followed by practices focused on exposing and naming the client’s current assumptions (26.32%), and the practices for “getting real” with the client in terms of examining the impact, limitations, and validity of their current assumption (21.05%). Somewhat less frequently discussed were coaching practices aimed at helping clients explore alternative assumptions (10.53%).

Figure 5.6

Distribution of Premise Reflection Coaching Practices Across Main Themes



Looking at this set of coaching practices for premise-level reflection, coaches’ facilitation moves from a more implicit focus on assumptions to a more *explicit* assumptive system focus as related to their current challenge and their engagement with reality. In these practices, the coach and client focus on examining the inner world of assumptions driving the client’s perception, thinking, feeling, and behavior and not on *what* they know (content reflection) or *how* they know (process reflection), but instead on the very premises and reasoning, the *why* on which the development of knowing has been built.

Table 5.6

Distribution of Premise Reflection Coaching Practice Themes Across the Sample

	Frequency	Percentage
1.Exposing and naming current assumptions	10	26.32%
2.Identifying the origin of an assumption	16	42.11%
3.Getting real: examining the impact, limitations, and validity of a current assumption	8	21.05%
4.Exploring alternative assumptions	4	10.53%
TOTAL	38	

Next, the findings in the form of these main analytics themes for premise reflection practices are described in more detail.

Finding 1: Exposing and Naming Current Assumptions

In this set of premise reflection coaching practices, coaches help clients uncover and name the assumptions at play with the intent of utilizing these assumptions as an object of reflection. Coaches do this by asking clients outright what their assumptions or beliefs are (approaching it “head on”), asking about the client’s “philosophies” and belief systems, clarifying the *why* behind what is important to them when they get stuck, and using exercises or models to expose assumptions (e.g., Immunity to Change [ITC], Kegan & Lahey, 2009). Anita described using a “stream of consciousness” writing exercise to access some of the client’s thoughts and, through

exploring the “opposites,” arrive at their “core belief that’s driving all the others,” eventually leading to a different kind of thinking, the process she calls “rewiring”:

Well, I think with beliefs, it is uncovering what the core belief is, right? And sometimes, I’ll have clients, write, you know, they’ll have a sheet of paper, and they’ll put a line down the middle and I’ll have them write, you know, stream of consciousness, write every thought that comes to mind on one side of it, you know the hamster wheel on one side. And then, on the other side, just write down the opposite. What would the opposite thought be around that? And typically, they can find the core belief that’s driving all the others. And so, once they are clear that the core belief is, I don’t feel worthy, or I don’t feel loved or whatever it may be, and they start inputting the positive belief, every time any of the negative beliefs come up, they’re able to start rewiring or something, it is like taking out old software and putting in new.

Finding 2: Identifying the Origin of the Assumption

In this theme, coaches help clients clarify the origins of the currently held assumptions that influence the clients’ *whys* behind their thinking, feeling, and behavior. The focus is on helping clients understand how prior experience and important others have led to forming the unexamined beliefs guiding their thinking, feeling, and approaches, mediating the challenges they are facing. Coaches do this by asking clients where their assumptions, beliefs, or philosophies come from, asking powerful and systemic questions about social norms and their influence on the client, and understanding the origins of value structures. Coaches use narrative techniques to show how our stories and their origins define us; they explore the *whys* of behavior and ask clients to pinpoint where that behavior began, examining past situations such as family systems and young adult (<21) and childhood experiences to expose unconscious defaults, voices from childhood, and feelings and lessons learned from how others treated the client to explore a deeper meaning behind their experiences. Eva described using inquiry, in a safe way, to help her client explore some “triggers from childhood” in order for him to detach from roles and identities “[the client] assumed that they might not be his”:

What comes up for [the client] around some of the frustrations, because there’s likely some triggers probably from childhood, um, not to turn it into a therapy, but mostly so that he can, could see, that he could start to detach a little bit from some of the roles and

identities that he's assumed that they might not be his. So I think asking questions around those kinds of things, find out what comes up with him around some of his thoughts and feelings and ideas, so that I could understand his worldview so that I could meet him where he's at, but then ask questions that could kind of expand from that worldview. So being able to honor him and again for it, of course, to be a safe space and for there to be rapport. So, questions around that.

The coaches explore the sources that have influenced the shaping of the clients' norms, values, expectations, their world views. These practices help clients move beyond resolving the problems to taking responsibility for resolving the problems in them, over time, leading to a true transcendence of a current way of knowing and toward a new one.

Finding 3: Getting Real—Examining the Impact, Limitations, and Validity of a Current Assumption

In this set of premise reflection coaching practices, coaches help clarify the impact and limitations of clients' currently held assumptions that influence their thinking, feeling, and behavior. The focus is on helping clients see their assumptions' related distortions, contradictions, complications, and constrictions in a new light. This reveals the ways these assumptions block the very resolution of their challenges. Coaches do this by provoking the client's deeper thinking, reflecting on whether past assumptions are necessarily true today, and reflecting assumptions back to the client while asking for elaboration. Coaches address assumptions indirectly by surveying consequences and responsibility; by asking the client to navigate an imaginary scenario, in which their assumptions and beliefs have been removed, to see how they had been directing behavior. They discuss constricted patterns and limiting self-beliefs and explore the fixations (e.g., how "wedded to the template" one is) clients have with assumptions. Valéria discussed helping a client through a decision-making process by using "imaginary scenarios" in order to "remove the complications" and simplify the process for the client. The goal Valéria had in this process was for the client to examine her assumption and the ways in which it was limiting her choices:

One thing that I like to do sometimes—assumptions and beliefs are quite complex, like there are several layers, and it is very intricate. Um, and especially if it is about making a

decision, I like to give the scenarios to clients to try and separate the different components of the problem. So, I remember a client saying once that, I do not know if ... let us see if I can remember, I do not know if I should get into another relationship or not right now. Um, some people tell me that I should because I have been alone, but I am not sure. And I do not know if I should do it now or should do it later, or, you know, there was a lot of ifs and whatnot. So, I just simplified. And I said, “Okay, so let us say, let us say you have a button that you can press. And when you press that button, you will meet the right person, and you, that can happen now, it could happen in a year, you choose. The thing is, when you press that button, you will meet the right person.” So, I was kind of removing the complications around finding the right person, not finding the right person, is it easy or hard? You just have this power, you have this button, you press, and then, um, would you press that button now? Or would you try it? Would you rather keep it for later knowing that you have nothing to lose, you will always find the right person. So, by separating the different components of a problem, she was able to decide for herself, I would not press that button now for sure. And she realized she needed time for herself. So I like to give, to uncomplicate and give imaginary scenarios for people to really understand, what is my belief or what is my assumption, or if I didn’t have this belief, what would I be doing instead?

Finding 4: Exploring Alternative Assumptions

In this theme, coaches help their clients discover and clarify new assumptions that could inform or expand the roots of their thinking, feeling, and behavior. The focus is on helping clients imagine, examine, and justify new assumptions that can serve as expanded guidelines for resolving their challenges. Coaches do this by calling out client assumptions and asking what other assumptions they could make in this situation, for example, by having clients represent a point of view they disagree with. Coaches also give clients a single frame of assumptions from which they must solve a problem and ask them to reframe their purpose to serve a greater value or truth while aligning it with their enacted approach, role, or responsibility. Alexandra described how she approaches such a practice “directly head-on” by “calling out the client’s assumption” and, through inquiry, engaging the client in the exploration of alternative assumptions she could make in a given situation. This, in turn, helps the client reflect on the ways in which clarified “assumptions might get [the client] into trouble” and toward “expanding the range of options” in the way the client thinks about the issue at hand:

I just, you know, I call out the clients’ assumptions, and then, so, you know, what other assumptions could you make in this instance? So, I’m playing the assumption piece, are you

assuming in this instance that this person is trying to piss you off? What other assumption could you make? Maybe they're stressed. Maybe they're ... like I don't tell them, what other assumption could you make for this kind of behavior? So now we're expanding the range of options. So, it's like oh maybe they're not mad at me, maybe something is going on for them that I don't know about, or maybe they had a bad day, who knows? So, it opens up that range of possibilities versus just focusing on how I'm reacting. So, I'm taking it from me to what's going on for them because a lot of times we think everything is about us, and most of the time it is not. When my clients say, well a person should do this, a person should do this. I go back to, who is the only person that you can control? And there you go, "yeah, me," because usually we've already had that conversation. And, how might your assumptions get you into trouble? What could be the risk in making those assumptions? What could you do to find out if this assumption is true? So, you know, I try and approach it directly head-on but with different ... it just really depends on the situation.

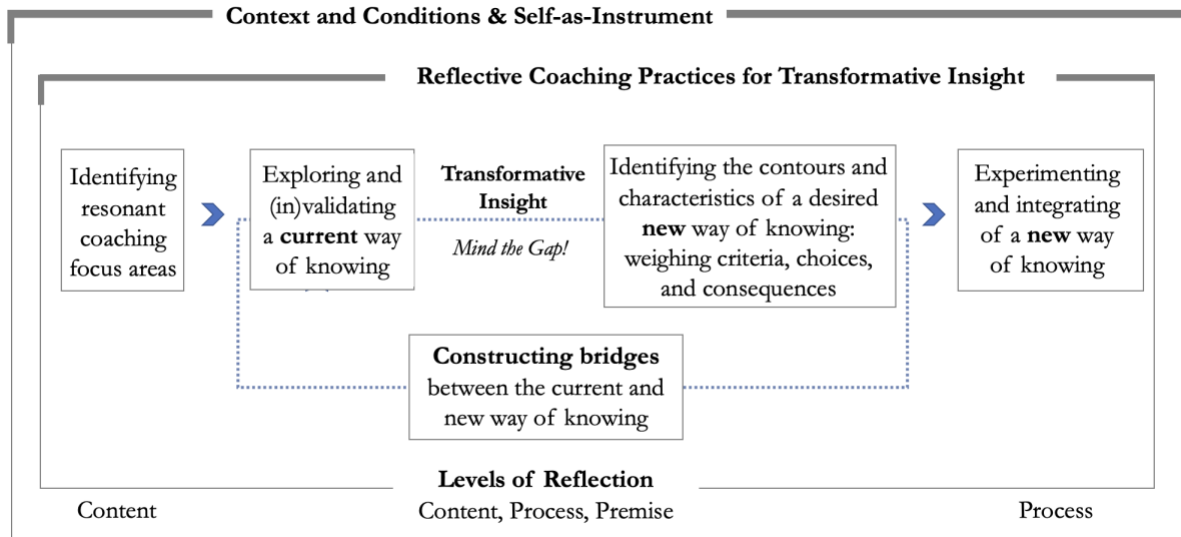
Interpretation and Synthesis: Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight

Based on the in-depth descriptive findings on coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight presented in the sections above, I now present the interpretation and synthesis of those findings in response to my first research question: *How do coaches describe and understand what they do in their coaching practices to facilitate transformative insight, and why? More specifically, how do coaches describe and use practices for different levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise reflection) to facilitate transformative insight?*

This big-picture interpretation and synthesis are anchored in the findings *across* all themes and *across* all three levels of reflection to arrive at an overarching model representing coaching process and practices for facilitating (reflection toward) transformative insight. To ensure that I represented *all* coaching practices that the study's population of 21 executive coaches deems as important in the process of facilitating transformative insight, in this model, I also included the *client-focused, non-reflective* coaching practices (i.e., context and conditions) and the *coach-focused* (i.e., self-as-instrument) practices. For the overview of the model, see Figure 5.7 below.

Figure 5.7

Coaching Process and Practices Model for Facilitating Transformative Insight



Revisiting the in-depth data, now from a broader perspective, allowed a few additional findings to emerge. First, while *client-focused, non-reflective* “context and conditions” coaching practices (i.e., meant to create the circumstances that best meet the client’s needs, preferences, and circumstances) and *coach-focused* “self-as-instrument” practices (meant to help the coaches self-regulate and navigate the coaching process more optimally, benefiting both the coach and the client) were not the main focus of my investigation, seen together, these practices create two components of the holding environment within which reflective coaching practices can occur in a more learner-oriented, safe, and synergistic way. Based on Winnicott’s (1965) definition, a holding environment refers to the “situation in which we exist,” the social, physical, psychological context(s) in which and through which an individual develops and comes to know and define his very self,” “the concept which itself ignites a vivid mental image of a person being held” (Popp & Portnow, 2001, p. 52). As such, their inclusion in the model was necessary so that the full picture of the dynamic of the process of facilitating transformative insight could emerge.

Second, when looking at the reflective practices at the content, process, and premise levels of reflection, an overall process emerged, representing a pathway for expanding the learner's perspective, which relates to Mezirow's (1991, 2009) perspective transformation and Kegan's (1982, 1994) subject-object move. Put simply, a process emerged that depicts moving the learner's *current* way of knowing (experienced as limited and standing in the way of one's challenge resolution toward goal achievement) to a *new* way of knowing understood by the learner as more desirable, effective, and accommodating their current experience. In this process, reflection is facilitated at all three levels (i.e., content, process, premise) with a few notable exceptions. I will touch on these as I describe each of the elements outlined in the above model (Figure 5.7).

Identifying Resonant Focus Areas for Coaching

This coaching process and practices model for facilitating transformative insight starts with identifying resonant focus areas for coaching. The intent of practices in this category, as the coaches described it, is to use a disorienting dilemma that brought the client to coaching (as well as its current impact on the client) as a portal to formulate a resonant and relevant goal (vs. going with the presenting, surface-level challenge). Additionally, coaches gauge the client's motivation for change and seek to understand what triggered the client to seek coaching, as well as the location of the emotional loadings or tensions, by providing a space for clients to vent and "lay it all out." Outlining the elements and demands of an experienced adaptive challenge (i.e., a challenge behind the challenge, one that directly implicates the client's current way of knowing and can only be resolved when their perspective "gets bigger") (Heifetz, 1998; Kegan & Lahey, 2009) becomes the (starting) variable of learning and development, which provides an overarching pragmatic and resonant focus for coaching.

Interestingly, in this part of the process, the reflective practices shared by coaches were only at the content reflection level (see Table 5.7 below for a full overview of how the main coaching

practice themes relate to each part in the above-outlined model). The absence of practices at process and premise reflection levels in this area might simply be that in order to start the process of perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1991, 2009) and subject-object move (Kegan, 1982, 1994), a client needs to have (and the coach needs to understand) a resonant and relevant space for reflection, that is, have a portal to identify an object of reflection. This is in line with Brookfield's (1991) central components or phases of the critical reflection process, the process which starts with "identifying the assumptions that underlie our thoughts and actions" (the *what*) (p. 177). It also aligns with Kegan's steps of the subject-object move, the first step being "naming the assumption" (Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002; as cited in Kegan, 1995; Kegan & Lahey, 2001) so that an assumption (the *what*) can move from subject to object, thus enabling a person to "look at it" instead of "looking through it" (Kegan & Lahey, 2001, p. 80). The data indicate that, at this part of the process, content reflection is sufficient for coaches to help clients identify "the *what*" of their perception, thinking, feeling, and behavior, thereby creating resonant focus areas for coaching and a starting point for reflections to come.

Exploring and (In)validating the Client's *Current* Way of Knowing

Once the portal to reflection is identified and the resonant coaching focus area is narrowed, coaches described engaging their clients in reflection aimed at exploring and (in)validating the client's current way of knowing. Specifically, using practices for facilitating reflection at all three levels (i.e., content, process, premise—see Table 5.7), coaches engage their clients in an active examination of the current perception, thinking, feeling, behavior, situation, and contexts, with the intention of increasing the clients' understanding of the self and its current way of making meaning and across domains of knowing (e.g., emotional, somatic, spiritual). The intent is to make these elements of knowing (and principles of organizing these elements) visible to the clients, to make them object so that they can look at them, reflect on them, take control of and responsibility for

them, and act on them (Kegan, 1982, 1994). Evidence is gathered from various sources (e.g., feedback, assessments, role-play) to identify clients' strengths, blindspots, past and current experiences, and dependencies between the client and the various contexts they are in. Additionally, the impact of those variables on clients' perception, thinking, feeling, and behavior is reflected upon as related to the identified coaching focus area. In this way, the boundary between the current way of knowing and its constraints, where the person is free and where they are captive, becomes visible to the client, thereby *indirectly* invalidating the current way of knowing and creating a more permeable opening to the necessity for change.

Identifying the Contours and Characteristics of a Desired *New Way of Knowing*: Weighing Criteria, Choices, and Consequences

Once the current way of meaning-making is brought into clients' awareness and its limitations more clearly exposed, the focus shifts to identifying the contours and characteristics of the desired new way of knowing. Specifically, using practices for facilitating reflection at all three levels (i.e., content, process, premise—see Table 5.7), coaches engage the clients in the reflective process of exploring and identifying possibilities for a newly expanded perspective by defining ideal desired states, values, and a long-term vision and in examining and weighing related criteria, choices, and consequences. The intent of this set of practices is to create the building blocks for developing a new way of knowing more aligned with clients' experience of where they want to go next. Once the contours of the current and new way of knowing are clear, and the gap between is identified, clients can compare and contrast the similarities and differences involved. This, in turn, helps them come closer to finding the path to becoming more authentic, open, and inclusive of experience, a demand on their current way of knowing that cannot be matched through a process of assimilation. At this point, the stage is set for constructing the bridges between the current and the new way of knowing, one equipped to meet that demand, to which I turn next.

Constructing Bridges Between the Current and New Ways of Knowing

Once the gap between the current and new ways of knowing is brought into the client's awareness (“*Mind the gap!*”), coaches facilitate reflection at any or all three levels (i.e., content, process, premise—see Table 5.7 below), with the goal of bringing these ways of knowing into the conversation and, as such, constructing the bridges that will close this gap. Specifically, in this part of the process, coaches engage the clients in active, explicit, and direct practices for “getting real.” Here, the clients sit deep in the tension of the gap. In this reflective space, clients are confronted with self-deceptions, dysfunctional coping mechanisms, and blindspots: the evidence of invalidity, incongruencies, inconsistencies, consequences, and contradictions in their perception, thinking, feeling, and behavior and the related costs of maintaining their current way of knowing (e.g., feelings of dissonance, reduced options, hampered progress to goal achievement). During “get real,” coaches invite clients to explore the assumptions upon which their current way of meaning-making is built and explore the ways in which these assumptions no longer hold true from the perspective of the clients' here and now. The intent of the “get real” practices is to create disequilibrium, or tension, in the beliefs stemming from the current way of knowing in order to motivate and accelerate the acceptance and construction of a new and expanded belief, one feeding into a more desirable, more complex (e.g., more valid, consistent, congruent), new way of knowing defined in the previous step in this process. And while (partial) transformative insights can occur at any step of the learning process, it is this sweet spot of learning and development, this exact gap, that holds the most potential for transformative insights to occur.

Experimentation and Integration of New Way of Knowing

Finally, after the bridge between the current and new ways of knowing has been constructed, the time has come for the handoff from the internal to the external world. Here, coaches work with clients to devise small and safe experiments to start integrating new perspectives, beliefs, and

approaches anchored in the new way of knowing and test and refine them in the “real world.” This gives the clients the data to evaluate, review, and adjust these perspectives, beliefs, and approaches further. This step reinforces the bridge between the current and new ways of knowing, thereby strengthening and, over time, internalizing the new way of knowing. Of significance and special note is that the data indicate that these reflective practices engage clients *only* at the process level (see Table 5.7 below). This finding is not totally surprising given that the intent behind this part of the process is very much aligned with the intent behind process reflection, which involves reflecting on the strategies and procedures of problem-solving rather than the content itself (Cranton, 2013; Mezirow, 1991) and relates to *how* one performs the functions of perceiving, thinking, feeling, and acting, as well as to an assessment of how effective that performance is (Wallman et al., 2008; p. 9).

Table 5.7

Mapping of Reflective Coaching Practice (Sub)themes to an Overarching Model of Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight

Step in the Facilitation	Level of Reflection		
	Content	Process	Premise
Identifying resonant coaching focus areas	1a. Clarifying the coaching focus and goal 1c. Identifying the challenge behind the challenge 5a. Encouraging venting so what is most salient can surface	X	X
Exploring and (in)validating current way of knowing (9)	1b. Getting feedback to identify what’s most important to work on 2a. Exploring the external context 2c. Reviewing life and work contexts to see the client more clearly 4a. Identifying strengths, blind spots, and shadows	1b. Exploring the dependencies in and between the client’s approach & context	1. Exposing and naming current assumptions

Table 5.7 (continued)

Step in the Facilitation	Level of Reflection		
	Content	Process	Premise
	<p>4c. Revisiting a client’s (hi)story to understand past experiences</p> <p>5b. Connecting a client’s inner experience to their outer experience</p> <p>5c. Understanding how clients are defining and making sense of things</p>		
Identifying the contours and characteristics of desired new way of knowing: weighing criteria, choices, and consequences (6)	<p>3a. Connecting to the ideal state clients have self-knowledge about</p> <p>3b. Identifying desirable characteristics and criteria around clients to work toward</p> <p>4b. Clarifying values as guidelines</p>	<p>5a. Defining desirable approaches from an aspirational, future space</p> <p>5b. Exploring and designing new approaches</p>	4. Exploring alternative assumptions
Constructing bridges between the current and new way of knowing (12)	<p>2b. Clarifying interpersonal differences and diversity</p> <p>6a. Getting real: Examining contradictions in thinking, feeling, behavior</p> <p>6b. Getting real: Examining the evidence for and justification of current thinking, feeling, behavior</p>	<p>1a. Exposing the (in)effectiveness of the current approach</p> <p>2. Resolving stuckness</p> <p>3a. Getting real: Examining contradictions in the current approach</p> <p>3b. Getting real: Examining the evidence justifying and challenging the current approach</p> <p>4a. Expanding the client perspective through facilitating the experience of multiple perspectives</p> <p>4b. Having the client experience their own approach through another person’s perspective</p> <p>4c. Helping the client to take new perspective by accessing their own non-preferred ways of knowing</p>	<p>2. Identifying the origin of the assumption</p> <p>3. Getting real: examining the impact, limitations, and validity of a current assumption</p>
Experimentation and integration of new way of knowing (1)	X	6. Experimenting with and integrating new approaches	X

Summary

In this chapter, I answered my first research question by presenting the findings on the coaching practices for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight at the content, process, and premise levels, as described and understood by the 21 executive coaches that participated in this study. For each of the levels of reflection, I presented the main coaching practice themes and related subthemes that emerged during the thematic coding process, both in terms of their prevalence (i.e., frequencies with which they were discussed) and the meaning and intent behind them (i.e., their shared patterns of characteristics).

To provide a big-picture perspective on the reflective practices of interest, and given the exploratory nature of this study, I also reported on the high-level findings on the other kinds of practices that emerged during the analysis process (and which were beyond the scope of this dissertation), namely, the *client-focused, non-reflective* coaching practices “context and conditions” and the *coach-focused* “self-as-instrument practices.”

Finally, looking at and interpreting all of the emergent practices coaches deemed important for facilitating transformative insight from a zoomed-out process perspective, I presented a synthesis of those findings in the form of a coaching practices model for facilitating transformative insight. The intent was relaying an overall system of facilitating transformative insight in coaching, one that includes the holding environment (as created through *client-focused, non-reflective* “context and conditions” and *coach-focused* “self-as-instrument” practices) within which the *reflective client-focus* practices at content, process, and premise levels occur. This system of facilitation holds the learner in safety and resonance, one that respects them and meets them where they are so that they can, in an optimal way, fully see, understand, and take (part of) their current way of knowing as an object of reflection, one that no longer sufficiently serves them. At the same time, this system of facilitation for transformative insight supports and challenges the learners to move beyond (part of) their

current way of knowing, to transcend and include it. As they slowly cross this bridge, they move into a space of new and expanded way of knowing, more truly representing who they are and where they are going next.

Chapter 6: Developmental Findings

In Chapter 5, I presented the findings on the coaching practices that 21 executive coaches found helpful for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight with their coaching clients. These findings are related to *client-focused, reflective* coaching practices across three levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise). Findings on those coaching practices were presented descriptively and in terms of their frequencies and were organized according to the themes that emerged during the thematic coding process. I will now look at these findings through the lens of constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994) to answer the second research question related to understanding how executive coaches with various forms of mind (or developmental capacities) differ in their descriptions, reasoning, and use of those reflective coaching practices. That is: *What relationship, if any, exists between the coaches' forms of mind and how these coaches describe what they do in their coaching practices, regarding the different levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise reflection), to facilitate transformative insight?*

To start, and as a reminder, I will briefly summarize the background of the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) (Lahey et al., 1988). Then I will present the SOI assessment findings that allowed me to identify each coach participant's form of mind, both in terms of the actual SOI score distribution found in the sample and in terms of the form of mind grouping (based on those SOI scores) that was used for comparison of coaching practices across various forms of mind throughout this chapter. Further, in this chapter, I will follow the same structure and procedure as the one used in Chapter 5 but now present the findings from a developmental perspective in line with answering the second research question. That is, I will look at and present the differences in the

participants' understanding and descriptions of reflective coaching practices for transformative insight across the three form of mind groupings: (1) Socializing transitioning *toward* a Self-authoring form of mind (i.e., *dominant Socializing* coaches with SOI scores of 3(4) or 3/4); (2) Self-authoring transitioning *away from* a Socializing form of mind (i.e., *dominant Self-authoring* coaches with SOI scores of 4/3, or 4(3)); and (3) *Fully* Self-authoring form of mind (i.e., *fully Self-authoring* coaches with an SOI score of 4). Once again, pseudonyms are used to protect the confidentiality of participant coaches. Finally, based on these in-depth findings, I will present a synthesis and a big picture overview of the main differences in how coaches who make meaning with different forms of mind differ in their approaches to facilitating reflection with their clients toward transformative insight.

Section 1: The SOI Assessment Findings—Coaches' Forms of Mind

As a reminder, the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) (Lahey et al., 1988) is a reliable method for assessing a person's form of mind. In this research, the SOI served to identify the complexity of the participants' meaning-making (i.e., form of mind) and current position along the developmental continuum as described by constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994) and to which of the three form of mind groupings each participant belonged. Seen as “theoretically the most elegant, and methodologically the most differentiated, of the theories and measures” of adult development (Torbert, 2016), the SOI allowed me to develop a nuanced perspective on the participant's subject-object development (Kegan, 1982), with a goal of answering the question, “From where in the evolution of subject-object relations does the person seem to be constructing his or her reality?” (Lahey et al., 1988, p. 7). *Subject* relates to those meaning-making elements we are identified or fused with and hence cannot control, be responsible for, or reflect upon. *Object* relates to those meaning-making elements distinct enough from us that we can reflect on, take responsibility for, control, and otherwise operate upon them (Kegan, 1994, p. 32).

As already mentioned, the main, qualitatively different subject-object relationships, or forms of mind (i.e., developmental capacities), found in adulthood are Instrumental, Socializing, Self-authoring, and Self-transforming (for a quick reminder of the main subject-object relations and related form of mind characteristics, refer to Figure 2.2 and Table 2.3 in Chapter 2). Each form of mind becomes incorporated into and expanded on in the next, more complex form of mind, a gradual process that takes years (Kegan, 1994). That is, the individuals do not make sudden jumps from one form of mind to another (from form of mind X to the next, more developed form of mind Y), and the SOI also identifies those transitional substages (i.e., X(Y), X/Y, Y/X, and Y(X)) between two main stages, or forms of mind, X and Y. X and Y indicate forms of mind where the subject-object balance is in complete equilibrium, and thus a person is making meaning fully from that form of mind (Lahey et al., 1988; Popp & Portnow, 2001). For a more detailed explanation of SOI scoring and analysis, please refer to Chapter 3, “Phase One: Assessment of Form of Mind—Subject-Object Interviews” section.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, each of the 21 SOI transcripts was independently analyzed and scored by two experienced, reliable scorers, including Dr. Popp. And while it has been considered sufficient to score around 30% of all SOIs to provide perspective into the reliability of scores (e.g., Lahey, 1986, scored 24% and Berger, 2002, 33% of all SOIs for reliability in their dissertations), I found it essential to have more certainty about each participant’s form of mind and more insight into the reliability of the scoring and scorers themselves before further analyzing the data and making any conclusions about the developmental findings.

The agreement between the two scorers on all participants’ SOIs was 100% (i.e., agreement within a single substage on the original score (i.e., exact score agreement) or no more than 1/5 of a stage apart on either side of the original score, Lahey et al., 1988). The exact score agreement was 90.52%. As for the two SOI scores with reliability but no exact score agreement, the final SOI

scores submitted for use in the data analysis were determined and agreed upon through an additional discussion by the scorers.

Table 6.1 below presents the distribution of the SOI scores and corresponding leading (or dominant) meaning-making structures identified in the sample of 21 coach participants. As can be seen, from the total of the 21 coach participants, none (0%) were making meaning from the SOI score 3(4) or a preceding (sub)stage; seven, or 33.33% of the sample, had an SOI score of 3/4, where both Socializing and Self-authoring forms of mind are active and operating, and where the leading meaning-making structure organizing a person's experience is the Socializing form of mind. Six participants (28.57%) had an SOI score of 4/3, where both Socializing and Self-authoring forms of mind are operating and where the leading meaning-making structure is the Self-authoring form of mind. Only one participant (4.76%) had an SOI score of 4(3), indicating that Self-authoring is the leading meaning-making structure organizing that individual's experience where the vestiges of the old Socializing structure still remain. Finally, seven, or 33.33% of the sample, had an SOI score of 4, where a subject-object balance is in complete equilibrium, where a person is making meaning *fully* from the Self-authoring form of mind.

As discussed in the Research Sample section in Chapter 3, initially, I aimed to include participants from a wider form of mind range in the research sample, but that proved difficult. More specifically, I was unable to populate the following initial form of mind groupings: the Socializing form of mind (i.e., coaches with SOI scores of 3 or 3(4)), the Self-authoring to Self-transforming form of mind transition (i.e., coaches with the SOI scores of 4(5) or above) and the fully Self-transforming form of mind (i.e., coaches with a SOI score of 5). This, in itself, is an interesting finding as it is, to an extent, at odds with Kegan's (1994) distribution numbers and especially with Perry's (2014) findings. I will discuss this point in detail in Chapter 7.

Table 6.1

SOI Score Distribution and Corresponding Leading/Dominant Meaning-Making Structures Across the Final Sample

SOI Score	Leading/Dominant Meaning-Making Structure	Frequency	Percentage	Participants, N=21
3(4)	Socializing	0	0%	-
3/4	Socializing	7	33.33%	Alexandra, Aleyna, Anita, Audrey, Catharina, Sandra, Valéria
4/3	Self-authoring	6	28.57%	Dara, Elizabeth, Gabriella, George, Hâi, Margaret
4(3)	Self-authoring	1	4.76%	William
4	Self-authoring	7	33.33%	Albert, Charlotte, Daivat, Eva, Justine, Robert, Viola

Based on the SOI scores obtained for this study's sample and having aimed for an equal distribution of participants across each form of mind grouping, the groupings achieved in this study are presented in Table 6.2 below. Specifically, from the sample of 21 participants, seven (33.33%) belonged to one of the following form of mind groupings: (1) Socializing transitioning *toward* a Self-authoring form of mind (i.e., *dominant Socializing* coaches with the SOI scores of 3(4) or 3/4; only 3/4 scores were found in this study's sample); (2) Self-authoring transitioning *away from* a Socializing form of mind (i.e., *dominant Self-authoring* coaches the SOI scores of 4/3, or 4(3)); and (3) *fully* Self-authoring form of mind (i.e., *fully Self-authoring* coaches with the SOI score of 4). Having an equal distribution of seven participants across these three form of mind groupings allowed me to draw conclusions about the differences, across forms of mind, among the coaching practices participants used to facilitate reflection toward transformative insight. Having seven participants in each form of mind grouping additionally provided me with enough breadth and depth in the data to identify meaningful concepts and patterns while at the same time reducing the risk of having too much repetitive data within each form of mind grouping.

Table 6.2*Distribution of the Form of Mind Groupings Across the Sample*

Form of Mind (SOI score)	Frequency	%	Participants, N=21
Dominant Socializing: Socializing transitioning <i>toward</i> Self-authoring (3/4)	7	33.33%	Alexandra, Aleyna, Anita, Audrey, Catharina, Sandra, Valéria
Dominant Self-authoring: Self- authoring transitioning <i>away from</i> Socializing (4/3 or 4(3))	7	33.33%	Dara, Elizabeth, Gabriella, George, Hải, Margaret, William
Fully Self-authoring (4)	7	33.33%	Albert, Charlotte, Daivat, Eva, Justine, Robert, Viola

Section 2: Coaches' Forms of Mind and Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight—The Big Picture

As already mentioned in Chapter 5: Descriptive Findings, even though the main focus of my research questions was on exploring coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight at three levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise), the analysis from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the study's 21 executive coaches revealed that in addition to those *client-focused, reflective* coaching practices, two additional categories of coaching practices emerged from the data: the *client-focused, non-reflective* coaching practices that I categorized as “context and conditions” and the *coach-focused* coaching practices I categorized as “self-as-instrument” (see Figure 5.1). In this section, I will report on the high-level findings for all three of these coaching practice categories in terms of the frequencies with which they were discussed by the participants in each of the form of mind groupings. I do this to provide a big-picture perspective on the overall coaching practices shared by participants during the semi-structured interviews, now framed from the developmental form of mind perspective. However, as directed by my research questions and the overall scope of this dissertation, in the rest of this chapter, I will focus on reporting the developmental findings only for the *client-focused, reflective* coaching practices at three levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise).

As seen in Table 6.3 and Figure 6.1 below, the participants in each of the three form of mind groupings mentioned *client-focused, reflective* practices (i.e., content, process, premise) approximately to the same extent. Out of the total of 410 reflective practices across all three levels of reflections, as captured and coded from the semi-structured interview data and based both on the practices from the participants' actual coaching client cases (i.e., critical incident) and a uniform, hypothetical coaching client case (i.e., vignette), 37.80% "belonged" to the dominant Socializing form of mind group, 30.00% to the dominant Self-authoring form of mind group, and 32.19% to participants from the fully Self-authoring form of mind group. Similarly, participants in each of the three form of mind groups mentioned *client-focused, non-reflective* "context and conditions" practices approximately to the same extent as the other two coaching practice categories. Of 241 context and conditions practices, 27.80% belonged to the dominant Socializing form of mind coaches, 37.34% to the dominant Self-authoring form of mind coaches, and 34.85% to the fully Self-authoring form of mind coaches. Finally, looking at the *coach-focused, self-as-instrument* practices seen by participants as important to the process of facilitating transformative insight, out of the total of 168 self-as-instrument practices, the least belonged to the dominant Socializing (20.24%), and the most were mentioned by the dominant Self-authoring form of mind group (45.24%). Fully Self-authoring coaches brought in self-as-instrument practices in 34.52% of the cases when discussing coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight. I will discuss the potential explanations for these findings in the next chapter.

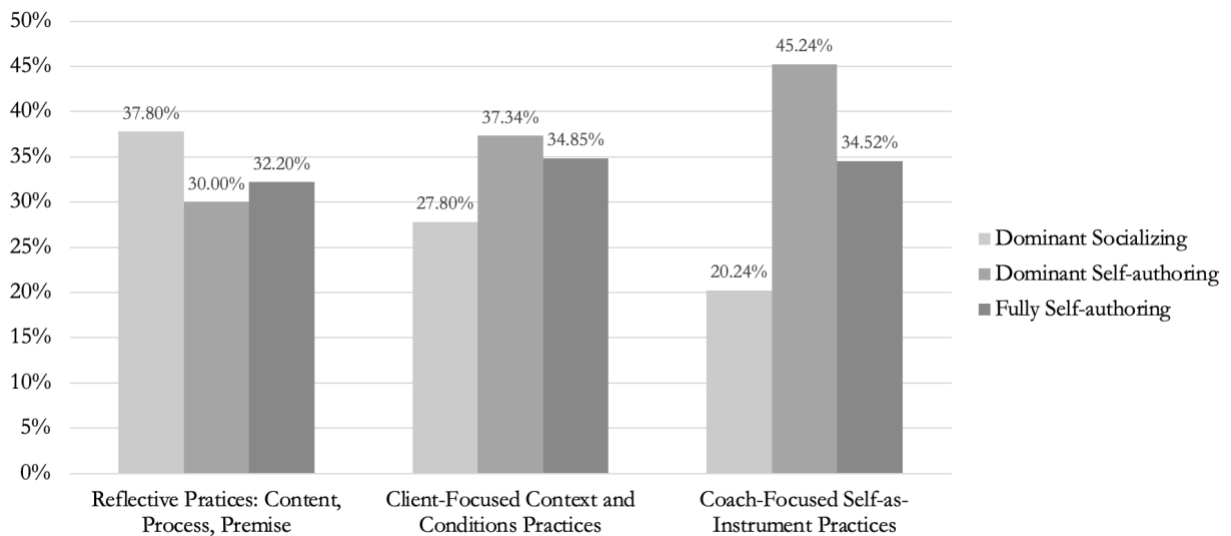
Table 6.3

Distribution of All Main Coaching Practice Categories per Form of Mind Grouping (Frequencies)

Form of Mind (SOI score)	<i>Client-Focused, Reflective Practices:</i> Content, Process, Premise N=410	<i>Client-Focused, Non-Reflective Practices:</i> Context and Conditions N=241	<i>Coach-Focused Self-as-Instrument Practices</i> N=168
Dominant Socializing: Socializing transitioning <i>toward</i> a Self-authoring (3/4)	155	67	34
Dominant Self-authoring: Self-authoring transitioning <i>away from</i> Socializing (4/3 or 4(3))	123	90	76
Fully Self-authoring (4)	132	84	58

Figure 6.1

Distribution of All Main Coaching Practice Categories per Form of Mind Grouping (Percentages)



With this big picture framing shared, I will next explore the high-level differences in the extent to which coach participants with different forms of mind privileged various *client-focused, reflective* coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight across each of the three levels of reflection—content, process, and premise—the main focus of my second research question. Once this high-level distinction in terms of frequencies is presented, in the following sections, I will focus

in depth on each of the main qualitative themes that emerged for the *client-focused, reflective* practices at the content, process, and premise levels of reflection across form of mind groupings.

Section 3: Coaches' Forms of Mind and Client-Focused Reflective Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight—Content, Process, Premise

In this section, the distribution of *client-focused, reflective* coaching practices at the content, process, and premise levels of reflection across the three form of mind groupings is presented as a way of conveying the extent to which the 21 coach participants, seven in each of the three form of mind groupings, privileged content vs. process vs. premise reflection while reporting on the coaching practices they used to facilitate reflection toward transformative insight.

As seen in Table 6.4 and Figure 6.2 below, participants from each of the three form of mind groupings mentioned content reflection coaching practices approximately to the same extent. More specifically, out of 203 reflective practices at the content reflection level, 33.00% belonged to dominant Socializing, 29.56% to dominant Self-authoring, and 37.43% to fully Self-authoring coaches.

Regarding process reflection, almost half of these 169 coaching practices stemmed from the coach participants making meaning from the dominant Socializing form of mind (46.15%). Coaches in the dominant Self-authoring (27.81%) and the fully Self-authoring form of mind groupings (26.04%) focused on process reflection practices to a similar extent.

Finally, looking at the total of 38 premise-level reflection coaching practices, the least belonged to the dominant Socializing group, that is, to the Socializing transitioning *toward* a Self-authoring (26.32%) form of mind group, and the most to the dominant Self-authoring form of mind group (i.e., Self-authoring transitioning *away from* Socializing form of mind coaches; 42.11%). Of the premise reflection practices mentioned, 31.58% belonged to the fully Self-authoring form of mind coaches.

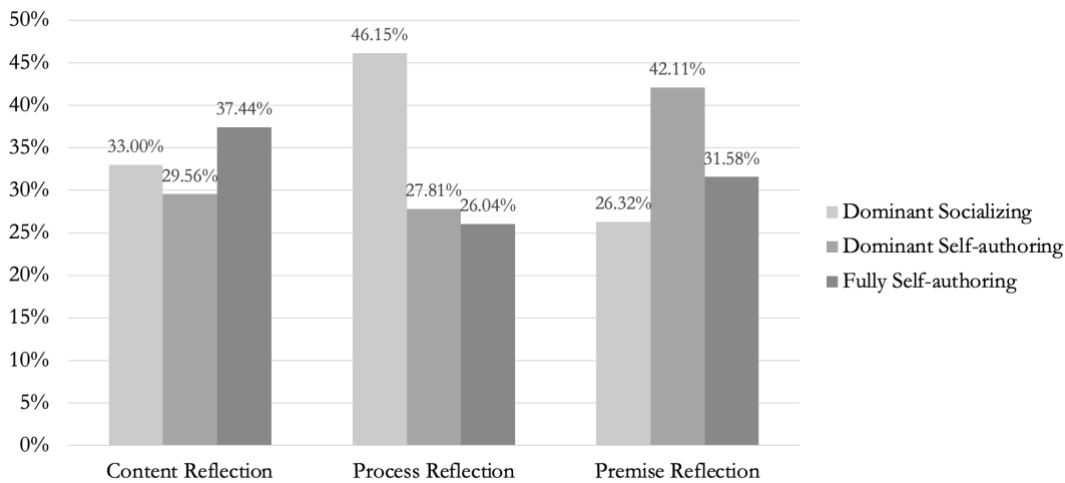
Table 6.4

Distribution of Client-Focused Reflective Coaching Practice Across Three Levels of Reflection (i.e., Content, Process, Premise) per Form of Mind Grouping (Frequencies)

Form of Mind (SOI score)	Level of Reflection		
	Content N=203	Process N=169	Premise N=38
Dominant Socializing: Socializing transitioning <i>toward</i> a Self-authoring (3/4)	67	78	10
Dominant Self-authoring: Self-authoring transitioning <i>away from</i> Socializing (4/3 or 4(3))	60	47	16
Fully Self-authoring (4)	76	44	12

Figure 6.2

Distribution of Client-Focused Reflective Coaching Practices Across Three Levels of Reflection per Form of Mind Grouping (Percentages)



Section 4: Coaches’ Forms of Mind and Client-Focused Reflective Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight—Content Reflection

In this section, I present the main developmental findings for *client-focused*, content reflection practices for facilitating transformative insight as discussed by coaches making meaning from all three form of mind groupings. The findings in this section, as well as Sections 5 (i.e., process reflection) and 6 (i.e., premise reflection), are organized and presented from two viewpoints. The first viewpoint will briefly illustrate the developmental findings in terms of the distribution of

reflective coaching practice themes at each reflection level across forms of mind to explore the extent to which coaches from different forms of mind (under)privileged some of the coaching practices over others. The second view will highlight the qualitative developmental findings for which an in-depth analysis was carried out in order to get a more fine-grained understanding of all the practices discussed and to explore differences in how coaches with various forms of mind described, understood, and used coaching practices within each of the main practice themes that emerged. This researcher hopes that providing both of these perspectives will be helpful to the reader in gaining a broader view of the extent to which the coach's form of mind influences the coaching practices for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight, the main focus of my second research question.

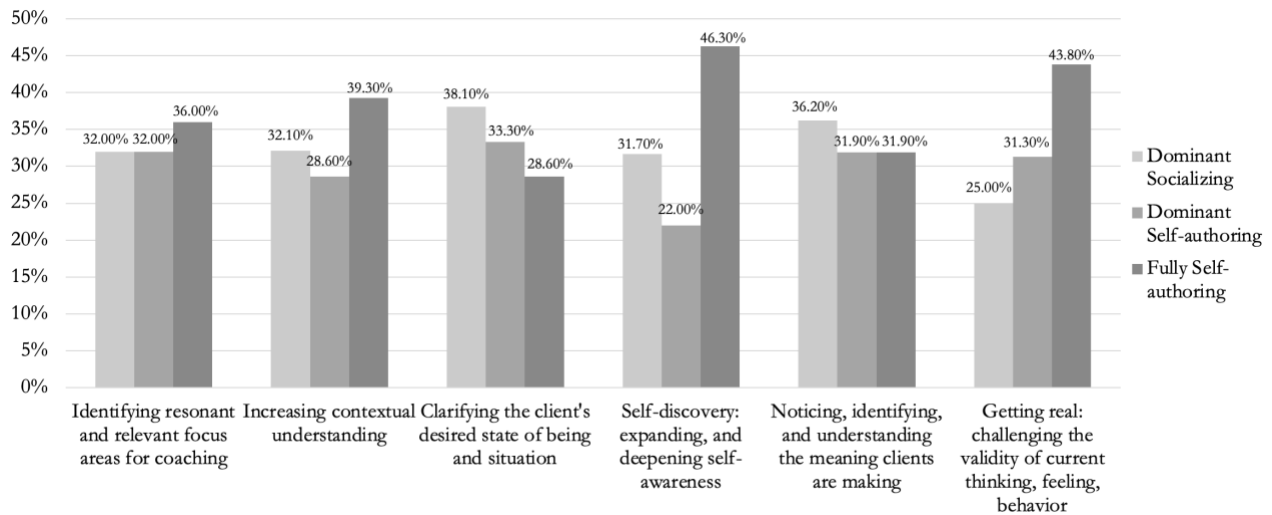
Distribution of Content Reflection Practice Themes Across Forms of Mind

For all reflective coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight (i.e., content, process, premise), I will start by reporting on frequencies with which coaches from each form of mind grouping used coaching practices belonging to each of the main themes that emerged during the analyses. At each level of reflection, the intent was to explore if coaches making meaning from different forms of mind (under)privileged some coaching practices over others.

1. *Identifying Resonant and Relevant Focus Areas for Coaching.* As seen in Figure 6.3 below, the participants in each of the three form of mind groupings discussed content reflection coaching practices related to this first theme approximately to the same extent. Of 50 practices in this theme, 32.00% belonged to the dominant Socializing, 32.00% to dominant Self-authoring, and 36.00% to fully Self-authoring coaches.

Figure 6.3

Distribution of All Main Content Reflection Coaching Practice Themes per Form of Mind Grouping



2. *Increasing Contextual Understanding.* Regarding this, the second content reflection theme, out of its total of 28 practices, the dominant Socializing and dominant Self-authoring form of mind coaches discussed these kinds of practices to a similar extent (32.14% and 28.59%, respectively). A somewhat higher percentage belonged to the fully Self-authoring coaches (39.29%).

3. *Clarifying the Client's Desired State of Being and Situation.* In this third content reflection theme, out of the total of 21 practices, the most belonged to the dominant Socializing coaches (38.10%), followed by the dominant Self-authoring (33.33%) and fully Self-authoring coaches (28.57%).

4. *Self-Discovery: Expanding, and Deepening Self-Awareness.* The most striking differences in the distribution of practices across the form of mind groupings were on the self-discovery theme. Specifically, out of 41 practices collected in this theme, the least belonged to the dominant Self-authoring form of mind group (21.95%), followed by the dominant Socializing group (31.71%). The fully Self-authoring form of mind coaches discussed these content reflection practices the most (46.34%).

5. *Noticing, Identifying, and Understanding the Meaning Clients are Making.* Looking at the fifth content reflection theme, all participants discussed these kinds of practices approximately to the

same extent. Of the 47 practices in this theme, 36.17% belonged to the dominant Socializing form of mind group, and an equal 31.91% belonged to dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches.

6. *Getting Real: Challenging the Validity of Current Thinking, Feeling, Behavior.* Another theme where slight between-group differences were observed was content reflection theme number six. Specifically, out of the 16 practices in this theme, the least belonged to dominant Socializing (25.00%), followed by dominant Self-authoring form of mind coaches (31.25%). Coaches that discussed these practices the most made meaning from the fully Self-authoring form of mind (43.75%).

Qualitative Developmental Findings: Content Reflection Practices

For all coaching practices at the content reflection level (as well as at the process and premise reflection levels), there were some differences between coach participants making meaning from different forms of mind in how they understood, described, and used coaching practices to facilitate content reflection toward transformative insight. To explore and report on those differences, per each of the themes that emerged during the thematic data analysis process, I have, in detail, once again analyzed all the data, that is, all the excerpts from the participants' semi-structured interviews belonging to each of the themes, now for each form of mind grouping.

Based on the available data, in this section and each subsequent Qualitative Developmental Findings section in this chapter, I have outlined the differences observed between coaches making meaning from the different form of mind groupings. This could be seen in how coaches with different forms of mind used similar practices yet with nuances of qualitative difference. Differences appeared, for example, in the intent of a practice's focus on reflection (e.g., clarifying subjective or objective elements). Differences were also found in the facilitation styles for reflective practices (e.g., appreciative vs. directive styles), or in how a different focus area or emphasis for reflection was highlighted (e.g., as focused on a client's relationships or authenticity). In some cases,

coaches making meaning from a different form of mind expanded on the practices already discussed by introducing a similar but more complex practice with distinctly new qualities and characteristics in how it hosted assumptions. The degree to which coaches across forms of mind differed in how they described, understood, and used particular coaching practices varied, as did the amount of data available for each theme across forms of mind. This is reflected in the depth and approach to reporting on those differences. As such, at times, differences were reported between all three forms of mind, and at other times, only the differences between one form of mind grouping vs. another two groupings were reported.

Theme 1: Identifying Resonant and Relevant Focus Areas for Coaching

While coaches from different form of mind groupings shared some perspectives on identifying resonant and relevant focus areas for coaching, there were also some notable differences. First, as compared to the dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches who had more of an *inside-out* focus in identifying coaching focus areas, coaches making meaning from the dominant Socializing form of mind had more of an *outward-in* focus. That is, the dominant Socializing form of mind coaches were more focused on external feedback received (e.g., “client’s team doesn’t 100% trust him, but they like him”) and on the external and concrete goals (e.g., “promotion,” “growing business”) as drivers behind coaching goal definition. Additionally, the idea of making goals “clear,” “highly tangible,” or “SMART” was at the forefront. Anita, a dominant Socializing coach, said,

Well, I think I work on the outward-in, so they may have something that’s very tactical, right? You know, this is typical with clients, “I want to grow my business,” or, “I want to have better leadership communication skills,” or, you know, something external, tangible....

Audrey, also a dominant Socializing coach, explained:

So, it’s about exploring the goal and making it as much as possible a SMART goal, and then that’s the session. So, I think that’s also a very important thing.

Like Anita and Audrey, Alexandra (also making meaning from a dominant Socializing form of mind) finds making goals tangible during the goal-setting process important. She said,

I like my clients to set one to three goals, so we have a goal-setting process. We do ten points on those goals. I'd like the goals to be highly tangible, so tell me what it means when you've completed the goal; what does success look like? And it isn't just that I got this rating in a lawyer-ranking magazine. It's this how I'm going to feel, this is how it's going to look like, this is what people are going to say—making that intangible very tangible.

On the other hand, dominant Self-authoring and fully Self-authoring form of mind coaches had more of an *inside-out* focus in identifying coaching focus areas, which I noticed from the way they talked about using feedback with their clients. The focus these coaches had was more on identifying “disconnects” and “misunderstandings” between the client's own understanding on the one hand and external feedback on the other and as a way of exploring clients themselves. In essence, the focus was on using external feedback as a form of validation and reality testing at the goal level and was, as such, much more challenge-oriented. William, a dominant Self-authoring coach, talked about not relying on the client's self-reported changes, stressing the importance of verifying this information from within the organization, calling it a “proof of concept.”

I would get him to have eyes and ears on him in the organization, not just, you know, I don't want him to self-report back to me, but I want to know that someone's watching him and can see the changed behavior, it could be his boss, it could be his peer... I would normally, in the absence of a 360 ... speak to a few people at the beginning ... to figure out what precisely is going on and get them to give very concrete examples. But I would rerun that in session nine and say, “Okay, so now let's take a look at this again and see what's changed and see how you're doing.” So we can get proof of concept. So that we would say, “Okay, so we know what we set out to do was a change, change A&B, and you know, this is what success looks like, and this is conceptually how I want to go about it. And do you agree with the coaching journey?”... I'm going to interview some people ... then, at the end of it, session nine, we would sort of say, “Okay, so now I'm going to do a little road test and see whether or not you're driving differently. And yeah, we have proved that that worked, or actually, we've still got a ways to go.” Yeah. I would want to measure it.

Viola, a fully Self-authoring coach, also talked about not wanting “to just go with what [the client] tells me”:

I want to know from them what this coaching is about for them. I want to know if this is about career trajectory. Is this about being misunderstood? People don't get me, I'm working really hard, and there's this complete disconnect with the feedback that I'm working so hard, and like, people just aren't appreciating what I'm doing. I can't work any harder, and people really don't get all the things that I do. Um, it could be, you know, I'm so smart, I'm smarter than everybody else, and they don't get it. I mean, I just, you know, who knows if

they're, who knows what's involved in all of this. So I want to get a sense of that, and I'm not going to just go with what he tells me for sure.

Along the same lines, Robert, also a fully Self-authoring coach, emphasized the importance of verifying what is really going on by “validating some of this stuff”:

I guess a couple of things I would like to spend some time on is really verifying some of this external stuff that is going on and whether there are existing assessments for him. I also would like a possibility, and I think it is so, a really valuable tool that I didn't mention, but I've been able to use especially with senior leaders, is, um, they might have an old 360... I would like, doing it in a way that is upfront that we are going to be doing this, but also doing it in a way where those people's feedback is protected. Um, thematic findings. And I usually do this from an impression of inquiry standpoint. So I don't get real negative. I ask open-ended questions about what is really working well right now. What do we need more of? What else? And I can get so much information just from those three questions. Um, get people to open up to me. I do not know what I do, but they do. And so, I can get a lot of information asking that type of stuff. And so I want to form a picture of that way to validate some of this stuff.

Compared to the dominant Socializing form of mind coaches, one more difference observed was that dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches, while still appreciating clear and measurable goals, were more concerned with taking the time to expand on and deepen the clients' presenting goals by capturing the big picture. Dara, a dominant Self-authoring coach, explained:

I try not to use goals much unless that's a really big word that they like because goals usually go with a problem-solving approach. So, I'll talk about priorities to get to your vision; it's like what are you focused on every hour, every day, every week, every month. What are your priorities? What are you focused on? ... initially, we're going to try to expand out so we get a bigger picture of what's happening with you and why you feel thwarted.

Additionally, fully Self-authoring coaches, as compared to both dominant Socializing and dominant Self-authoring form of mind coaches, also explained that in their understanding, the goal definition process is an evolving conversation that takes time, and allowing the clients to “tell their story” is an important part of that process. A fully Self-authoring coach, Robert, said:

Some of it also comes with a little bit of time and realization. So, I think giving it some time, and that structure I use, I am able to get to probably some of the deeper issues or, the more actual issues or challenges or opportunities.... I think then you are working on what's in the client's best interest.... I learned this early on in my coaching when I would have some clients where we would meander session after session. And I think using these

practices that I have come to, helps really get to the core a lot more quickly and to where we need to be focusing, rather on than this tertiary stuff.

Another aspect in the coaching practices for identifying resonant and relevant focus areas for coaching, which only fully Self-authoring coaches mentioned, related to using their intuition as a way of getting “a hit of something” to get to “something a little deeper” with the clients and then “testing to see where they are” (as mentioned by Viola), as well as making sure to “set aside” own ideas and judgments. Robert explained:

I think it would be very important to allow him space to talk and really present himself and not, you know, I could have a lot of ideas about what he could be doing differently. So I think this is a disadvantage of me being so versed in leadership is, I can, you know, come to the table with some ideas, and I really want to set those aside. And so I would really want to get to the core of what was going on with him and the people around him rather than me putting my own judgment on it. So that would be the other thing I have really practiced, to show up with having those things set aside.

Theme 2: Increasing Contextual Understanding

While reflecting on clients’ contexts was salient in all form of mind groups, there were some noticeable differences in understanding and application of these context-related practices, as well as in the focus of reflection emphasized by the coaches making meaning from various forms of mind. First, as compared to the dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches, coaches making meaning from the dominant Socializing form of mind understood the idea of context as closely related to introducing how perception leads to the reality seen in the world and using the idea of context to better understand the bigger picture behind a client’s experience of their relationships and important others (e.g., boss, colleagues). As such, dominant Socializing coaches used these content reflection practices primarily to increase awareness of how context plays a role in the differences and similarities with others and to explore group dynamics that have a contextual basis. For example, they engaged their clients in reflection on the need to share information with the team during a group outing exercise, or they would start with team coaching first to get an idea of the interpersonal dynamics before engaging in one-on-one coaching with the client. In this others-as-

context-focused approach, psychometric tools, such as the MBTI, are also seen as very important for increasing the client's understanding of themselves in relation to others and how they might be different or similar. Sandra, a dominant Socializing coach, emphasized:

I would have him [the client] go through the Myers-Briggs assessment because that is the most phenomenal tool for helping you to realize how other people look, how other people make decisions, how other people think, um, how they orientate themselves to the world in terms of their organization to the world. And, uh, I would have him go through that... I think he would really benefit from some self-awareness tool,... comparing him to others, how he is, how people are different, and how he is different.

On the other hand, dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches, while also engaging the clients in reflections on relational contexts, differences and similarities with others and the impact thereof, and often using similar tools and practices, had an additional focus aimed at reflecting on the ways in which these insights could be used to discover a client's "blind spots" and be "leveraged" or "capitalized upon." In this way, these coaches implicated a previously unseen aspect of the self as present in and influential on context, bringing forward new awareness about the deeper layers and dynamics of a given context. Dara, a dominant Self-authoring form of mind coach, nicely explained this perspective:

So if I work on, let's just pick this, I've got three strengths. I actually worked with a client this morning; she's got four strengths in the area of influencing. So, she's new, and her team, she came in, [having] a very different style from the person before her. And so they're all calling her harsh, and she, you know, they're used to somebody not holding them accountable, and she comes in with this. I mean, that's a lot of presence to have four strengths in the influencing category of StrengthsFinder. It's a lot. So just showing up is already intimidating enough. So really helping them see how they're coming across to others, things that they can capitalize on, things that are blind spots.

This focus on helping clients capitalize on the context they are in was also conveyed by Charlotte, a fully Self-authoring coach, who discussed using Kantor's model to help the client explore the system of group dynamics for the purpose of the client becoming more strategic and intentional in his interactions. She explained:

So if he's leading meetings and they don't seem to go very well, then sometimes I take out some of the principles of structural dynamics, so Kantor's model, that can be really

useful for people to get under the skin of what goes wrong in group interactions and just explain to them the things they can listen out for, look out for in meetings to unpick who's influencing, who's doing what exactly, what are the repeated patterns and what's desirable, what's not desirable, how can I use those things, um, and interpret feedback after meetings as well, and they can finally get beyond the irritation of it.

One final difference observed in terms of how the content reflection practices for increasing coaching clients' contextual understanding were used related to how the dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches put more emphasis on a broader and a more systemic perspective on the contexts the clients were in, as compared to the dominant Socializing form of mind coaches. Next to considering the work-related contexts and relations, these two groups of coaches also considered the impact of the client's organizational culture and its related values and impact. Margaret, a dominant Self-authoring coach, considered the interplay between the organizational culture and the client's behavior to get a bigger picture of the client's challenges:

Yeah, I would explore the culture there [in the client's organization]. How much of a macho culture there is, and what's this change? Why has my position changed? Try to understand that... if we can understand it together, then he might see if he wants to change something in his behavior; now he feels only threatened.

A notable difference between dominant Socializing and dominant Self-authoring coaches compared to fully Self-authoring coaches was the fully Self-authoring coaches' focus on helping clients understand their responsibility for and influence on their contexts. Additionally, these coaches facilitated clients in creating opportunities for self-development that could help them re-engage in their external contexts in new and expanded ways. They helped clients explore greater self-understanding and achieve greater coherence within the self by having clients identify, for example, certain emotions or experiences they were not currently privileging. This would surface, for instance, in a client's wish to bring a sense of greater happiness and productivity (as noted by Robert) to his context, or a client's wish to achieve more integration between cognitive and somatic knowing in hers (as mentioned by Viola). Coaches helped clients make time for and give space to this type of exploration and reflection on that exploration to integrate that learning more fully in

their influence and engagement in external contexts. Viola, a fully Self-authoring coach, emphasized the importance of what she calls “integrated coaching”:

So for her [the client], I was able to, like go, not just work life but outside. So for me, uh, I often ... but sometimes the integrated coaching can be very helpful. So there was something around also like her losing herself. That’s what I mean when I say dissociation. She was dissociating, um, from her personal life, from her work life. That’s what was happening. She was going on autopilot.

Theme 3: Clarifying the Client’s Desired State of Being and Situation

One of the differences that stood out when analyzing content reflection practices in this theme was that, during the process of helping clients clarify their desired future, the dominant Socializing coaches, as compared to dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches, had a more explicit emphasis on defining these desired outcomes in as tangible and explicit ways as possible to help their clients “create a path” forward. Alexandra, a dominant Socializing coach, explained:

The client questionnaire talks about professional strengths, weaknesses, whom you admire.... Then I would ask for tangible goal development in terms of how do you want to be seen as a leader? I want to be seen as an effective, fair, collaborative leader that gets things done. Okay, what does this look like? How will you know? You know, turnover reduces. People want to work on my team. I’m invited to senior management meetings. As tangible as possible. That’s where you, as a client, want to get to, so let’s determine, and work together to create a path for you to get to that point. And so, making it really real in terms of, what does it look like, feel like, smell like? What do people say? All of those things make it more tangible and more real.

Dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches, on the other hand, seemed to be more focused on the idea of the client’s authenticity and their responsibility in clarifying their desired future. In terms of authenticity, the coaches from these two groups, just like dominant Socializing coaches, relied on practices using various ideals and “heroes” as anchors for reflection but have additionally emphasized the importance of the clients owning their visions of the future in a way that aligns with the very essence of who they, authentically, already are. This expansion of focus in these kinds of practices to include consideration of and support for the client’s authenticity was nicely articulated by George, a dominant Self-authoring coach:

I have a tendency to, I won't call it cheerlead, but I'll work on some "ideal self" kind of thing and work on the notion of aspiration and what are your aspirations? Who are your heroes? How could you pull this off for yourself in a way that would really make you feel like you, you're at your best self, so, some of that best self-work?

Daivat, a fully Self-authoring coach, expressed the idea that simply taking over another person's approach or "becoming like them" is not what's necessarily best for the client; what matters most is that clients themselves take responsibility for and become the "heroes" of their own aspirational journey:

I might even draw a presentation, a picture of 10 personalities. Maybe I'll put Greta Thunberg, Barack Obama, Hitler, or someone and say, "What comes to your mind the moment you see this photo? What is your perception about each of these personalities? Write it down for me." So usually, people when I coach or train, they'll write, "Great leader, very empathetic, horrible, bully..." Then I will ask them, "Who do you want to be? How would you like others to look at you? Would you just choose one?"... And then I go further deep into understanding why those beliefs you think or why that leadership style you think is the right leadership style? ... They need to be the hero of the conversation. They need to feel that they had the ability to, you know, talk a lot. So by giving them the opportunity to talk about what do you feel about this person, that person? Almost, it's like they feel that they are coaching; they are giving their thoughts. They are telling their, you know, "I like this person because of this reason, and this is what he or she could have done..." One of the pictures will be of, which I would have done the intelligence in the back of someone he likes in the company and one picture would be of someone who he doesn't like in the company, which is a dangerous thing, but I do it. I want them to come out. And I will tell, "What do you like about this person?" And it's important to understand that person, what his or her qualities are. And, so usually, people have their own qualities, but then they start following somebody, and they become like that as well. And they think that that's the best culture to be in, that's the best way to be in, you know, you start becoming like someone else in the long run, and it could be helpful. It could be not helpful as well. So, I would say that this helps, this whole process, and this kind of coaching approach helps to give a little bit more power to the client, to the coachee, and also draw out a lot more about them.

Finally, an additional focus that only fully Self-authoring coaches have had in some of the practices they described and that belong to this content reflection theme was on removing emotional obstacles such as distress and creating moments of silence to allow a bigger and deeper perspective to emerge during the process of visualizing an ideal self and toward embodying that vision. This was described by Eva, a fully Self-authoring coach:

So, largely I would say that it's just two things. Probably there are a bunch more, but really it's the questions and it's the silence. So, and by questions, I mean that, so if she would

say that she was having distress about something or she was observing whatever, and I would ask her, “Well, if you set all of that aside, you know, what do you see as the attributes of an ideal leader?” And then she might, there might be some sessions I’m introvert, so she takes a little longer, so the silence is even more necessary for her. So she would ponder a little bit and say some different things and then those would create sort of a lattice that I can continue to ask deeper questions about. Um, you know, what’s important to you about that or what would that look like or how have you experienced that in the past or...? And then often, she might describe not having experienced that in the past. And so then we could ask questions around the, um, conflicting, you know, experience that she had had and how she experienced that. And so she would continue to kind of hone and refine her description of the ideal leader and who she wanted to be as a leader while concurrently by those story narratives was already beginning to sort of step into the shoes of what that would look like. So she was visualizing herself and starting to embody that role.

Theme 4: Self-Discovery: Expanding and Deepening Self-Awareness

While the focus of all coaches in this content reflection theme was to increase the client’s self-awareness, thus who the clients themselves are, there were some differences in how the coaches from the different form of mind groupings went about doing that. First, the dominant Socializing coaches, as compared to the dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches, anchored more of their practices in the self-in-relation-to-other domain. That is, the dominant Socializing coaches helped their clients increase their self-awareness by reflecting on definitions of the self as seen in relation to those around them (including understanding themselves by taking perspective on their own thinking, feeling, and behavior and by reflecting on psychometric models and/or how they show up in the normative findings of psychometric tools) and on the impact thereof. One example of this self-in-relation-to-other focus was provided by Alexandra, a dominant Socializing coach:

I used the emotional intelligence assessment and EQI with him to get to kind of a deeper understanding of the emotional intelligence aspect and certainly that empathy piece which I referred to earlier about how, you know, some people need something different than what you would normally provide in terms of the relationship.... In terms of really understanding himself and his impact on others.

Valéria, also a dominant Socializing coach, discussed reflecting with her client on his values while also considering the relational aspect and impact of those values:

And another thing that I think was very, it would be very useful is to understand the values that come up in regard to himself and in regard to others, what things are important

to him, and how would he prioritize them? What is most important? Is it, for example, and this is just for the sake of giving an example, is it having your own way, or is it having a good relationship with somebody else? Is it being promoted or being able to, um, just continue to do things with the same systems that you have been using so far?

The dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches, while also considering the self-in-relation-to-other domain, had one more, very clear additional focus: the self-in-relation-to-context domain. As such, the additional focus was given to increasing the clients' awareness of who they are not only in relation to others but also in relation to the various contexts they find themselves in, such as their organizations, their current and previous jobs, or their private life sphere. Of interest here is how these coaches looked at self-awareness not only to identify how it related to signature characteristics of the self as applied in thinking, feeling, and behavior but also to deepen this understanding by reflecting with the clients about the choices and consequences that came with this self-awareness. Second, the dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches, as compared to the dominant Socializing coaches, had one more expansion to these very same practices that all the coaches used with their clients—the life history practices. While all the coaches used their clients' past experiences as input in helping their clients expand and deepen self-awareness by reflecting on their past experiences, the dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches would also introduce a more elaborate form of a biographical, historical meta-reflection to that process. This was done in order to see what George, a dominant Self-authoring coach, called “the arc of their development” and to learn from the past learning that the clients experienced developmentally on these journeys. George explained:

And so for me, it's standard to do, if I don't do a lifeline exercise with people, I will do a narrative, and I'll just interview them through, “tell me about school...” I actually don't let them start it when they're 21 because it's already, everything's already in place. But I want to know, “Tell me about your family, siblings, tell me about your parents.” I want to know the arc of their development. I get their whole story, and then I'm going to be on their path with them for a short part of their current arc, but I want to use the past arc and see how they decide things, what they've learned, what their strengths are, what their innate strengths are and tendencies. So I know their story. And he had a fascinating psychological history with a father that had been not very good right at the important teen years. And then he had lost his mom as a teenager. And so I knew all this stuff, but he was happily engaged. He was reconnecting with his father. I knew all those things, but we didn't make that the major part.

Building on the dominant Self-authoring coaches' attention to learning from past learnings (or lack thereof), fully Self-authoring coaches also asked clients to share their life journey as an additional deposit in their growing bank of self-awareness. In doing so, they distinctly included a perspective on what was especially resonant to the client about that journey, connecting life experience to meaning and its very personal definitions to the client. Fully Self-authoring coaches also differed in how they brought further perspective to the clients' experience by including reflection on their capacity for and understanding of perspective transformation and, specifically, how that has played out for them in adulthood. This can be seen in an example practice described by Daivat, a fully Self-authoring coach, in which he used the idea of "turning points" clients have experienced in the past to trigger a realization that not only might they "need a turning point right now," but also that it is their own responsibility to create those moments of turning points vs. "waiting for it to happen":

I, um, my style is based on experience. You know, it's based on triggering my client to talk about some of the personal turning points. For example, asking questions like, "Can you write down. Can you think of one thing that changed your life that would be personal? One thing that changed your career, what step did you take? What are the...?" So first of all, have them tell what their turning points have been. And they love it. People love it; people love when they have to talk about themselves. So I would say that I would talk about, uh, first them. And once they start realizing what turning points are and what impact that has made in their life, and how much they've progressed or not progressed, then it's easy for them to go back and realize that they need a turning point right now. Otherwise, it will keep moving the same way, and then get onto what can you do to bring such turning points, right? Are you going to wait for some incident to happen to have a turning point, or can you create a turning point for yourself?

Theme 5: Noticing, Identifying, and Understanding the Meaning Clients are Making

While there were many similarities in the understanding of and approaches to this set of content reflection practices, there were some additional focus areas that the coaches from the dominant and fully Self-authoring forms of mind groupings brought in. More specifically, there were three expansions brought in by the dominant Self-authoring coaches to the approaches described in the similarities section above, above and beyond inviting and following the client in their process of

noticing, identifying, and understanding the meaning clients are making. First, the dominant Self-authoring coaches described using their own in-the-moment observations of the client's somatic expressions, such as changes in breathing or movements, as an additional input to this process. The second expansion, also brought in by this group of coaches, involved a more explicit and deeper, as Elizabeth called it, "root cause exploration" behind the meaning that the clients made, where the clients also need to start "understanding those emotions [that come up] and where they are coming from and why," often requiring reflection on the client's past. Hãi nicely articulated both expansions in the approaches to this set of content reflection practices; these practices, as is seen in the example below, are not always intuitive or easy for the clients to engage in initially:

So, the example is this one day I was coaching him [the client], and one moment I saw him was, he kept scratching his chest, where his heart is, he is scratching it. Now he doesn't know that he's doing that, but as a coach, and I'm trained to observe bodily, I am trained to observe the geography of the body, right? And so I saw him scratching his chest, and I said, "Well, are you aware that you are scratching the chest?" He said, "No, no. What are you talking about?" And I said, "I have been noticing you're scratching at the chest." And intuitively, I just said, "If your chest, if your body has a voice, what would it say?" And he was like a little shocked by it, like, "What my body has a voice?" So initially, he resisted that. And I said, "Well, why don't you just put your finger where you keep scratching and then hold it there for a moment, and keep breathing into it and then see what comes up?" Initially, he was like, "No, no, that's really weird, no, no" and then I was like, "Just go ahead and do it," he put his hand there and he started breathing. And then suddenly I could feel some emotion rising up because I could see his eyes are welling up and I knew, oh, I'm on the, I'm touching something here. So I said, "Go ahead, keep on breathing and just wait, just be very patient, asking your body, asking that part of your body, if it has a voice, what would it tell you?"

And we sat there for another five minutes. It felt like a thousand years in those five minutes. And then suddenly he said ... because he sat for five minutes with his hand on his heart. He said, uh, "I don't have to prove anymore. I don't have to prove to anyone, I don't have to prove to my father anymore." And then tears started coming, and he said, "I don't have to improve for him anymore." And then I discovered this father had passed away [a] long time ago, but he was still running his company to prove something to his father. And so the turning point, the "aha" moment there was, "Oh, I've been running my company from this place of pride, you know, proving to someone who is not no longer even alive." So there's a psychological aspect to this, right? His family dynamic with his father, it's almost therapeutic in some ways. The coaching becomes almost like a therapy experience because he realized the dynamic that he has with his dead father.

The third addition to this set of practices observed in this form of mind group related to using more abstract forms of reflection to get to a deeper understanding of the client's experiences and the related meaning-making, such as using religious symbolism or poetry. George, a dominant Self-authoring coach, is a big proponent of these approaches:

Making sure that you're doing work at a couple, that we ... that you're connecting outer world events to inner mental and emotional processes. But not doing that with any psychological, I didn't use much psychological language, of course, I don't do that anyway. I use more poetry. I'll quote poetry more often ... I've got a vice president, a client right now. And it looks more like the old-style stuff, but I know I'm bringing a deeper me to it, so it just comes up naturally, but we'll do, but he's got a very big heart and a very servant-oriented guy. Well, I can tell you how I use it. He was raised Catholic, and I was raised Catholic, and even though he's probably much more of a practicing Catholic than I am, I still am very faith-friendly. I like all faiths. I think all of them have, at their core, a lot of great wisdom in it that's why we call them wisdom traditions. And, so I've never had, certainly had my battles because most religions know they've done a lot of damage in the world too, when they've done things like inquisitions and stuff like that. But at the heart of Catholicism, for instance, is a lot of symbolism. The right hemisphere stuff and a lot of moral teaching that has a lot of high values. So I'll go there with him more than I ever did, I'll go there with him, we'll talk that lens. Not extensively, but I'll go there with him.

The fully Self-authoring coaches introduced yet another way of engaging clients in noticing, identifying, and understanding the meaning they're making, above and beyond what the dominant Socializing and dominant Self-authoring coaches discussed. Their addition to this set of practices involved coaches not only using their observations of the clients' somatic expressions but using their own in-the-moment somatic responses and experiences and bringing those as input into this process of reflection around the clients' experiences and the meaning behind them. Viola, a fully Self-authoring coach, described how she provides her client with feedback based on her own somatic experience of the client's presence during the coaching session as a way of taking the client into more of an "authentic presence" and toward "interacting on resonance" with the client:

I also include something around, like the intensity that shows up. I'm noticing. So I'll also notice like how I'm experiencing her [the client's] intensity. So like me saying, it feels a little confronting. Yeah, the intensity and how I experienced that all through my body. That's taking it beyond eye contact, back history or leaning forward a little bit like eyes, you know, whenever eyes like there's eyes wide open quality to her, um, to something else. And I give her that feedback and I may say something about like, um, like is there a, it felt a sharp or

something else. It's sharp. And then she'll change it. And what I'm experiencing as the change that, actually, I don't remember this, but this is in the ballpark, the experience, the change in her presence may be like her eyes aren't as wide open or she's not leaning forward as much, but she's not getting to the presence. So then I'll express the distinction that I'm making between those two things. I might say something like, you know, I'm noticing, ... like an intensity. I may say something like, I notice your eyes are a little bit more relaxed and you're not leaning forward, but there's still something about your intensity that feels there's an edginess to it. Yeah. So now that takes her more into her authentic, let's say, presence to play around with. And so now that would change. So now that's a different kind of feedback loop and behavioral and even in our relationship, because now we're interacting on resonance.

Theme 6: Getting Real: Challenging the Validity of Current Thinking, Feeling, Behavior

One of the main differences that emerged regarding this content reflection practice theme was very much related to the style with which these practices were put to use and the focus of confrontation. Compared to the dominant Socializing coaches, coaches with dominant and fully Self-authoring form of mind were much more than directly confrontational with their clients during this “getting real” process. They fully embraced taking a “firm” devil’s advocate role with their clients in exploring the process of reflecting on thinking, feeling, and behavior. As Margaret, a dominant Self-authoring coach, emphasized, “[it’s important to be] firm and patient at the same time.... It’s also a kind of confrontation about things [the client] has to change or do, what may be difficult for him.”

The degree of confrontation is very much apparent in the following excerpt, in which William, a dominant Self-authoring coach, described a form of “intellectual chess” he plays with his client, with the goal of “walking [the client] into a corner” in their thinking, at which point he will launch a “nuclear missile” that would expose a contradiction, invalidity, or inconsistency in order to “split the thing open”:

I said something that, in coaching terms, might look like a sort of nuclear missile going off rather than a gentle discursive conversation where the person came back and reflected very deeply and said this was a very interesting conversation. Very often, I see the opportunity, and I see it very clearly, well ahead of where the client sees it. And so I know that I'm going to launch, but they don't know I'm going to launch, and so I time that pretty carefully, and then I launch. And so it's often something quite big that splits the thing open,

and that's just my own stylistic bias because it's what keeps me interested, frankly ... I tend to be in with C-level leaders who are very smart, and I'm time-limited, and therefore, you need to get to the core of it pretty quickly. And so therefore, it becomes a little bit of an intellectual exercise where I allow them by a series of questions to walk themselves into a corner. The thing is, they don't realize they're in a corner because this is their normal operating system; it's their normal MO. And so, in a strange way, I'm playing intellectual chess and boxing them in without them realizing they're getting boxed in. And once I've got them completely cornered in a very safe way, then I will launch the missile.

Albert, a fully Self-authoring coach, described how he would approach working with Richard, a hypothetical coaching client introduced through a vignette. His inquiry style, directed at exploring Richard's limits of thinking, feeling, and behavior, was very directly confrontational; asking the kind of questions that Albert considers to be "simple questions":

I think in that kind of space, I would try to work out how Richard is currently seeing the problem and his capacity to see other perspectives on what the problem looks like. That could be the simple questions, you know, like how do other people see this? On what basis do you accept or deny the validity of that? If there is no real problem, why are you here? If you are right about everything, how come everybody doesn't see it that way? Yeah.

Whereas the dominant Self-authoring coach was confrontational about the (in)consistencies, validity, and evidence of a client's thinking, feeling, and behavior as related to the choices, consequences, and blind spots produced in context, fully Self-authoring coaches were more confrontational about the idea of perspective-taking as relating to limitations of the system of meaning-making itself. They asked clients to compare and contrast perspectives, to look for matches and mismatches within perspectives, and even to step into another person's perspective of them to test the validity of their perspective and intent in upholding espoused values by illustrating how that perspective, in fact, could be experienced by others as holding a very different meaning or intent. This was illustrated by Robert, who questioned the very validity of holding only one perspective as possible: "Where is this going to get you in the end?" Robert explained:

I think the goal in mind was for her to, in the end, see that I think two things, one, she was hearing all these things, but yet she was convinced that she was right the way she was doing things, the process and the goals and her way of doing things would lead to the best outcome. Her way of doing things was the only way to do it. Um, but yet she was getting all this counter feedback to that. Um, and so I think it was us getting to that point of, "Where is

this going to get you in the end?” You know, and so getting to that point, but it was also for her to see it and not for me to direct her because I think, in the end, she had to get to that place.

Section 5: Coaches’ Forms of Mind and Client-Focused Reflective Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight—Process Reflection

Distribution of Process Reflection Practice Themes Across Forms of Mind

1. *Discerning the Current Approach and its Impact.* As shown in Figure 6.4 below, out of 25 of these process reflection coaching practices, almost half (48.00%) belonged to the dominant Socializing form of mind group. The other 52.00% was divided between the dominant Self-authoring (28.00%) and fully Self-authoring form of mind coaches (24.00%).

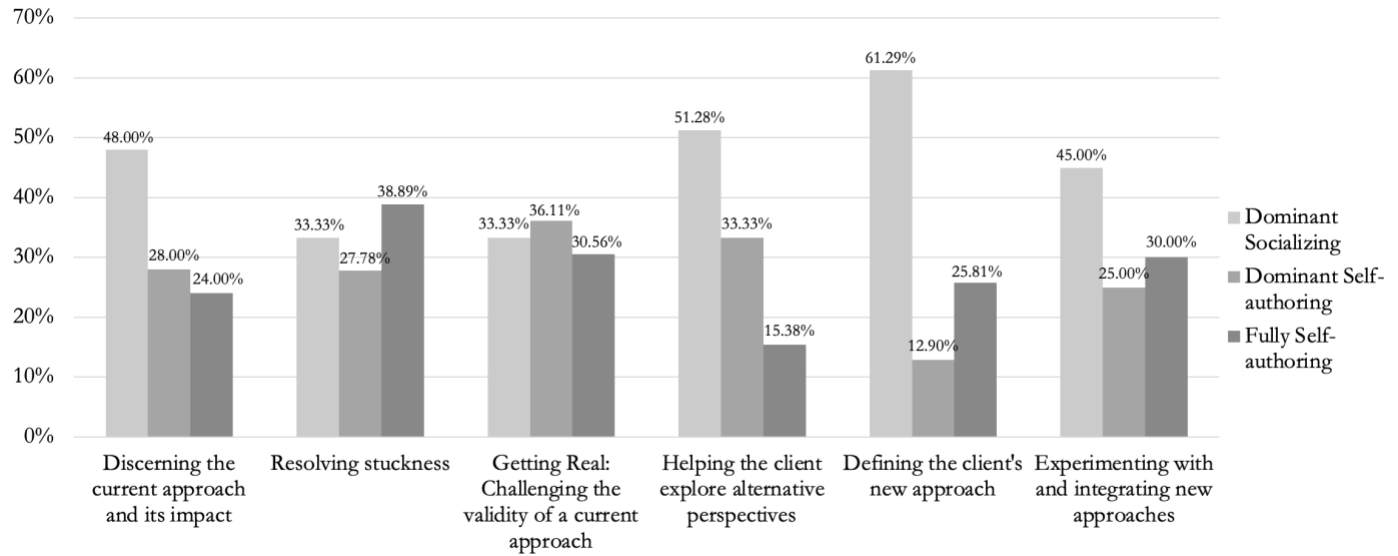
2. *Resolving Stuckness.* When it comes to the second process reflection theme, resolving stuckness, out of the total of 18 practices, the most belonged to the fully Self-authoring (38.89%), followed by the dominant Socializing (33.33%), and dominant Self-authoring form of mind coaches (27.78%).

3. *Getting Real: Challenging the Validity of a Current Approach.* For this process reflection theme, the participants in each of the three form of mind groups discussed this kind of coaching practice approximately to the same extent. Of 36 practices belonging to this theme, 33.33% belonged to dominant Socializing, 36.11% to dominant Self-authoring, and 30.56% to fully Self-authoring form of mind coaches.

4. *Helping the Client Explore Alternative Perspectives.* This was another process reflection theme where about half of the 39 practices belonged to participants making meaning from the dominant Socializing form of mind group (51.28%). This was followed by the dominant Self-authoring form of mind group (33.33%). Finally, coaches that discussed these kinds of process reflection practices the least were the ones making meaning from the fully Self-authoring form of mind (15.38%).

Figure 6.4

Distribution of All Main Process Reflection Coaching Practice Themes per Form of Mind Grouping



5. *Defining the Client's New Approach*. The biggest difference in the distribution of process reflection practices across form of mind groupings was observed on this fifth theme related to defining the client's new approach. Specifically, out of 31 practices in this theme, the least belonged to the dominant Self-authoring coaches (12.90%), followed by 25.81% belonging to fully Self-authoring form of mind coaches. Coaches that discussed these process reflection practices the most made meaning from the dominant Socializing form of mind (61.29%).

6. *Experimenting with and Integrating New Approaches*. Looking at the sixth and final process reflection theme, once again, most practices (out of 20) belonged to participants from the dominant Socializing form of mind group (45.00%). Thirty percent belonged to fully Self-authoring, and 25.00% to the dominant Self-authoring form of mind group.

Qualitative Developmental Findings: Process Reflection Practices

In this section, I investigate and outline the differences between coach participants from different form of mind groupings in how they understood, described, and used coaching practices

for facilitating transformative insight at the process reflection level, for which, once again, the main analytical coaching practice themes served as an organizing principle across form of mind comparison.

Theme 1: Discerning the Current Approach and Its Impact

A qualitative analysis of the data belonging to this process reflection theme revealed some differences in how dominant Socializing coaches, on the one hand, and dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches, on the other, talked about these process reflection practices. First, dominant Socializing coaches, as compared to the other two groups of coaches, have, to a larger extent, focused on the diagnosis of an approach and the impact of a situation and others on clients' approaches (external triggers), whereas dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches were more focused on the impact of the client's own thinking process (i.e., "how they construct reality"; internal triggers) on the kinds of approaches they chose to engage in. Audrey, a dominant Socializing coach, talked about how she invites the client to "let loose" with "all the judgment" to "unearth" how another person triggers her and how that impacts how she feels and behaves:

With her, it was really around, I asked her to actually let loose, and that often helps and tell me everything, all the judgment that you've had about that person, and to just lay it all out. And that usually comes with a lot of anger and frustration, and yes, and she shouldn't do this, and ah, ah, ah ... it's emotional obviously. And then to say, okay, what about it do you feel that really gets to you? And usually, there's one or two behaviors or traits that come to the fore. I say, okay. And how do you see yourself? You know, do you have that trait? Or is this something that you recognize in yourself? And usually, often the client either will have immediately an aha moment to say, ah, yeah, that's the thing I hate about myself the most. Or, um, it will go to, no, no, no, no, no, I'm nothing like that it has nothing to do with me. So, there's a complete sort of closing off that area is sort of no-go zone. And from that, the conversation can go further. So, it is about unearthing what is it the trait, the value? Is it behavior? And what does it evoke in the client? And that was the thing with her. Um, and in her case, we discovered that the way that she was seeing that was, the main characteristics of the person that was triggering her were exactly what she was trying very hard all her life, not to be, and in some way, she needed to release this energy.

Second, there was one aspect of these process reflection practices that dominant Socializing coaches did not talk about but that both dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches considered,

when trying to help their clients understand how they tend to approach resolving their challenges, was standing in the way of their clients' goal achievement. These two groups of coaches found it important for the client to reflect on the idea that, as Gabriella, a dominant Self-authoring coach, put it, their "feelings and ideas, their stories are constructed" and that these constructions limit the approaches to their thinking, feeling, and behaving as well as toward exploring alternative ways to construct their narrative and hence the choices they make. Albert, a fully Self-authoring coach, explained:

Look, even simple things like the old woman/young woman picture, one of the ways I've used that is, you know, don't ask people whether they see an old woman or a young woman, so I sort of say, okay, here's a picture, write down what you see and tell a story about it. And everybody sees one of two things, but people write different stories about what they're seeing. So, even that sort of thing, not only did we see it from this perspective, we told ourselves a story about that, which is different from somebody who saw an old woman too. So, it's always like we're telling ourselves stories all the time, like, in a sense, I think it's what some people have called the fantasy of being a human being.

And as we continued up this fantasy and stories that we're telling about what's going on and, you know, it's like, okay, what other stories could be told? If there's eight people in the room, we've got eight different stories about what's on there really, and this isn't even a complex problem, it's just a picture. This is not about, you know, how do we manage the tension between the rights of the individual and the needs of the many in an organization. This is like, tell me what you see on that wall and what's the story there. Kind of like, things like that, just to help people stop and think about simple things. I don't know if you've ever done it with the pen, you know, ask people to put a pen in the air and rotate it in a clockwise manner. So, it's going on a clockwise manner and then just gradually bring it down so it's in front of you and now look down, so you're looking at the top, which direction is it going now, it's going anti-clockwise, but how can it have a change of direction in the air? So, what's happened? So, we're looking at it differently. When you look at it differently, you get a completely different story here than you do up there, but it's the same thing, you know?

So, I find simple things like that are really useful segues into sort of like this kind of conversation. Wouldn't it be good to be able to look at it that way and that way, you know? Wouldn't it be good to see an old lady and a young lady, and also be able to choose a number of stories that you could tell? And maybe that might help you tell the right story in a different, you know, for context. So, kind of tease with the stuff, and so in the end, you have to apply what you know, and that's a learning experience. But if you're not aware of it, if you're not aware that there is another way of looking at it, of seeing it, then it's hard, I think, for some people just to automatically come up with that, you see that playing out in the way conversations are happening at the moment around COVID restrictions, that same sort of stuff. So, I find like little fun things where people can have a little bit of a laugh, but are ultimately about stories, and perspectives can often be helpful.

Dara, a dominant Self-authoring coach, helped her client reflect on the idea that the way in which she constructs her reality directly impacts her (in)ability to make the desired change:

I just did lots of priming; whatever she presented, I kept seeking to prime around how you construct, you know, kind of, I used the appreciative coaching principles basically that you do construct your reality, you know, if you're anticipating, if you're constantly worrying and anticipating the same thing that you have, you know, you're not going to be able to change at all.

Differences observed between the dominant Self-authoring and fully Self-authoring coaches related to how the dominant Self-authoring coaches focused, beyond the diagnosis and impact of an approach that is the focus of the dominant Socializing coach, on helping clients further understand the nuances of the approach and the situations at hand and helping them make more detailed analyses of the characteristics and dynamics at play between an approach and situation. Compared to the focus of dominant Self-authoring coaches, the fully Self-authoring coaches brought significant attention to the process of defining an approach based on its impact on the context of self instead of the external situation or context. They included a focus on giving language and meaning to an approach, looking at how different parts of the self were triggered by certain situational nuances and showed up in certain patterns of inconsistency and themes, and helping the clients integrate those parts of the self in an approach that reduces internal conflict and brings increased coherency and consistency across situations. Viola, a fully Self-authoring coach, described how she uses “imagery” or a “vision” of a new approach that “for her captures what it means to be integrated” in both words and experience that become the defining features of putting a current approach into perspective more fully and from the context of the self.

Theme 2: Resolving Stuckness

Based on the available data, one difference that emerged was, again, not so much in the kinds of practices coaches with different forms of mind used but in the style with which they enacted them. And while challenging clients with something they did not yet see, understand, or

were trying to avoid was an inherent part of “resolving stuckness” practices and was something all coaches introduced, the way in which dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches described that process was much more confrontational than that of the Socializing coaches. That is, while the practices might not have necessarily differed in their intent, they differed in the degree of challenge and confrontation brought in by the approach these coaches took. An example of one such approach was described by Dara, a dominant Self-authoring coach, who explained how she is not worth (much) as a coach if she doesn’t “intervene” and “challenge” the clients when she hears them repeatedly using “that problem language”:

[I work] a lot of on that problem language, and you know, “Could we use a different word?” You know, “Are you aware of how often you use the word *problem*?” You know, that is the lens that you’re looking at—”You know, what otherwise could you see if we didn’t use the word *problem*?” You know, what would, and then you know, like a, a miracle question or something.... And then, you know, I do a lot with clients that if I hear them repeat their story, their negative story, three times, I intervene. I ask their permission, and I say, “You know, I’m really not my worth as a coach if I’m not, you know, intervening and challenging at some points because I know from science, if all you do is retell your problem story, to me, we’re just building that story.” So I do, I do, I forgot this point here, I always manage to bring up a lot of the science of change. And that helps a lot.

Another, even more confrontational approach was described by another dominant Self-authoring coach, William. He explained how he uses a motivational interviewing technique to expose his clients to their ambivalence around what they are (not) doing, without them initially realizing where the process is going, thereby directly confronting them or “proving to them” how they are biased in their belief that “they are very decisive, and they know what they are doing”:

And then the second thing that I just like to use a lot when we’re in the process of figuring out, sort of how much change can we actually make here, is a technique which also borrows from psychotherapy but is used in coaching. I believe. I mean, I’ve certainly used it a lot in coaching, which is known as motivational interviewing and comes from the work of Stephen Miller.... Essentially it relies on two central planks, which is, how important is it for you to make this change? And how confident are you that you can make it? And those questions are phrased by forcing the client to answer the question on a scale of one to 10, so it’s a highly simplified question. How important is this for you on a scale of one to 10? And they give you a number, and then, as a matter of fact, it doesn’t really matter what the number is, surprisingly. And they don’t realize that they think this is going to be just easy,

and they give you the number, the number might be six, whatever it is that you're asking them.

And what you ask them to do is, instead of saying, "How can you make that 10?" You ask them the question that they're not expecting, which is, "And why is that not one?" And what they do in both cases, is they then become an advocate for why this is a very important change, and they become an advocate for how confident they are rather than how their lack of confidence will defeat them. And what you're essentially doing, if you sort of then look at the underlying to all of that is you're exploring their ambivalence, and the ambivalence is this sort of therapeutic technique, which is then brought into coaching. And especially with senior people who don't believe that they are ambivalent, they believe that they're very decisive and they know what they're doing and they're just either going to do it or not. That kind of bias, you actually say to them, "Well, you're ambivalent; I'm going to show you how." But of course, if you set that up front, they would find a way around you. So you ask them those questions and then you prove to them afterwards, "Well, it seems that you're ambivalent. Let's talk about that ambivalence for a while." That's a way of getting into this sort of at this sort of vulnerability, this softness.

Charlotte, a fully Self-authoring coach, talked about directly asking her clients, "How fed up are you with it [the problem]?" and "I need to know if this is important enough for you to really invest in, and what's the payoff?" Albert, another fully Self-authoring coach, talked about working through his client's "defense mechanism," explaining how when he sees that his client "doesn't take initial criticism real good," that his "first point of call is to deny the validity of that."

You know, is this just a defense mechanism? I mean, I know I [the client] don't take initial criticism real good, my first point of call is to deny the validity of that, but is there a place he can go to from that? Or is it, he's got the drawbridge up, and he's in his castle. I really need to explore that a little bit, not for anything else that I need, but I think, you know, it became quite apparent in the first 20 minutes whether he saw the problem is out there as something that he has to confront because other people are telling him he has to, and he's going to lose his job, or he won't get what he wants, or that there is actually something he can learn from this.

No clear differences were observed between the dominant Self-authoring and fully Self-authoring coaches.

Theme 3: Getting Real: Challenging the Validity of a Current Approach

While "getting real" with clients with an intent to challenge the validity of their current approach was salient in all form of mind groups, the dominant Socializing coaches tended to do this by countering client intentions and exposing blind spots by sharing a different perspective, namely,

by holding up a mirror to the client by sharing a team or colleague's experience, sharing the coach's evaluation or experience of the client, or having an external expert/authority sharing and evaluating their experience of the client. A difference emerged between how dominant Socializing coaches engaged in helping clients "get real" and how dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches engaged in those practices. Specifically, while all coaches discussed reflection on these focus areas primarily through inquiry and reflection, these last two groups of coaches also talked about testing assumptions and checking the validity of a current approach, for example, through Socratic questioning and at other times by directly joining their clients in their thinking or behavior by getting in the client's way in order to expose it. As such, these approaches are even more confrontational as clients, in a way, get exposed to their own assumptions and approaches, allowing them to observe and experience them fully. Like Viola, a dominant Self-authoring coach, said, it's about "exposing [the client] to the really granular experience of her impact and her awareness and her experience in a relationship." One way that Viola described doing that was by "getting strong back" with a client that was getting strong with her, by "bringing strength to strength" if she judges that this particular move would be helpful for the client:

Yeah, I mean, a bold move would be to get strong with [the client]. When he's strong with me, get strong back, just bring the same energy, but it doesn't always work because sometimes, you know, that gender, cause they're strong because of trauma, and so bringing strength to strength sometimes can actually create a problem. So that's what I would really have to notice. Sometimes strength is, strength can be fun for them. So it's playful, feels like they, makes them feel safe. So it just really depends. Do you know what I mean?

Another example of one such directly confrontational move was illustrated by William, a dominant Self-authoring coach, who, by joining the very meaning-making the client was making (and that stood in his client's way), helped expose the absurdities of it, triggering a previously non-existent desire for change through exaggerating the utility of the assumptions driven by a current "operating system":

And so the turning point came, and I think I described it in what I wrote to you when I said to him, when he basically, he started to argue with me and say, “Look, I’m successful. You know, how can you help me? Why should I hire you?” And I started to feel, “Hmm, I’m getting drawn into an argument here. And I guess this is what happened with these other people. He’s picking a fight with me so that he can throw me out” and I didn’t care. I mean, I’ve always felt a little bit like, “Well, I’ve got nothing to lose here, I don’t care.”

So I sat there for a while, and I thought, “Well, let me just take another tack here.” And I said, “Well, you know, of course, we can always be better, right? I’m sure you think you can be better. I mean, otherwise you’d be in...” and you said, “Well, yeah, of course, we can always be better,” because he was an intellectual, he knew the right answer. And I said, “So then one of the things you could do is, you know, given that you actually think that pretty much everything that’s written in this report [360 feedback] is rubbish. I mean, you’ve pretty much told me over the last 20 minutes that you could hire me to support you to continue. And in fact, even embellish some of these behaviors that you see written about here. We could sharpen them up even further because they’re obviously, you know, highly successful, as you keep telling me.”

And there was this sort of very long silence. I mean long in conversational terms, which you will understand, but it was long, and he kind of squinted, okay, I could throw you out now. I could kind of bury you and say, who the hell do you think you are coming in here saying this kind of stuff to me? And, but I think what registered with him, and I knew this only with hindsight was he realized that the way that I said it, which was entirely authentic, I mean, I didn’t say it with a smile on my face to be facetious, I said it completely seriously. He realized that what I’d said was quite courageous and which it was because I kind of felt, I’m going to say this thing, and then he’s going to tell me to fuck off if you’ll excuse the terms. And he just sat there and looked at me, you know, and he said, “Hmm, yeah, okay, so what do you think I should do?” And that was the turning point. It was like, “Ah, I got him.” Because the question was not, “What do you think I should do?” [With respect to sharpening up these bad behaviors] and they were bad behaviors. I can judge them. It was, “Okay. So actually, how do you think you can help me to be better?” And you know, it was interesting because that conversation began a five-year relationship.

Differences between the dominant Self-authoring and fully Self-authoring coaches related to how fully Self-authoring coaches focused on the longer-term and systemic impact of not facing a certain reality. They wanted to know, around a given dilemma, why clients were accepting non-sustainable results or, in a pivot, wanted to help them better understand the reasoning that would help them find the motivation to achieve sustainable results. Robert, relating the benefits lost if the inadequacy of a current approach is not overcome by a client, shared:

His other dilemma might be, well, is this going to get you where you want to go next? Um, because that seems to be most important to him and I, and I would also want to understand why he wants to go where he wants to go next. Um, is he just, is he focusing on

the next role while he is on another part of the ladder? You know, I do not know. I am just surmising because I do not have enough information, but those are some things I would love to explore [with him].

Theme 4: Helping the Client Explore Alternative Perspectives

One difference that was observed between dominant Socializing coaches and the dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches when it comes to process reflection practices for exploring alternative perspectives related to having clients experience the current vs. new approaches themselves. Specifically, dominant Socializing coaches had an increased focus on having clients experience their own approach and find another approach through another person's perspective, most often by putting themselves in another person's shoes. Audrey, a dominant Socializing coach, explained how once a client does that, it helps to use our "superpower of empathy" so that we can "manage ourselves and our relationships better":

And the other thing that I do often use is to put the person in the other person's shoes, which I did with this particular client as well, with that about the colleague. I did ask her once she stopped, you know, she gave me the whole thing about how she couldn't stand her. And she was so irritating and so on. I asked her if she could embody that person and that we could do some role-play, where I would be her, and she would be the triggering person. And I find often I use that because that often brings a lot of insight because that goes to using our superpower of empathy to manage ourselves and relationship much better, because suddenly you're in the other person, the other person has a view of you. And that the view is usually not very flattering.

In these practices, role play was often mentioned by coaches in this form of mind group as a way of literally taking on the role of others with whom the client interacts to "be more aware of how he is showing up as boss" and to "to see himself from a different perspective," as Aleyna said:

Probably we could do some exercises as him being an employee. We can do some role-playing. I would play Richard [the client], perhaps, and he would play one of his employees, and we can have some fun in this. And at the same time, it's a message for him to be more aware of how he is showing up as a boss. So let's say if he comes saying, "In the morning, I don't like to talk to my staff for an hour." From an employee's point of view, probably I would ask him what's going on in his mind, how he thinks his boss is behaving in the early morning. It could be fun, and it could be really a learning experience for Richard to see himself from a different perspective.

Even when trying to expose the clients to their non-preferred, less automatic approaches, something all coaches talked about, the intent for coaches in the dominant Socializing groups was often focused on the self-in-relation-to-other domain, that is, in relation to the experience of others that are on the receiving end of the client's approaches. In another example Aleyna brought in, she invited her client to "get more in touch with his heart" vs. operating from his "brain presence," assuming that "these people are not usually close to other people":

I would probably get him more in touch with his heart. He looks like a person with a lot of brain presence, so these people are not usually close to other people. That's why people stay away from them. When you are more in touch with your heart, if you see your colleague wearing a nice t-shirt this morning, you will say, "Oh, okay. Hey, listen, I love your t-shirt." These kinds of things that are really the spur of the moment coming from the heart make a big difference in communication. So I would probably train him as well to be more in touch with his heart and to blurt, to be vulnerable. Appear as a vulnerable person. Say it, if it doesn't work, fine. So you're not someone that should not [make] any mistakes.

Another approach brought in by both dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches about the way in which the clients' perspective could be explored and expanded, and above and beyond what was also discussed by the dominant Socializing coaches, was that these coaches were more directive in those explorations by very explicitly bringing in their own perspectives and "answers" into the mix as a catalyst for further perspective expansion. George, a dominant Self-authoring coach would "connect the dots" for his client "when he would miss them":

And then I just would connect the dots for him, connect threads when he would miss, you know, a conversation we had two months ago is now reflected, you know, it has kind of shown up again here with a different angle. And so remind him of that.

Albert, a fully Self-authoring coach, would "throw in some alternative answers" when using a dialogue mapping practice useful for "conceptualizing a much bigger picture and where the client's perspective fits into the overall and multiple perspectives that are in an organization around a particular problem":

I could get him to maybe dialogue map this problem and then throw some alternative answers into it, and we could explore those just as an exploration exercise and sort of see what his capacity or willingness to engage in that would be. I think, you know, the first part

of call there is, it seems so obvious on that description that it's this, but I sort of like, I think I'd want to spend at least the first session trying to get a clearer understanding of Richard in relation to the problem and the other people that are in the problem.

Finally, one additional perspective on these practices was brought in only by the dominant Self-authoring coaches, who talked about these practices as in-the-moment co-creation or energetic interplay between the coach and client, allowing for something new to emerge. When George, a dominant Self-authoring coach, talked about “going into the implicit intuitive space instead of the analytical, definitive space” that the clients were thought to privilege, his approach was anchored in the idea that during the coach-client interaction, various things get “evoked” in both the client and the coach creating a sort of “shared energy space” where both “emotional tones” and “meaning” can be borrowed and shared”:

One way of looking at it is to see a pattern. And often, it comes through language, the words they're choosing, the phrases they're using, and of course, there's emotional coloring around it. What emotional tones does it evoke in the client and in me? And so going after those, implicit, much of this is going into the implicit intuitive space instead of the analytical, definitive space. So they're taught to be analytical and definitive. And I think coaching is about being intuitive and implicit using the implicit instead of thinking implicit is somehow inferior. Now by using the implicit, it's sometimes the paradox here is of course it becomes explicit. So now you're, and that's a good way of saying it becomes more unconscious, but you want to work at those things that are just underneath the surface of explicitness because that's where the energy is.

So, there's clearly all the social intelligence research on what happens between, you know, a mirror neurons and all those things that we should, so it's shared energy space. So I absolutely believe that the client borrows my energy for a while, and borrows meaning, uh, feels it. And, it always is back too, so this is the old therapy words of transference-countertransference. But there's a, I feel their energy, they feel mine. And if I'm in a centered place and I'm not hung up in my analytical and because I don't know as much about their work as they do, I can't go where they are. So that's a good thing. So they borrow my energy and they use that energy to kind of break free of those patterns that they were previously confined to. They weren't necessarily stuck in them, but they were confining and now they can go beyond those.

Hải, also a dominant Self-authoring coach, talked about using observation and joining the client in his unconscious behaviors by way of mirroring to get the client, who “learned to function at a cognitive level” and was “disconnected from [his] body” to stop and breathe:

He has no way of describing the feeling. He can rationalize his feeling, but it's not tuned to the feeling. So I would say the first few months I literally just sat there and watch him and encouraging him to breathe. Literally just to breathe, like we would yawn and I would, I would mirror back yawning, and I would yawn and yawn and yawn with him until like tears come to his eyes. Because what happened is that oftentimes these high-power people, they, they've learned to function at a cognitive level full strong that they stopped almost like they're holding, they'll hold their breath, and they disconnected their body.

Theme 5: Defining the Client's New Approach

One of the differences observed when analyzing this set of process reflection practices was that the group of dominant Socializing coaches, compared to dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches, had an additional perspective on the aspirational practices. Specifically, while all coaches talked about having clients anchor their reflection on the people they admire or perceive as successful in defining a new approach, dominant Socializing coaches also talked about connecting the clients to their own selves. As such, they facilitated the client, in this process, to draw inspiration from not only the self-to-other space but also from a self-to-self space. Aleyna, a dominant Socializing coach, described doing that by having the client go to their future self and its "ultimate wisdom" to try and think from that space and use it as a guide when deciding what to do:

I do some wisdom work around confidence. So if you are, let's say, in your ultimate wisdom, how would it look like? How would that be? So we try to draw this person who will be the get to go person, get to call, or get to check in with, this [is] reasonable. Let's say she's wise; she always knows what to do, she's older if she wants; make her 70 years old if you want, 75 years old, build this person until at one point this person will be you. I tell her, what would your senior say? Let's say if you ask her, what would you think she said? Oh, okay she would say, drop this and go there. So do you think you can do that? So gradually, this person will merge with the client himself, and he will start asking himself these questions. Let me pause, let me check in with the wise side of me, and what answers would come up from that perspective.

Aleyna also had a client connect to their past self, to the "little boy who is really fun," to allow for more options for how to behave, above and beyond the "boss hat" approach he tends to use with his team:

I would like Richard to get more in touch with Richard. So behind every tough executive I have seen, there is this little boy who is really fun and is trying to hide this part of himself. So I try really hard to let him remember this side of him. And if not showing up

fully with this side, occasionally or at times to use this small boy in certain places. So he doesn't have to be wearing the leader or the boss hat everywhere he goes. You go to a family dinner with your team, okay, just mingle around, do not sit on the top of the table and lecture them about what's coming in project. No, it's time for fun, have fun. To be mindful of the moment as well. You have to take off your boss hat when you are having a coffee break with your staff in the room or whatever.

Another observed difference related to how the practices that focused on the client's values were used as guides for the clients when reflecting on their future actions. While the dominant Socializing coaches focused on the value-level contradiction with others, the dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches were more focused on how the clients could use their values in defining new actions while at the same time preserving those values. Valéria, a dominant Socializing coach, explained facilitating the client's reflection on "how he would resolve" instances where there is "a contradiction" in values with others:

Values—in terms of contradiction with others: So what is it that comes up for him in terms of values and then explore if there is a contradiction, probably there is some kind of contradiction between those values or at least, uh, between his values and other people's values. And how would he then like to resolve that once that comes to light? If it does come to light, how would he like to address that?

Elizabeth, a dominant Self-authoring coach, on the other hand, was more concerned about how to resolve the client's "fear of change" and get a client into a "calm state" so that he can come up with different ways of "showing up" while still "preserving the values he wants to keep":

So if his fear of changing and letting go of something, you know, if we know we have, we understand in the brain that when we're in a threat state, our field of vision actually decreases by 30%. So if we were able to help Richard get in a calm state, his parasympathetic nervous system activated, help him kind of imagine ideal situations and scenarios, pull him into the future in a calm brain state with maybe even some energy and excitement about possibilities of what could be, we could help him realize and see that it may be possible to still preserve the values that he wants to keep preserved while showing up differently and still achieving those new possibilities. So it's, so it's expanding his perspective, helping him see beyond the way his current view is limited.

Albert, a fully Self-authoring coach, had the same focus, as he discussed how he tried to help his client find how to "negotiate an emotionally draining situation" while at the same time "remaining true to his internal values" and "being authentic":

I think if I look at that coaching session as being the product of, you know, the previous three to four conversations that led into that, I think for a lot of that, I turned up supportive, saw my role as being supportive, and also, um, conspiratorial is not the right word. It's like consenting, I think, to my client's definition of what was important and their understanding of things. So, there were a number of things I took for granted in the conversation that I wasn't knowingly taking for granted; they were just eases, if you know what I mean. So, I saw my main role in those initial conversations as being supportive of David, helping him find the internal resources to negotiate his way through what was an emotionally draining situation for him, dealing with his disappointment and expectations of other people, remaining true to his internal values, being authentic and that was where I was originally going with those conversations.

No clear differences were observed between the dominant Self-authoring and fully Self-authoring coaches.

Theme 6: Experimenting with and Integrating New Approaches

One thing that dominant Socializing coaches did not explicitly discuss was paying attention to the clients' fallback into their old behaviors and habits during the new approach integration process, something that both dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches explicitly brought into focus. William, a dominant Self-authoring coach, in his description of the new action integration process, in addition to trying out a few small experiments and measuring the progress via "feedback loops," an aspect of this process that all coaches talked about, also explained that clients "dropping back into old behaviors" is something that needs to be attended to and eventually, over time, "completely demolished":

So next up, we would be in this sort of mode of let's make an experiment. Let's try a couple of small things and see what happens. Let's road-test this in a way that doesn't create a huge bomb to go off in your part of the organization; let's try a couple of things out, and let's measure whether or not the feedback loops are positive or negative. And then once we've done that, and again, assuming that there were positive feedback loops at some point when he says, "Well, you know, this is sort of going quite well. You know, I'm quite, you know, I think I can sort of make some progress in this." One might then say, "Okay, but something's getting in the way." You keep dropping back into old behaviors. You're doing stuff that you used to do."

And what I would do later in the coaching series, probably, if you want, two-thirds of the way through six or seven out of 10 coaching sessions, I would then sort of run the Immunity Change Model with them ... to prise apart that final piece, which is, so where is the rest of the resistance? Let's really look at the rest of the resistance. What's the legacy

there? And let's just completely demolish that too. And then hopefully he would be able to demonstrate that his behaviors have changed and that he, you know, there would be other bits that came in, I would get him to have eyes and ears on him in the organization, not just, I don't want him to self-report back to me, but I want to know that someone's watching him and can really see the changed behavior, it could be his boss, it could be his peer, if his boss could still that's great to me.

A fully Self-authoring coach, Robert also considered the idea of clients' "backsliding or re-engagement of some old behaviors" during the integration part of the change process and the importance of "examining that" and reflecting on whether or not this "serves [the client's] greater purpose":

I think there would be some probably, you know, once we got some commitment to doing some certain things, there probably be some backsliding or some re-engagement of some old behavior and stuff like that, and we would just have to talk about it, and see if that, again, that was serving that greater purpose. And whether that greater purpose is, you know, Richard being promoted or serving others, I would really like to know what his greater purpose is, but I would, once we discern that, then we can decide what is going to work. And then as time goes on, and it is not working, we are going to examine, or with hiccups, we are going to examine that, sustaining it.

Section 6: Coaches' Forms of Mind and Client-Focused Reflective Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight—Premise Reflection

In this section, I present the main developmental findings for the client-focused, premise reflection practices for facilitating transformative insight discussed by coaches making meaning through all three form of mind groupings. As in the previous two sections (i.e., on content and process reflection coaching practices), I first present the distribution of premise reflection coaching practice themes across forms of mind to express the extent to which the coaches privilege the use of said practices in facilitating learning toward transformative insight. Second, I once again present the findings of an in-depth analysis of qualitative data (i.e., interview excerpts) in the form of differences between coach participants from different form of mind groupings in how they understand, describe, and use coaching practices at the premise reflection level. Once again, the main analytical coaching practice themes served as an organizing principle in this comparison across forms of mind.

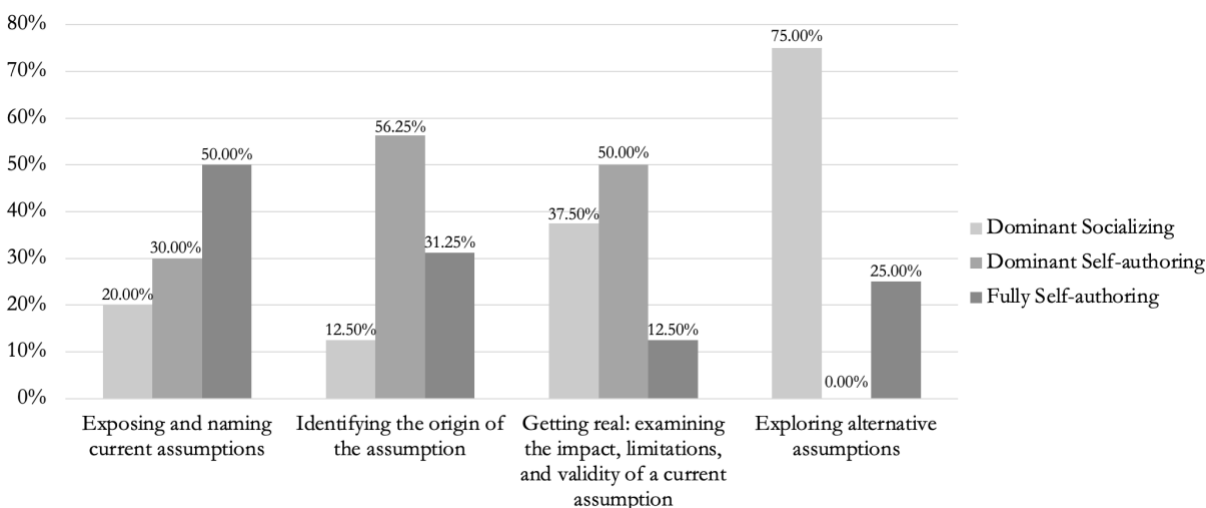
Distribution of Premise Reflection Practice Themes Across Forms of Mind

1. *Exposing and Naming Current Assumptions.* As shown in Figure 6.5 below, when it comes to the first premise reflection theme, a clear trend is observed—the more complex the form of mind, the more “exposing and naming current assumptions” practices coaches discussed. Out of the ten practices mentioned, half (50.00%) belonged to the fully Self-authoring, 30.00% to the dominant Self-authoring, and 20.00% to the dominant Socializing form of mind coaches.

2. *Identifying the Origin of the Assumption.* When it comes to the second premise reflection theme, out of the total of 16 practices discussed, the majority belonged to the dominant Self-authoring form of mind group (56.25%), 31.25% belonged to the fully Self-authoring, and the least belonged to the dominant Socializing form of mind group (12.50%).

Figure 6.5

Distribution of Premise Reflection Coaching Practice Themes per Form of Mind Grouping



3. *Getting Real: Examining the Impact, Limitations, and Validity of a Current Assumption.* In this premise reflection practice theme, half (50.00%) of the practices (out of eight) discussed belonged to participants making meaning from the dominant Self-authoring form of mind. This was followed by

the dominant Socializing form of mind coaches (37.50%). Finally, coaches that discussed these kinds of premise reflection practices the least were the ones making meaning from the fully Self-authoring form of mind (12.50%).

4. *Exploring Alternative Assumptions*. This last premise reflection theme showed the biggest difference in the distribution of practices across form of mind groupings. Specifically, out of the four practices in this theme, most belonged to the dominant Socializing form of mind coaches (75.00%). Twenty-five percent belonged to the fully Self-authoring form of mind coaches, while the dominant Self-authoring coaches did not discuss these practices (0%).

Qualitative Developmental Findings: Premise Reflection Practices

In this section, I report on the differences between coach participants from different form of mind groupings in how they understood, described, and used coaching practices at the premise reflection level. In this group of reflective coaching practices, there were fewer data points found than for the reflective coaching practices at the content and process levels. Specifically, compared to the total number of practices in the content (203) and process reflection (169) categories, there were far fewer coaching practices that met the criteria for inclusion in the premise reflection category (38 practices). As such, I qualitatively reanalyzed this set of data in detail to explore any emergent differences between coaches making meaning from three form of mind groupings. Once again, the main analytic themes that emerged for the analyses served as an organizing principle for these explorations.

Theme 1: Exposing and Naming Current Assumptions

The first notable difference in how coaches discussed using these premise reflection practices is related to the explicitness with which they approached exposing and naming clients' assumptions. Specifically, the dominant Socializing coaches approached assumptions work with their clients much more directly and explicitly than the dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches, whose

approaches were more indirect and implicit. This is clearly seen in an excerpt from Alexandra, a dominant Socializing coach, where she described how she starts her coaching engagements by asking her clients to express what their assumptions are “head-on,” an approach that she generally finds useful in her practice:

A lot of times, at the start of the coaching engagement, I’ll ask them what their assumptions or beliefs are, so I just approach it head-on. Sometimes in a coaching conversation, they’ll say, or they’ll ask, well, if you were me, what would you do? And I’ll say, we’ve had this conversation before and as your coach that’s not my role, so I can help you explore alternatives, but it will not be correct, ethically correct for me to tell you what I would do. I’m pretty direct in terms of approaching things head-on.

Dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches, on the other hand, described using a whole array of coaching practices, such as analogies and metaphors, role-play, as well as methods such as the four-column exercise from the Immunity to Change process, constraint-based learning activities, or upside-down coaching, to reveal their clients’ assumptions in a more step-wise, implicit, and subtle process that builds toward the revelations of the assumptions held. Albert, a fully Self-authoring coach, described how he uses constraint-based learning activities to expose the clients’ assumptions. He does that by introducing constraints around typical assumptions people hold around ideas and roles by having the clients remove them from consideration. This, in turn, helps expose the presence, role, and intensity of their assumptions (and their attachment to them) in their thinking and behavior and what their limitations are:

The other thing that I found useful is constraints-based learning activities ... where we ask people, what are all the things, if you were to design a restaurant from scratch, what are all the things that you’d need to incorporate into a restaurant to make it successful? So, people come up with, you know, a list of different things. But, you know, so what we then do is we have a list of all the things that are essential for a good restaurant; then we split people into three groups and we say, okay, you’ve got 25 minutes or whatever the time is to come up with a working model of a restaurant that you will sell to us as a panel and which we will be prepared to invest in.

We’ve got three groups, but before we start, group one, your restaurant is not allowed to sell food. Group two, your restaurant is not allowed to have any staff food. Group three, your restaurant is not allowed to have any location. Um, and then you say, go away and, you know, and so you facilitate the ingroup discussion as you move around. People try to bend

around the constraint by sort of saying, oh, well, how about we put it in a truck, you know, sort of moves around? I say, no, that's just a food truck this can't have a physical location. You know, once your truck stops, it's a physical location. So, people try to make sense of the problem according to the way they currently understand it.

What you start to find as you sort of scaffold and facilitate the discussion in the groups is they start coming up with ideas and ways of looking at a restaurant they've never seen before, and we never failed to have three really good tenable ideas for a restaurant that met all of the criteria.... And what we're doing there is, we're helping people make objects to themselves through gamification and constraints, the assumptions that we make about what a restaurant is and how holding onto that assumption, constrains them from looking at the other aspects of what a restaurant is.

One other difference I observed was related to what fully Self-authoring coaches are *not doing* as compared to the dominant Socializing and dominant Self-authoring coaches. First, they do not explicitly call out a client statement as being an assumption, something the other two groups of coaches do. A great example of that explicitness of calling about assumptions is visible in an excerpt from Alexandra, a dominant Socializing coach:

In terms of working with a client's assumptions not related to me as a coach, or the coaching process, the client says something like well, I think my leader should know how to do XYZ and then I'll say okay so I think you're making an assumption here and what's the assumption you're making?

Second, fully Self-authoring coaches do not bring an explicit focus to assumptions by using figures of speech (e.g., metaphors, analogies), colloquial terms (e.g., "your view," "your philosophy"), or in-preference terms (e.g., speaking in intellectual terms, such as "taking out the old software" and not psychological terms, such as "assumptive system," making it more comfortable for the clients) to make it easier for clients to connect to and understand the implicit but active role assumptions play(out) in our thinking.

Theme 2: Identifying the Origin of the Assumption

While all coaches helped facilitate reflection around the origin of their clients' assumptions, the main focus in those practices differed across forms of mind. The focus of the dominant Socializing coaches was on teaching clients that assumptions are learned, using theoretical models

very explicitly to convey that idea and by looking for the roots of their assumptions in their personal histories, such as their childhood and family influences. Audrey, a dominant Socializing coach, discussed using Mindell's majority-minority theory to "deepen the conversation" in exploring the client's "majority voices" from childhood, which shape who the client is, for the purpose of breaking down some of these constructions:

With that particular client, I actually have used ... a majority-minority Mindell theory... And that's something that I studied when I did my coaching. So, it's about in-depth. I think he came out of the School of Jung, but basically came up with the idea of, um, this, there is a majority voice that is all the stuff that from childhood we have adopted to be who we are. These are the things that were encouraged by parents, teachers, society, culture, to become, and to be proud of and to tell the world, "This is who I am." The minority voice is the stuff that was, from a very early age, told this is not good. This is not positive, not productive; we don't like it here. That's not who you are. You shouldn't be that; please hide those.

And the edge is what kind of, it's like a wall. And with some people, this edge is like a very thick wall, particularly if they come from a home that really was very sort of, the opposite of democratic, very, um, authoritarian, or in certain cultures have very thick edges. And basically, in coaching, what we're doing in therapy is creating this wall that becomes more porous, and you can kind of have a better kind of connection between the parts. And you can see the union story here, and what I referred to earlier as to, there's another narrative, there's another part, the parts of us that we don't see, or we judge as not good, um, to actually stop and ask questions, hang on, is it not good? I mean, let's check this and what does he do to you believing that this is not good, that you're a horrible person, if you ask something for yourself, or that you're a horrible person if you are not working 20 hours a day.

Whatever, every client with their own. So that's an example of, you have some to add, I find some clients bringing a model like that into the conversation helps deepen the conversation. And when I feel the need for that, I will do it.

The dominant Self-authoring coaches, while also, at times, using these very same approaches, additionally explored a broader range of contexts, such as the greater societal norms as potential sources behind the client's current assumption formation. And while also using models and frameworks to help anchor their coaching conversation, the focus was not merely on conveying the idea that assumptions are learned (i.e., teaching) but more on actively demonstrating how this dynamic plays out in their clients' experiences, perceptions, and across a variety of contexts. George, for example, discussed one of the methods he developed for engaging his clients in reflection on

their own experiences and the stories they have constructed around their worldviews and who they are to expose the limits of those narratives by exploring their current experience and situation and by tapping into their “deeper emotions of betrayal [and] forgiveness.” The goal was also to explore alternative narratives that are more appropriate for the clients and their experience in the here and now:

So I [work with] how stories define us, but they also confine us. So how are you, what are you doing to, you know, define who you are and to tell your story, your life through your story versus, and then how has that same story, it’s going back to the neuropathways, how’s that story hemming you in? Not giving you a new pathway?

So I literally suggest, re-imagine your stories. What other meanings could you get out of that traumatic event that you had when you were 14? As an adult now, you know, when you were 14, you couldn’t figure out an alternative. So you made these probably crappy interpretations of uh, but, but, but you need it. You need some interpretations to survive. So you survived, you made these limitations, you made these interpretations that got you through, but they were limiting, and they’re not. Then they’d created your worldview.

Well, now you’re 50. Do you want a 14-year-old version of your life to be driving you, or do you want a 50-year-old re-imagined? What do you think? Now have you had more love in your life? Have you had more opportunities to rethink what that was really about? Can you forgive the person who bullied you, and can you forgive yourself for having gotten that interpretation fully? You know, so I work in the space of a narrative. I work with those deeper emotions of betrayal, forgiveness, permission.

The aspect of considering the broader norms of other kinds of contexts of which the clients are a part was brought in by Dara, another dominant Self-authoring coach, who discussed the need to “feel out the greater system” the client is in, in this case, the client’s organizational culture that might serve to reinforce the very things that the client is trying to change:

I think it would be, you know, I would need to feel out how the greater system is. And so usually, that’s kind of the hardest thing for clients is if they’re in a system that actually encourages, that doesn’t overtly but covertly actually encourages, the very behaviors that he’s been criticized for. You know, so what kind of support, what’s a greater system that he has to operate in? So as an organizational development consultant, I always bring that system.

Finally, the fully Self-authoring coaches, while having the same intent of exploring the origins of their clients’ assumptions, had a different approach to engaging their clients in reflection in these areas. Namely, they did not anchor the reflection process in prescriptive methodologies,

models, or frameworks explicitly but placed emphasis on pursuing similar focuses and outcomes of reflection through the emergent dialogical aspects of the coaching process, such as having a free-flowing, active, exploratory discussion inviting the clients to lay out their reasoning behind holding a certain assumption. Eva, a fully Self-authoring coach, discussed exploring her client's frustrations so as to dig into some of the "roles and identities that he's assumed [and that] might not be his," this being done in order to meet her client where he is in his worldview, respecting and honoring it, and at the same time working on "kind of expand from that worldview":

[explore] what comes up for him around some of the frustrations, because there's likely some triggers probably from childhood, not to turn it into a therapy, but mostly so that he can, could see that he could start to detach a little bit from some of the roles and identities that he's assumed that they might not be his. Um, so I think asking questions around those kinds of things, find out what comes up with him around some of his thoughts and feelings and ideas, um, so that I could understand his worldview so that I could meet him where he's at, but then ask questions that could kind of expand from that world view. So being able to honor him and, again, for it, of course, to be a safe space and for there to be rapport. Um, so questions around that.

Additionally, they discussed creating a context of detached perspective-taking so that the client can take his assumption as an object in a less threatening way. Daivat, another fully Self-authoring coach, like all other coaches, talked about the importance of looking into the client's past to get a fuller understanding of what "made him be what he is." However, the way he talked about approaching this process involved creating more distance between the client and the challenge at hand by introducing examples from other clients in similar situations. The intent here was to help the client become "aware through his own turning points" and "change the belief slowly:"

You know what needs to be dealt with, I think, with some personal situations and his own turning points like I said before that everybody has, would have had a turning point, and it's also important to find out why [the client] is like this. Right. Was there something that happened that made him be what he is, or this is how he just happened to be? Nobody just becomes like this, right. So I would probably dig deeper into his past. And the way I would do it is not straight away going to his past. I will give him some examples. I'll tell him that, listen, I was coaching this other client of mine, who had a similar situation like you are in today. And, uh, but as he started talking and digging more deeper and I figured out that there were certain turning points in the personal life. And from that point, he sort of became more of a, to the point, cut the story, get the job done, type of person. And, uh, and that's all

he wanted to be. And he was struggling like you as he was trying to get to the next level. So I think it is important to make [the client] aware through his own turning points and help him to change the belief slowly.

Theme 3: Getting Real: Examining the Impact, Limitations, and Validity of a Current Assumption

Given that a fully Self-authoring group of coaches only had one interview excerpt belonging to this premise reflection theme, there was not enough data available to draw any conclusions on the differences between this and the other two form of mind groups of coaches. Dominant Socializing coaches focus on helping their clients recognize the limitations, validity, and inner truths of their current self-assumptions. They do this by asking clients to look within and beyond themselves for validity, asking clients to use imagination to work around limitations to see the role that assumptions are playing and decide if they are helpful. For example, this was visible in an excerpt from Valéria, where she explained how a client's assumptions and fears limited her ability to envision what she needed. She asked her client to engage in imaginary scenarios to remove the fixations her assumptions imposed and be able to envision a new situation and separate parts of the problem that would help her move forward:

[A]ssumptions and beliefs are quite complex, like there are several layers, and it is very intricate. Um, and especially if it is about making a decision, I like to give the scenarios to clients to try and separate the different components of the problem. So, I remember a client saying once that, ... I do not know if I should get into another relationship or not right now. Um, some people tell me that I should because I have been alone, but I am not sure. And, uh, I do not know if I should do it now or should do it later, or, you know, there was a lot of ifs and whatnot.

So, I just simplified. And I said, "Okay, so let us say you have a button that you can press. And when you press that button, you will meet the right person and you, that can happen now, it could happen in a year, you choose. The thing is, when you press that button, you will meet the right person." So, I was kind of removing the complications around finding the right person, not finding the right person, is it easy or hard? You just have this power, you have this button, you press, and then, would you press that button now? Or would you try it? Would you rather keep it for later knowing that you have nothing to lose, you will always find the right person.

So, by separating the different components of a problem, she was able to decide for herself, I would not press that button now for sure. And she realized she needed time for

herself. So I like to give, to, to, un-complicate and give imaginary scenarios for people to really understand, what is my belief or what is my assumption, or if I didn't have this belief, what would I be doing instead? The usual, typical question, what would you do if you were not afraid?

On the other hand, Dominant Self-authoring coaches are more focused on clarifying how the client's current assumptions play out in the world. This includes how they cocreate the challenges they face and how emotional defenses play out along with assumptions. They do this by challenging the clients with evidence exemplifying how their assumptions are not working well. George, a dominant Self-authoring coach, described supporting his clients in understanding and opening up to the inherent narrowness of the assumptions that are "getting in their way" by confronting them with "evidence coming in from the outside":

Hmm, what I have learned to date, I have learned that I think the [assumptions] play a big role. They play a huge role when there's big emotionality built into these. If there's a huge personal investment of their beliefs and their assumptions and if they take them really seriously and um, it can be a huge positive, and it can be a huge negative the more feeling and conviction they have behind it. If it's a lightly held belief and a lightly held assumption, then you can generally then, you know, that means they're open to change it....

There's other times when I know they have an assumption or belief that's getting in their way, but I don't want to directly challenge it cause it'll, they'll dig in deeper. Uh, but I, I will, uh, I'll be pretty sure that unless we change that, but the only thing that's going to change it is evidence coming in from the outside usually.... So rather than say, "Oh no, no, no, this is," but just saying, "Well, how does their problem become part of your problem?" Now you're starting to at least open up the possibility that that assumption is too narrow....

Theme 4: Exploring Alternative Assumptions

Given that a dominant Self-authoring group of coaches did not have any data belonging to this premise reflection theme, the differences were looked at only for dominant Socializing and fully Self-authoring form of mind groups of coaches. While there is not enough data to make any definitive conclusions on the differences between these two groups (i.e., the fully Self-authoring group only has one excerpt belonging to this premise reflection theme), there is one difference worth mentioning. Specifically, the dominant Socializing coaches worked with their clients on reframing an assumption by deepening or broadening its definition and application by testing its

validity (e.g., serving clients can mean helping them directly and helping them find a better fit for their needs). Alexandra, a dominant Socializing coach, talked about exploring what else could be going on above and beyond the clients' reaction stemming from the clients' current assumptions. She does this with the intent of "expanding the range of options" a client is able to perceive, discriminate between, and choose from in terms of what could be going on in the world around them:

I just call out clients' assumptions, and then so, you know, what other assumptions could you make in this instance? So, I'm playing the assumption piece, are you assuming in this instance that this person is trying to piss you off? What other assumption could you make? Maybe they're stressed. Maybe they're ... like I don't tell them, what other assumption could you make for this kind of behavior?

So now we're expanding the range of options. So, it's like, oh, maybe they're not mad at me, maybe something is going on for them that I don't know about, or maybe they had a bad day, who knows? So, it opens up that range of possibilities versus just focusing on how I'm reacting. So, I'm taking it from me to what's going on for them because a lot of times, we think everything is about us and most of the time, it is not.

A fully Self-authoring coach, Albert, while also focused on clients expanding their current assumptions, discussed approaching that process differently. He had his client take on, defend, and reason from a "point of view they disagree with" to solve a problem in order to see and experience alternative assumptions to their current one. This practice forced the clients to think beyond their own assumptions, putting their whole assumptive design in perspective:

[I use] forced dialogue, asking people to represent a point of view that they disagree with or limiting them to only having one frame to solve a problem. So, using Bolman and Deal, they've got four frames; they talk about the structural frame, the HR frame, the cultural frame, and the political frame and sort of say, well, this is the problem that we have to solve. You're only allowed to solve it using the political frames. What does that look like? So, doing that in a gamified way, but also doing it in a serious way. There's some serious learning to be had from this sense.

Interpretation and Synthesis: The Influence of Coaches' Forms of Mind on the Facilitation of Reflective Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight

In this section, based on the in-depth findings presented in the sections above, I now present the interpretation and synthesis of the main developmental findings for *client-focused* reflective

practices for facilitating transformative insight as discussed by coaches with various forms of mind and in response to my second research question: *What relationship, if any, exists between the coaches' forms of mind and how these coaches describe what they do in their coaching practices for different levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise reflection) to facilitate transformative insight?*

While in the sections above, I explored and reported on differences per each of the coaching practice themes that emerged during the thematic data analysis process for each of the three levels of reflection, in this section, I focus on exploring and synthesizing these findings, now *across* all themes and *across* all three levels of reflection to arrive at a coach profile for each of the three forms of mind groupings present in the study's population of 21 executive coaches: dominant Socializing, dominant Self-authoring, and fully Self-authoring forms of mind.

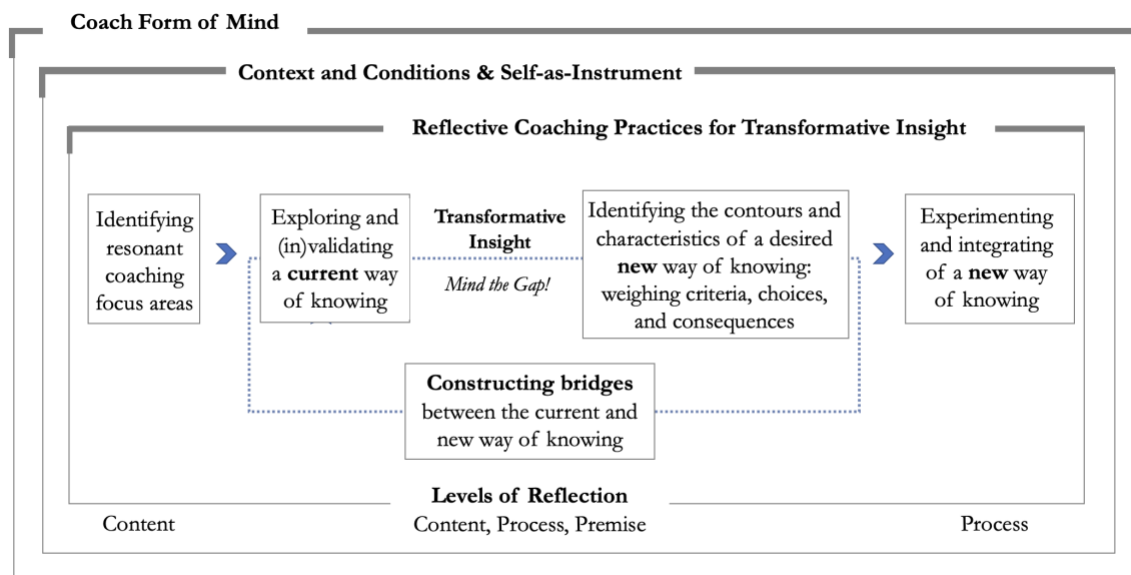
In the process of analyzing and reporting on the in-depth findings in this chapter, a few general observations quickly emerged. Before reporting on these observations now at a more global summary level, it is important to reiterate that the themes that emerged when analyzing coaching practices data related to the *intent* with which coaches engaged in these practices, that is, the goal they were trying to achieve while facilitating reflection with their clients. For example, the theme "Increasing contextual understanding" (content reflection coaching practice theme) conveys the coach's *intent* of having their clients bring to awareness, explore, and assess their external environments and the impact of those contexts on their thinking, feeling, and acting.

With that being salient, the first global observation related to the overall system of facilitating transformative insight in coaching was that from all coaching practice themes that emerged across all three levels of reflection, as well as "context and conditions" and "self-as-instrument" practices, all coaches, independent of their form of mind, engaged in coaching practices belonging to each of the coaching practice themes that emerged. That is, all coaches engaged their

clients in learning by using the practices belonging to every step of the model, as outlined in Chapter 5 (see Figure 6.6 below).

Figure 6.6

Coaching Process and Practices Model for Facilitating Transformative Insight and Forms of Mind

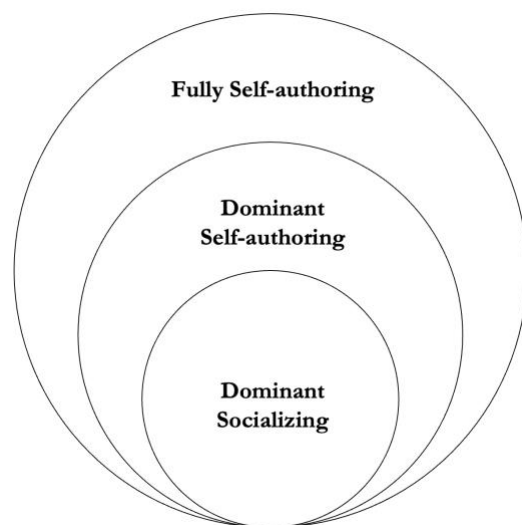


Narrowing in on the focus of this dissertation (i.e., coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight at three levels of reflection: content, process, and premise), and based on the in-depth findings above, a second observation is that while all coaches independently of their form of mind discussed engaging their clients in all reflective practice from all coaching practices themes, the *way* they described using these practices and the way they went about meeting that intent by facilitating clients' learning toward transformative insight differed. Interestingly but not surprisingly, globally observed differences in the way coaches with different forms of mind understood and described how they use these various reflective practices followed the "transcend and include" principle behind the developmental trajectory (i.e., the subject-object evolution) as defined by the constructive-developmental theory (Kegan & Lahey, 1983; McCauley et al., 2006; see Figure 6.7

below). Specifically, the reflective practices described by coaches with each subsequent, more complex form of mind included and transcended how these reflective practices were described and used by coaches making meaning from a previous, less complex form of mind. That is, coaches from each subsequent form of mind expanded upon certain aspects of each of these coaching practices as described by coaches with a less complex form of mind. This means that the ways dominant Socializing coaches discussed using reflective practices were incorporated in the description of dominant Self-authoring coaches, but they further expanded upon these uses. Along the same lines, the ways that dominant Self-authoring coaches used reflective practices were incorporated in the descriptions by fully Self-authoring coaches, who similarly further expanded upon these uses considered by the dominant Self-authoring coaches.

Figure 6.7

Transcend and Include Representation of the Expansion of Application of Reflective Coaching Practices Across Forms of Mind



Third, when synthesizing the qualitative developmental data findings reported in the above sections, this transcend and include principle was observed in several general aspects of reflective coaching practices. Specifically, while the intent behind reflective practices was the same, the main

focus of reflection the coaches with different forms of mind emphasized, the *input* upon which the reflection was based, the practical *approaches* taken to meet that intent, and the *style* with which these practices were put to use evolved. I summarized this evolution of practice application, which emerged from the complete developmental analyses and present them in Table 6.5 below.

Table 6.5

Form of Mind-Related Coach Profiles Across Various Aspects of Reflective Coaching Practices

Aspect of coaching practice	Coach Form of Mind		
	Dominant Socializing	Dominant Self-authoring	Fully Self-authoring
Focus of reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outward-in focus (e.g., external goals) - Self-in-relation-to-others - Relationships - Impact on others and of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inside-out focus (e.g., internal “disconnects”) - Self-in-relation-to-context - Identifying and preserving authenticity - Impact on self - Responsibility taking - Fallback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Removing emotional obstacles to create a detached perspective
	<p><i>Expanding perspectives:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having clients consider and explore other perspectives, often by putting themselves in another person’s shoes 	<p><i>Expanding perspectives:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenging client’s perspectives - Directly joining the clients in their perspective to expose it - Explicitly bringing in own perspectives 	<p><i>Expanding perspectives:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inviting clients to inhabit and defend other, opposing perspectives (e.g., organizational)
Input for reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The client’s story/narrative - External feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coach’s own in-the-moment-observations - Coach’s intuition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coach’s own in-the-moment somatic experiences as input (e.g., “energetic interplay”)
	<p><i>Contexts:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Narrow/focused (i.e., work, life) - Closely related to relationships and important others (e.g., boss, colleagues) 	<p><i>Contexts:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broader systemic/societal/big picture (e.g., organizational, cultural, societal norms) 	

Table 6.5 (continued)

Aspect of coaching practice	Coach Form of Mind		
	Dominant Socializing	Dominant Self-authoring	Fully Self-authoring
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear, tangible - Using explicit models and theories - Teaching (e.g., your perspective is constructed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explorative - Cocreation - More abstract (e.g., poetry, analogies, religious symbolism) - Directly experiencing (e.g., how does your perspective play out in the world and across a variety of contexts) and actively demonstrating - Deeper root cause explorations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Free-flowing, emergent, and evolving dialogue
Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actively supportive (and challenging) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actively challenging and confrontational (and supportive) 	

1. Focus of Reflection

1a. Dominant Socializing Form of Mind Coaches

Starting with the focus or the emphasis placed while engaging in reflective practices, coaches making meaning from a dominant Socializing form of mind had a primarily outward-in focus, meaning that this group of coaches placed emphasis on external (and concrete) goals, such as client's promotion or growing their business, as drivers behind the coaching process. Additionally, in engaging their clients in reflection across a variety of themes and purposes, they emphasized the self-in-relation-to-others domain and the relational aspects of the challenges the clients experienced. This was visible in how these coaches worked on increasing the clients' self-awareness by reflecting on not only who they are but also, importantly, on who they are in relation to those around them. For example, when working on identifying the clients' values or preferred approaches, the coaches engaged the clients in reflection not only on what their values are but also on what the impact of

these values might be on those around them and their relationships. As such, when working on expanding the clients' perspectives (something that all coaches were focused on), this group of coaches prioritized clients considering and exploring other perspectives mostly by putting themselves in another person's shoes and using their, as Audrey called it, "superpower of empathy" so that they can "manage themselves and their relationships better." This was to be expected given that the individuals making meaning from the Socializing form of mind (which was a leading meaning-making structure of this form of mind group) are subject to interpersonal and mutuality. As such, they rely on others' expectations and role definitions as an important driver of their own thinking and actions, as well as having a strong sense of responsibility for meeting those external expectations and as a way of ensuring their sense of belonging and affiliation (Drago-Severson, 2009; Popp & Portnow, 2001).

1b. Dominant Self-authoring Form of Mind Coaches

In facilitating reflection with their clients, this group of coaches considered and, to an extent, incorporated all the aspects as the dominant Socializing form of mind coaches, but these aspects were not a primary focus they held. Instead, these coaches primarily had an inside-out focus and explored the internal "disconnects" and "misunderstandings" the clients experienced related to their challenges. For example, while external goals and expectations were used as input, their primary purpose was not only anchored in the relational domain but was also used as a form of reality testing and validation, challenging the clients' perspectives on reality, and as a way of discovering the blind spots that clients can then leverage or capitalize upon. As such, the impact of the clients' actions was considered not only on the clients' relationships but, more importantly, on the clients' authenticity and sense of self and how these may be preserved or enhanced. Another, more prominent domain these coaches explored with their clients was related to self-in-relation-to-context, where the insights were geared toward not only who the clients are in relation to others but also in relation to multiple

contexts they inhabit (e.g., organizational, private life) and how these contexts shape their thinking, feeling, and action. In these reflective explorations, another expansion that this group of coaches introduced was a reflection on the clients' own responsibility for their own process of learning and growth and the achievement of transformative insights versus, as Daviat explained, only "waiting for it to happen" as well as for the role they have in creating the very challenges they are trying to resolve. Related to that responsibility-taking was the idea of fallback and ensuring the clients are aware of the triggers that pull them back into their old meaning-making so that they can notice and counter those instances more readily and more successfully. Finally, when working on expanding the clients' perspectives, this group of coaches prioritized challenging their clients not only by introducing others' perspectives but by directly challenging their own by joining their very meaning-making process and by directly introducing their own perspectives into the mix to expose and expand it. They talked about "connecting the dots" for the clients "when they would miss them" or "throwing in some alternative answers" as a catalyst for further perspective expansion. These approaches were also in line with the theory and what one would expect from dominant Self-authoring coaches who have, to a large extent, moved away from the interpersonal and mutuality-driven aspects of meaning-making and toward authorship, identity, and internal authority aspects that are more contextually (vs. relationally) determined. The focus on discovering blindspots, preventing fallback, and taking responsibility for one's own learning process and actions is also in line with their increased sense of responsibility for the self and its own functioning and the concern for meeting one's own standards (Popp & Portnow, 2001).

1c. Fully Self-authoring Form of Mind Coaches

The focus of this group of coaches closely resembled that of the dominant Self-authoring group, with two notable expansions in focus. First, fully Self-authoring coaches, in addition to the focus areas emphasized by the two previous form of mind groups, placed an additional emphasis on

removing emotional obstacles as a way to help their clients take on a detached perspective on their challenges so that the bigger and deeper perspectives can emerge. This was meant to counter the clients' negative emotional experiences and a sense of threat that often emerged in the process of growth and the related realization that the way they understood themselves and the world around them so far might no longer be valid. In that process of perspective broadening, their second expansion related to inviting clients to inhabit and defend other, opposing perspectives versus only introducing those other perspectives. This involved, for example, clients taking on, defending, and reasoning, as Albert put it, from a "point of view they disagree with" to solve a problem in order to see and experience alternative perspectives as compared to their current one, forcing the clients to think beyond their own perspective, making their whole assumptive design an object of reflection. Both of these expansions related to the way that fully Self-authoring individuals make meaning. First, their expanded focus on removing emotional obstacles in the process of learning relates to their capacity to engage with and manage their own emotional experiences and use them as information with regard to their own functions (Kegan, Noam, & Rogers, 1982). Putting emotions aside in order to move forward may also relate to this group's tendency to regard emotions as things to be resolved so that the self-authored meaning-making system can function more smoothly. Second, the idea of inhabiting and defending opposing perspectives is also something that would come naturally to this group as they tend to take differences in perspectives as a given and see them as an opportunity for growth and improvement and strengthening of their own self-authored perspectives (Drago-Severson, 2009; Popp & Portnow, 2001).

2. Input for Reflection

2a. Dominant Socializing Form of Mind Coaches

The second set of observed differences and evolution of reflective coaching practices related to the main input for reflection taken by the coaches making meaning from different forms of mind.

Coaches making meaning from a dominant Socializing form of mind primarily used the client's own story/narrative as well as various forms of external feedback as the input for reflection. These coaches closely and in appreciative ways followed the client's stories to identify the salient objects of reflection so that the clients can work on increasing their awareness of the way in which they make sense of things. To expand that understanding of themselves and others and to understand and challenge the interpersonal dynamic, in the coaching process, external feedback was of the essence for this group. The contexts considered and brought in as objects of reflection were mostly from work and private spheres and were closely related to relationships and important others (e.g., boss, colleagues). This narrower contextual focus and focus on explicit external feedback, both anchored in relational spheres, are once again aligned with the relationally anchored meaning-making focus of the Socializing group. The importance of external feedback is more pronounced in this group as, with a Socializing form of mind being in the lead, these coaches may still, to an extent, concern themselves with the consequences of one's behavior for the shared reality the clients inhabit with those around them (Kegan, Noam, & Rogers, 1982).

2b. Dominant Self-authoring Form of Mind Coaches

While also using the client's story and external feedback as input for reflection, this group of coaches additionally emphasized using their own in-the-moment observations of the client's reflection and reactions, as well as their own intuition, as input and additional perspectives to the overall reflective process and way of co-creating that reflective space. For example, they talked about reflecting back on their in-the-moment observations of the client's somatic responses, such as changes in breathing and movements, so that these can be brought in as input for reflection next to the story that the clients themselves bring. George, for example, talked about "going into implicit intuitive space instead of analytical, definitive space" that the clients tend to privilege so that various other aspects of their experience can be "evoked" in both the coach and clients, creating a "sort of

shared energy space” where both “emotional tones and meaning” can be borrowed and shared. Additionally, the context within which the reflection was placed was broader than the one considered by the dominant Socializing coaches. In addition to the work and life contexts and their relational aspects, this group (as well as the fully Self-authoring group) also considered a broader systemic, societal context, such as organizational, cultural, and societal norms, as a way of providing a bigger picture and space within which reflection can occur; a space where, as Robert put it, a client can take “the larger context” into account so that they can come to a space “where that can all be woven together” and where “integrated coaching” (Viola) can occur.

2c. Fully Self-authoring Form of Mind Coaches

This group of coaches discussed the very same inputs for reflection with one additional expansion. In addition to using their own in-the-moment observations of the client’s reflection, reactions, and intuition as input, this group of coaches also used their own in-the-moment somatic responses and experiences as input (e.g., “energetic interplay” between the coach and client). They found this helpful for getting “a hit of something” or getting to “something a little deeper” with the clients and then “testing to see where they are,” as well as for taking the client into “a more of an authentic presence” and toward “interacting on resonance” with the client (as mentioned by Viola). As such, they used their own direct experiences, interchanging them with those of a client to come to a new and deeper reflective space, above and beyond the cognitive one alone. The use of their own observations, intuition, and somatic experiences as input for reflection by fully and dominant Self-authoring coaches conveys something about their capacity to trust their own internal compass and experience enough to bring them into the coaching process. This can be related to one’s increasing capacity to differentiate between parts of oneself and parts of others (Popp & Portnow, 2001; p. 57) and, as such, feeling more confident in bringing these two elements together as input in a more emergent and explorative process.

3. Approach

3a. Dominant Socializing Form of Mind Coaches

Regarding the practicalities of an approach to meeting the intent behind a set of practices, the dominant Socializing coaches had clear and tangible approaches to putting their practices to use. For example, they were focused on having the clients reflect toward identifying “clear,” “highly tangible,” and “SMART” goals (i.e., Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timebound goals) so that an explicit “path forward” can be outlined. When working with clients’ assumptions, they approach them directly and “head-on” by, for example, simply asking, “What are your assumptions?” (Alexandra). They discussed using explicit models and theories to provide their clients a new language and anchor their reflection in concrete concepts, frameworks, and ideas. These models and theories were also used to teach clients about various psychological processes that could help them place their own in perspective. For example, they used constructivist ideas and theories to relay to their clients how their perspectives are constructed based on past experience and that they had a choice in how they construct their experience going forward.

3b. Dominant Self-authoring Form of Mind Coaches

While at times also relying on explicit models and theories, this group of coaches expanded these approaches by relying on more explorative and abstract approaches, such as poetry, analogies, or religious symbolism, in the reflection process. They found these approaches helpful in getting to a deeper understanding of the clients’ experiences and related meaning-making. Additionally, when working with clients’ assumptions, rather than directly approaching them and merely conveying that their assumptions are learned, their practices emphasized the clients’ directly experiencing and actively demonstrating the consequences of those assumptions. So instead of only asking, “What are your assumptions?” they engaged the clients in active exploration of how those assumptions play out in the world and across a variety of contexts and the related limitations of those constructions for

the clients' experiences in the here and now. In that process, they also place more emphasis on the approaches anchored in deeper root cause explorations behind the clients' assumptions and the need to start "understanding those emotions [that come up] and where they are coming from and why," often requiring reflection on the client's past (Elizabeth).

3c. Fully Self-authoring Form of Mind Coaches

Finally, regarding approaches taken, this group of coaches, in addition to what has already been discussed for the two other groups, had one more aspect to how these practices were understood and enacted. Specifically, rather than seeing the process as anchored in explicit models or theories, fully Self-authoring coaches understood their approaches as free-flowing and emergent and their discourse with the client as an evolving dialogue. As such, they did not explicitly call out clients' assumptions or bring in an explicit focus on assumptions by, for example, using figures of speech (e.g., this is "your view," "your philosophy") or using terms such as "assumptive system," so that the clients might connect to their assumptions in more implicit ways and through the roles they play in their thinking, feeling, and acting, allowing the clients' reasoning to emerge less directly and more intuitively.

These distinctions in approaches taken to facilitate reflection, including the extent to which explicit theories and models are relied upon, may relate to coaches' confidence in relying on themselves as a guide for thinking and action. As one grows from Socializing to a Self-authoring form of mind, her confidence in her own authority grows. This occurs as the authority is no longer external to self (e.g., education background, experts) but is increasingly found in the self, meaning that one can decide the rules and regulations by which this should occur (Berger, 2012). As this feeling grows, one is "more likely to put herself on and her growing Self-authoring perspective on the authority-approved list" (p. 85). Through this growth in confidence in one's internal compass as a guide and as an extension, an elevated tolerance for ambiguity (Popp & Portnow, 2001) might also

account for the increased use of abstraction with which one facilitates reflection as well as the degree to which one feels comfortable with engaging in a more evolving, free-flowing dialogue versus keeping things concrete and tangible and approaching them directly.

4. Style

The final set of summarized observed differences relates to the style with which coaches making meaning from different forms of mind enacted reflective coaching practices with their clients. The most salient aspect in that domain concerns the degree of support and challenge coaches introduced in their facilitation of reflection toward transformative insight. While all coaches described approaching the facilitation using both support for and challenge to the clients' current way of making meaning and for the purpose of bringing it to awareness and expanding it, coaches making meaning from a dominant and fully Self-authoring form of mind were much more challenging and confrontational in style than the Socializing form of mind coaches. The dominant and fully Self-authoring form of mind coaches, even when using the very same practices (e.g., role play) with the very same intent (e.g., helping the clients explore alternative perspectives, process reflection theme), fully embraced taking, as Margaret puts it, a "firm" devil's advocate role with their clients, which could at times be characterized as confrontational. They would, at times, join their clients' meaning-making with the intent to expose the "absurdities of it" (William, dominant Self-authoring) or to "expose them to the granular experience" of their own approaches (Viola, fully Self-authoring). For example, William's language when describing his facilitation included descriptions such as "intellectual chess" with the goal of "walking [the client] into a corner" and launching a "nuclear missile" to expose contradictions or inconsistencies in the client's thinking and "prove to them" how biased their beliefs are. Or Albert's (fully Self-authoring) "simple question" posed to his client: "If you are right about everything, how come everybody doesn't see it that way?" Dara's (dominant Self-authoring) comment nicely sums up the reasoning behind this style taken by these

two groups, emphasizing how she is “not worth (much) as a coach if she doesn’t intervene and challenge” the clients when their own approaches to thinking and acting are working against them.

This finding, too, can be traced to the strengths and challenges associated with different forms of mind. First, the comfort with challenging clients demonstrated by the dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches, as compared to the dominant Socializing coaches, may stem from the higher degree of comfort with conflict they may experience. Even when challenging others occurs within a context where it can be seen as part of one’s role, it may still be hard for dominant Socializing individuals to separate the interpersonal aspects of their client relationships enough to be as challenging and confrontational as more Self-authoring coaches. With the experienced co-ownership of emotions and related sense of responsibility they hold for other people’s feelings (Kegan, Noam, & Rogers, 1982), and anticipation of their needs, as well as the felt obligation to meet those needs, it may be harder for more dominant Socializing coaches to engage in facilitating reflection in this manner. This sense is further strengthened given that conflict, such as, for example, in holding opposing perspectives, is not yet fully understood as a natural part of interaction and an opportunity for growth and creativity but rather a potential threat to a relationship.

Taken altogether, the above descriptions of evolving coaching practices demonstrate that coaches’ forms of mind do indeed influence their facilitation of *client-focused* reflective practices toward transformative insight. The above-described ways in which this influence occurs are aligned with the descriptions of characteristics associated with different forms of mind (for a reminder, refer to Tables 2.2 and 2.9 in Chapter 2) as outlined by constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994). They are also mostly in line with the available literature exploring the ways in which coaches’ forms of mind might relate to how they understand and enact their role, as reviewed in Chapter 2. I will discuss these points in the following Chapter 7.

Summary

In this chapter, I answered my second research question by presenting the developmental findings on the coaching practices for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight at content, process, and premise levels for coaches across three forms of mind groupings: dominant Socializing, dominant Self-authoring, and fully Self-authoring. First, I presented the distribution of each coaching practice theme at all three levels of reflection in terms of the frequencies with which they were discussed by coaches from each form of mind grouping, to explore, at each level of reflection, if coaches making meaning from different forms of mind (under)privileged some coaching practices over others. Second, I presented the observed differences in how coaches with various forms of mind described, understood, and used coaching practices for each of the main practice themes and for all three levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, premise). Finally, using these in-depth qualitative developmental findings as input, I synthesized and interpreted these findings across all reflective levels as a way of creating a more focused, big-picture perspective of the differences between coaches making meaning from various forms of mind in how they approach the facilitation of reflective coaching practices toward transformative insight.

Chapter 7: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion

As a reminder, this study aimed to identify new coaching practices for facilitating leadership development, the kinds of practices that could help leaders learn to navigate their increasingly complex contexts more successfully. Specifically, in Chapter 5, I presented the findings on the coaching practices that 21 executive coaches found helpful for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight with their clients across different levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise) and in response to my first research question: *How do coaches describe and understand what they do in their coaching practices to facilitate transformative insight, and why? More specifically, how do coaches describe and use practices for different levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise reflection) to facilitate transformative insight?*

In Chapter 6, I explored these reflective coaching practice findings through the lens of constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994), using the coaches' current forms of mind to answer the second research question: *What relationship, if any, exists between the coaches' forms of mind and how these coaches describe what they do in their coaching practices for different levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise reflection) to facilitate transformative insight?*

Arriving at this point in my dissertation has been a journey with a vast number of layers and dimensions in valuable learning, thought-provoking inquiry, and meaningful insights gained along the way. As I do not have the time or space to go into all the learning or insights acquired on this journey, it can be useful to see this dissertation (and this chapter) not only as a summary of the key parts of this process but also as a starting point for new learning and future research. For now, however, it is time to wrap up. I will, therefore, frame this chapter as a discussion of the big-picture

interpretation and synthesis of findings that were most relevant to my two research questions and are presented in the closing sections of Chapters 5 and 6.

The first purpose of this final chapter is to discuss and relate those findings to existing literature, both theoretical and empirical, anchored in my two main theoretical lenses and as depicted in my conceptual framework (see Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2), that is, transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000) and constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994), and as reviewed in Chapter 2. Second, in light of these considerations, I will outline practical recommendations and implications for the coaching field and for coaches and their facilitation of reflection toward transformative insight. Next, the limitations of this study will be discussed, as well as related future research opportunities. I will end this chapter and dissertation with a word of hope, sharing some of my reflections on the conclusions in the context of the research as well as my own.

Discussion of (Reflective) Coaching Practices for Facilitating Transformative Insight

In this first discussion section, I turn to the findings on (reflective) coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight (presented in depth in Chapter 5). Using the interpretation and synthesis of these in-depth findings and the emergent overarching model representing the coaching process and practices for facilitating (reflection toward) transformative insight (Figure 5.7) as an anchor, I will discuss these findings in the light of existing theoretical and empirical literature stemming from transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000), and in response to my second research question: *How do coaches describe and understand what they do in their coaching practices to facilitate transformative insight, and why? More specifically, how do coaches describe and use practices for different levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise reflection) to facilitate transformative insight?*

First, looking at the Chapter 5 findings, it can be concluded that in their efforts to facilitate transformative insight, next to *client-focused, reflective* coaching practices at three levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, premise), coaches also found other practices important. While client-focused,

reflective coaching practices covered 50.06% of all 819 coaching practices discussed, coaches also brought in *client-focused, non-reflective* context and conditions (29.43%) and the *coach-focused* self-as-instrument practices (20.51%) (see Table 5.1 and Figure 5.2). This exposed a whole system of practices also involved in facilitating reflection toward expanding the client’s perspective. It became clear that these categories of practices were also important in supporting the transition from the client’s *current* way of knowing (which can be experienced as limited and standing in the way of one’s resolution of a challenge or goal achievement) to a *new* way of knowing understood by the learner as more desirable, effective, and accommodating of their current experience (for a reminder, see Figure 5.7). Coaching practices for “context and conditions” (i.e., practices meant to create learning circumstances that best meet the client’s needs, preferences, and situation) and *coach-focused* “self-as-instrument” practices (i.e., practices meant to help the coaches self-regulate and navigate the coaching process more optimally, increasing the presence of wholeness and synergy between the coach and the client) were emphasized by all coach participants. While these coaching practices were not the focus of the study, a broader perspective on the findings clearly acknowledges the role and important dynamic between these two additional sets of practices and the *client-focused* reflective coaching practices that are at the core of the study’s intent and focus. Specifically, coach participants emphasized the importance of creating a holding environment focused on meeting each client’s needs as a learner (i.e., “context and conditions”) in various ways. Coach participants also shared how coaches self-regulate their own needs and influence (i.e., “self-as-instrument” practices) in the process of facilitating reflection toward transformative insight. Seen together, these two practice categories draw attention to the importance of having a conducive holding environment in place for reflective practice to occur in an optimal, authentic, and safe way that serves the process of reflection toward transformative insight. This finding is very much aligned with the focus of many coaching programs and institutions that emphasize the importance of coach competencies such as,

for example, “establishing the coaching agreement,” “establishing trust and intimacy with the client”, and “coaching presence” (ICF, 2022). Given the weight these competencies have in defining what coach education, training, and guidelines should look like, it is not surprising that coaches place emphasis on these competencies in their facilitation.

As the data analysis revealed, an emphasis on the presence of these coach practices and the role that they play in facilitating transformative insight is also in alignment with the literature on fostering transformative learning. Sammut (2014), who explored how coaches foster transformative learning, found that coaches pay special attention to practices aimed at creating a safe environment, acceptance, and accountability (i.e., as related to “context and conditions” practices). Sammut’s findings also show that coaches pay attention to their presence in coaching, such as engaging in active listening and being non-judgmental (i.e., as related to “self-as-instrument” practices) (p. 48).

Mezirow (1991), discussing transformative learning, speaks of the broad perspective and versatility of facilitative and facilitator practices an educator needs to bring to the table to “define and elaborate all the factors that sustain (a client’s) unquestioned meaning perspectives” (p. 218). Cranton (2016) speaks of the need for educators to be aware of and attend to the “wholeness of learning” that goes under the surface and connects to a “deep shift in perspective,” as “we cannot say what kind of learning experience will promote this perspective in any person or context” (p. 13). Further, Cranton (2016) speaks of the specific demand that a learning objective of challenging and supporting a learner to “construct knowledge about themselves, others, social norms” (p. 81) places on the educator. Here, she writes, creating a comfortable learning environment and meeting the needs of learners will need to, in a very personal way, sometimes relate to supporting a fully learner-centered approach and sometimes to a co-directed approach where the facilitator is involved. Identifying some of the demands on the facilitator, Taylor (2009) describes a particular context for fostering transformative learning that not only meets the needs of the learner but engages the

facilitator in a specific form of dialogue, provides guidance for critical reflection that brings a holistic orientation to the process and establishes an authentic relationship. Cranton (2016) agrees, saying that co-direction, described as a partnership between learner and teacher in a process involving the construction of knowledge, is not only imperative but it trumps having a sole focus on the learner (self-direction). This statement is clearly substantiated in the findings on the system of practices for facilitating transformative insight described in this research study. Additionally, Cranton addresses the sensitive and vulnerable nature of facilitating transformative learning, something that must become part of a learning process not burdened or solely driven by the facilitator to avoid “venturing into indoctrination, manipulation, and coercion” (p. 105). As this study shows, coaches have many roles and responsibilities geared toward regulating themselves when they are facilitating transformative insight. This includes expressing a particular awareness of their potential impact and an ability to mitigate it and being able to engage in a co-directed way and style with and for the client in order to achieve a holding environment conducive to the emergence of transformative insight. Seen together, these practices not only create essential components of the holding environment within which reflective coaching practices can occur in a more learner-oriented, safe, and synergistic way, but they are a critical dynamic in the enabling the kind of system built around reflective coach practices, from which the achievement of transformative insight becomes more accessible.

Narrowing in on the *client-focused, reflective* coaching practices at three levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, premise), the main focus of my investigation, it becomes apparent that one of the findings that deserves special attention is that practices for facilitating transformative insight at the *premise level* were the least discussed practices by participant coaches. Specifically, out of a total of 410 coaching practices, only 9.27% belonged to premise reflection, while the rest were approximately equally divided between content (49.51%) and process (41.22%) reflection practices (see Table 5.2 and Figure 5.3). Given the centrality that premise (or critical) reflection has in the process of

perspective transformation described by the transformative learning process (Cranton, 2016; Kitchenham, 2008; Mezirow, 1990) as well as the potential it holds for facilitating a major change in the learner's assumptive system (i.e., subject-object move), and as such, for transformative insight, I was surprised by the extent to which premise reflection practices were underrepresented in the coach practices gathered in this study. Even while keeping the complexity of premise reflection (Kember, 1999) in mind, as well as the findings from studies (Kember et al. 2008; Wallman et al., 2008) and literature (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009) indicating that premise reflection is the least common of these three levels, I did not expect premise reflection to be discussed five times less frequently than content and process reflection practices. Seen from the context of this study, where the practices coaches discussed were seen as helpful for, and specifically aimed at, facilitating learning toward transformative insight, I anticipated finding more premise reflection practices than were found in the empirical studies, which involved analyzing unfacilitated reflective writing exercises (Kember et al., 2008; Wallman et al., 2008).

As already shared in Chapter 2, perhaps this finding reinforces the fact that in facilitated dialogue (as coaching is and does) and when working from the intent to expand the learner's current way of knowing, coaches find it important to create a conversational and collaborative learning arc that slowly, and in a scaffolded way, eases the learners into the exploration of their current belief system and beyond. Mbokota et al. (2022) also found that in order to get to awareness of the *why* behind the clients' dilemmas (i.e., premise reflection), they first need to gain awareness of the *what* (i.e., content reflection) and *how* (i.e., process reflection) behind them. Once that process is complete, the client can reflect on the *why* behind their dilemmas through the process of dialogue and discourse, including critical reflection. Taking time and making (reflective) space for this could not only serve as a challenge to a current way of knowing, but it could also, as this study shows, and in my own experience, reduce the risk of reflective premise-level reflective practices as being

experienced as “emotional and traumatic” (Cranton, 2016; p. 109). Cranton’s (2016) warning is aligned with another of Mbokota et al.’s (2022) findings demonstrating how the process of critical (premise) reflection mostly caused negative emotional and cognitive experiences, which need to be mitigated (the process for which positive emotions were a prerequisite). In this way, the emotions can be acknowledged, and if they experience emotional safety, confidence, and acceptance (p. 129), the clients become more able to openly engage in the kind of dialogue where their beliefs and assumptions are critically reflected upon. My professional experience in executive coaching has also taught me how important, even vital, it is to reduce triggers around negative emotions and related defenses in order to help a client maintain the kind of open, stable, and receptive posture they need so they can explore a challenge to a current way of knowing. This study’s findings show that the key to using reflection in facilitating transformative insight is not just about making use of the three levels of reflective practices. At its core, this process of facilitating transformative insight is also about achieving a productive and constructive systemic balance between the equilibrium and disequilibrium its many moving parts create in the service of making space for a path to transformative insight. It is also a very individual and personal system, one that needs to be fully respected for the specific salience of relevance and readiness it holds. This salience relates to what a client is not (yet) aware of, what a coach is not (yet) aware of, and what this means for what they will still navigate together, with the awareness they do have and can share in their sense-making dialogues.

Additionally, the finding that premise reflection practices were so underrepresented indicates that content and process levels of reflection and related practices should not be underestimated or discounted for the power they hold for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight. Even though these two levels of reflection affect change at a specific belief-level (vs. system-level beliefs, as does premise reflection), content and process reflection still play important roles in belief-level

changes that can, incrementally and over time, lead to system-level (or meaning perspective) changes in beliefs. Those incremental steps and investments in the overall build-up toward accommodating a new way of knowing are most common, as is often reiterated in the literature (e.g., Cranton, 2016; Mezirow, 2000; Taylor, 1997). As Mezirow (2000) reminds us, a deep shift may only become apparent after it has occurred, further illustrating the intertwinement of steps and shifts that came before it. Whether or not that shift feels dramatic, sudden, or epochal may make it more memorable, but in my view should not be seen as making it less significant or meaningful to the client and their process. In both cases, the system around the emergence of transformative insight can work its magic.

Before relating the findings on coaching practices at the premise reflection level, as well as the overall system of practices for facilitating transformative insight, to the existing theoretical (e.g., Kegan, 1995; Kegan & Lahey, 2001; Brookfield, 1991; Mezirow, 1978a, 1978b) and empirical (e.g., Terblanche, 2020, 2022) literature, I would like to offer some other potential explanations for the finding that premise reflection practices were so underrepresented in my data. First, looking at the various definitions of coaching, one aspect that is often emphasized is coaching's pragmatic nature. The focus of coaching as a "goal-oriented, pragmatic learning practice" (Chatterjee et al., 2021, p. 2) aimed at helping "people produce extraordinary results in their lives, careers, businesses, or organizations" (ICF, 2002; as cited in Cox, 2015; p. 28) has been emphasized in its many definitions. Clients often come to coaching with concrete problems and very specific, real-world goals they want to resolve (e.g., facilitating a career transition, addressing derailing behaviors; Kauffman & Coutu, 2009; p. 6). It happens, in my experience, that client coaching objectives come paired with a feeling of urgency of some sort, perhaps reflecting the discomfort or limitations that bring a client to coaching in the first place. Given the need a client could have and feel for practical solutions that could be applied post-session to reduce these tensions, and as seen within the often limited duration

and number of sessions available within a coaching engagement (i.e., 72.1% of coaching engagements typically last between two and 12 months; Kauffman & Coutu, 2009; p. 10), my curiosity is engaged by how a client could experience premise reflection. Coach practices for premise reflection bring focus to understanding the underlying, unconsciously assimilated, and taken-for-granted assumptions (Mezirow, 1990, 1991) driving a client's current thinking, feeling, and behavior. Might premise reflection, next to being experienced as sensitive in nature, perhaps also at times feel too far removed from the coaching objective, too abstract, too complex (Kember, 1999), or even—surprisingly—too trivial to the client, the coach, or both?

Additionally, perhaps coaches may refrain from engaging in premise reflection to avoid, as Williams (2003) puts it, “wander[ing] onto the thin ice of therapeutic terrain” (p. 30), something that coaches are thought to be very mindful of in their interaction with their clients. The importance of this point is emphasized by Kauffman and Coutu (2009), who state that “businesses that do not demand [mental health issues] training for the coaches they hire are failing to meet their ethical obligations to care for their executives” as these coaches may not be sufficiently equipped to recognize boundaries between coaching and therapy and, hence, when their client's needs may require a different form of professional help (p. 7).

Another potential explanation could be that coaches have only a minimum of knowledge of how to engage their clients in this type of reflective process. That is, reflecting on the “*why*” behind the client's thinking, feeling, and behavior, the process, which is often more complex, requires more time and, on the surface, appears to be a less practical and more therapeutic approach. The importance of involving client assumptions in coaching dialogue is emphasized in some coaching programs. For example, “testing assumptions” is a core coaching competency of the Columbia Coaching Certification Program (3CP)'s competency framework (n.d.). However, it is not always

clear how and to what extent training and practice on these competencies, and specifically targeting premise reflection, are facilitated and evaluated.

Staying with the findings on coaching practices at the premise reflection level, the interrelated coaching practice themes that did emerge in that reflective space closely resemble Kegan's five steps for supporting a subject-object move (Kegan, 1995; as cited in Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002; Kegan & Lahey, 2001) and Brookfield's (1991) central components or phases of the critical reflection process; for an overview, see Table 7.1 below. Broadly speaking, the processes and practices in this space relate to accessing learners' assumptions in their current way of knowing, as well as understanding the sources of that knowing, seeing the validity of that knowing under a new light and tension, as well as imagining alternatives that could help them navigate and resolve the disorientation they experience, through a more complex and congruent perspective. Seen together, the premise reflection themes and their related practices not only address a current way of knowing, but they involve and implicate the self, giving the client not only a new perspective but also a new sense of responsibility for it.

Looking at the first theme that emerged from my premise reflection practices data, *Exposing and naming current assumptions*, coaches spend time exposing premise-level assumptions as a first step in the process. Brookfield (1991) alludes to the need to expose and identify assumptions that "underlie our thinking and actions," calling this, in his later work, a "first discrete task of reflection" (Brookfield, 2009). Similarly, Kegan's step, "Naming the assumption," emphasizes the need for the learner to see the assumption as an object to be able to reflect on it (Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002). In Kegan's (2009) "Immunity to Change" model, a very explicit focus is placed (via the four-column exercise) on exposing and naming assumptions that prevent learners from achieving their much-desired goals. As such, this first step, as defined by Brookfield and Kegan, is supported by this dissertation's findings.

In the second emergent premise reflection coaching practice theme, *Identifying the origin of an assumption*, coaches use various practices that provide a temporal perspective on one's history, as the focus of reflection is to clarify the original source of an assumption. While Brookfield does not seem to see this as a distinct step in the process of critical (premise) reflection, Kegan finds it to be an important reflective space. This is in line with my findings, as the coaches in this study mentioned these premise reflection practices most often (see Figure 5.6).

The practices from my third premise reflection theme, *Getting real: examining the impact, limitations, and validity of a current assumption*, very much align with the third step as outlined by Kegan (1995, as cited in Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002) and Brookfield (1991). They all refer to the process of engaging the learner with a review of the limiting consequences these assumptions have on their lives and the extent to which those consequences are working for the learner in their current situation. Brookfield (2009) emphasized examining evidence so that judgments can be made about the validity of current assumptions, often by engaging them with alternate perspectives so that the learner can recognize just how “unchecked” these assumptions are (p. 296)—a description that fully resonates with the intent behind the practices discussed by coaches in this study. Along the same lines, Kegan and Lahey (2001) consider not only the influence that the assumption may have on the learners' choices and lives but also the extent to which those same assumptions prevent them from living the life they want. As a result, this process sparks the person's curiosity and “creates added energy to continue the exploration” (p. 83). Interestingly, three of Kegan's steps belong to this “getting real” space, relaying something about the importance he places on this part in the process, all for the purpose of helping the learner “build a relationship to an assumption rather than being run by it” (p. 83).

Finally, the fourth emergent premise reflection coaching practice theme, *Exploring alternative assumptions*, aligns with Brookfield (1991) in that it shows attention to a new way of knowing by

exploring alternative assumptions and reconstructing them. Hence, they become more inclusive and integrative of one's experience. This step is important as it completes the necessary understanding of a current way of knowing by putting it in the perspective of a new one, allowing for the process of constructing and navigating the bridges of meaning between them. Brookfield's (1991) transformative learning perspective may inherently express a more reality-engaging view on a perspective transformation, given the educational objectives it has for personal transformation linked with a more whole, complex societal transformation. While constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994) would certainly not find this unimportant, its focus is of a more psychological nature and in service of a more whole, complex self.

Altogether, while not all coaches in this study have explicit knowledge of transformative learning or constructive-developmental theories, and certainly not critical (premise)reflection, findings reflect that they do, to an extent, naturally engage in premise reflection coaching practices that align with processes as outlined by Brookfield and Kegan. In line with this, Sammut (2014) also found that coaches engage their clients in deep inquiry for critical (premise) reflection, challenging false beliefs and assumptions (p. 48), concluding that these activities are "actively used by coaches, even though they may not have been overtly aware that they were doing so" (p. 52).

Table 7.1

Relating Premise Reflection Coaching Practice Themes (Halgren, 2023) to Steps for Supporting a Subject-Object Move (Kegan, 1995; Kegan & Lahey, 2001), and Critical (Premise) Reflection Process Phases (Brookfield, 1991)

	Premise reflection coaching practice themes Halgren (2023)	Steps for supporting a subject-object move Kegan, (1995) Kegan & Lahey (2001)	Critical (premise) reflection process phases Brookfield (1991)
1.	Exposing and naming current assumptions	Naming the assumption	Identifying the assumptions that underlie our thoughts and actions
2.	Identifying the origin of an assumption	Exploring the history of the assumption	
3.	Getting real: examining the impact, limitations, and validity of a current assumption	Noticing its implications Looking for discrepant evidence Testing the truth of the assumption	Scrutinizing the accuracy and validity of these in terms of how they connect to, or are discrepant with, our experience of reality
4.	Exploring alternative assumptions		Reconstructing these assumptions to make them more inclusive and integrative

I will now explore the extent to which the overarching model representing the big-picture interpretation and synthesis of these findings (i.e., the model of coaching process and practices for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight, see Figure 5.7) relates to Mezirow's (1978a, 1978b) ten phases of transformative learning. However, it first needs to be emphasized that the coaching model that emerged from the analysis of coaching practices was for the *facilitation* of transformative learning and from the *perspective of the facilitator of learning* (i.e., the coach). Mezirow's ten phases of transformative learning describe the transformative learning *experience* from the *learner's perspective*. As such, this cannot be a one-on-one comparison, but still, in doing so, many similarities and some differences emerged (see Table 7.2 below). This learning can serve as a valuable continuation of the development and refinement of transformative learning coaching models informed by the learner experience, emphasizing (dis)connections between the facilitator's

experience and intent on the one hand and the learner’s experience of the transformative learning process on the other.

Table 7.2

Relating the Coaching Process and Practices Model for Facilitating Transformative Insight (Halgren, 2023) to Mezirow’s (1978a, 1978b) Ten Phases of Transformative Learning

Element of the Coaching Process and Practices Model for Facilitating Transformative Insight (Halgren, 2023)	Ten Phases of Transformative Learning Mezirow (1978a, 1978b)
1. Identifying resonant coaching focus areas	1. Disorienting dilemma
2. Exploring and (in)validating a current way of knowing	2. A self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame 3. A critical assessment of assumptions 4. Recognition that one’s discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change
3. Identifying the contours and characteristics of a desired new way of knowing: weighing criteria, choices, and consequences	3. A critical assessment of assumptions 5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
4. Constructing bridges between the current and new way of knowing	
5. Experimenting with and integrating of a new way of knowing	6. Planning of a course of action 7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plans 8. Provisional trying of new roles 9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships 10. A reintegration into one’s life and society with the new perspective

Starting with the first element in the coaching model, *Identifying resonant coaching areas*, where the challenge that brought the client to coaching is used as a portal to formulate a resonant and relevant coaching goal, the similarity is apparent with Mezirow’s (1978a, 1978b) first phase of transformative learning: *Disorienting dilemma*. In both spaces, the focus is on the (internally) disruptive nature of the learner’s dilemma, which Mezirow describes as ranging from not getting a promotion to kids leaving home (p. 168), as not something in the real world that needs to be solved, but

something that does get resolved through learning and development. This alignment is also found in the felt disorientation (e.g., loss of direction and balance, inability to think clearly) stemming from the dilemma (e.g., having to make choices with many desirable options available), a dilemma which, once put into focus, becomes the objective of transformative learning. This then starts the learning process aimed at resolving the lack of direction and stability the learner is experiencing through the initiation of an internal process of learning and development, which then resolves the real-world issue. One aspect that coaches emphasized in describing practices in this part of the process outlined in this study's coaching model (Figure 5.7), and an aspect that is not clearly described by Mezirow, is that for coaches, a learner dilemma is not only a starting point for motivating learning. It is also an incredibly important part of the learning process that the client needs to engage with and explore more deeply. Instead of acknowledging a dilemma and transitioning away from it in other steps of the transformative learning process, coaches take their time in this space, bringing perspective to it. Coaches see the disorienting dilemma as a place and way for them to meet the client where they are and go a bit deeper on the felt sense of disorientation related to the current way of knowing (including, for example, encouraging venting and identifying a challenge behind a challenge). The study's findings are aligned with what Cox (2015) sees as the role of the coach at this step of the transformative learning process, namely, paying attention to opportunities to challenge the client and uncover mini-dilemmas, or "openings," which can aid and result in transformation (p. 33).

With regard to the second part of the coaching model, *Exploring and (in)validating the client's current way of knowing*, one phase that Mezirow (1978a, 1978b) describes and that to a small extent resembles this focus area in the coaching mode is *A self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame*. While the process of self-examination is a major component of the practices belonging to this part (and all the other parts) of the system of coach practices for transformative insight (including, for example, identifying strengths, blind spots, and shadows, revisiting a client's (hi)story to understand past

experiences, or exploring the dependencies in and between the client's approach and context), the facilitative focus in this (and other) space(s) is much broader than the one acknowledging the heavy, negative emotions of guilt or shame as emphasized by Mezirow in conveying the learner's experience. Coaches focus on exploring a current way of knowing, implicating the learner's self in all levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, premise) and via a whole range of emotions (positive and negative) and across various domains (e.g., emotional, somatic, spiritual) throughout the transformative learning process, and not just at its beginning. In exploring the client's current way of knowing, coaches ask clients to elaborate and connect more deeply to somatic experiences or feelings, asking them about other times they felt similarly (both positively and negatively). They are actively using the emotions that surface, not only acknowledging them, so that the client can use them as "data" for engaging with deeper knowing and its expression and see them as a key part of unlocking new insights and finding a positive and fulfilling way out of an old way of knowing and, down the line, into the new one. Based on the findings, coaches seem to be working in many different ways to understand the client's current way of knowing, in a way that not only honors where they are but, equally importantly, honors the client's process of letting go. As such, once again, this study's findings are aligned with how Cox (2015) sees the role of the coach at this phase of the transformative learning process: to explore clients' motivations, help them think through their dilemmas and the roles they play in them and provide emotional support as they arrive at certain new and meaningful realizations (p. 33).

Another of Mezirow's phases related to this part of the model (i.e., *Exploring and (in)validating the client's current way of knowing*) is *A critical assessment of assumptions*. This phase of transformative learning can be found in this study's findings in the practices with which coaches engage clients in an active examination of current perception, thinking, feeling, behavior, or of a specific situation and contexts, with the intent of exposing and naming the underlying current assumptions so that clients

can use them as an object of reflection. Coaches do this by, for example, directly asking clients what their assumptions or beliefs are, by reflecting on the why behind what is important to them, or asking for their “philosophies,” by using various exercises or models (e.g., Immunity to Change [ITC], Kegan & Lahey, 2009), or external evidence from various sources (e.g., feedback, assessments, role-play) to expose assumptions and their limitations. As Cox (2015) indicated, in this phase, the role of the coach is indeed to challenge the client to provoke the disequilibrium around the current way of knowing to create a new opening for learning and development (p. 34).

Finally, Mezirow’s *Recognition that one’s discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change phase* also resonates with the intent of practices described by coaches in the coaching model as *Exploring and (in)validating the client’s current way of knowing*. These practices are discussed, for example, by coaches inviting clients to reflect on their inner experience and connect it to what is happening around them, as well as taking time to understand how clients define and make sense of things. Coaches mention the experience of similar challenges they or other clients have had by bringing in those examples to normalize the client’s experience of dissonance and dilemma and also to offer hope and input for navigating them. Coaches’ practices in this space are again aligned with Cox’s (2015) emphasis how a client’s current dilemma is not unusual and they do not need to feel isolated in this experience (p. 34).

The third part in the coaching model, *Identifying the contours and characteristics of a desired new way of knowing: weighing criteria, choices, and consequences*, relates to Mezirow’s (1978a, 1978b) phases three (i.e., *A critical assessment of assumptions*) and five (i.e., *Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions*). In these practices, similarities are seen in how coaches engage clients in the reflective process of exploring and defining ideal desired states and values and a long-term vision for their goals. As an extension of that, coaches facilitated client reflection about new ways they could enact their roles, engage in their relationships and take action (phase five). In that process, an emphasis is also placed

on critically examining their assumptions (phase three) and exploring alternative ones that can transcend and include the old ones that no longer serve them.

The coaching practices belonging to *Constructing bridges between the current and new way of knowing* part of the model, just like the previous one, resonate with Mezirow's (1978a, 1978b) phases three (i.e., *A critical assessment of assumptions*) and five (i.e., *Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions*) yet address a different intent. With these practices, coaches aim to bridge the gap between the current and new way of knowing previously brought into the client's awareness. The intent behind these practices, and where the coaches spend the most time with their clients, is to "get real" and have clients critically examine and assess the validity of the current assumptions (phase three) that drive whatever self-deception, dysfunctional coping mechanisms, fixations, and blind spots are making it hard for the client to let go of those assumptions- At the same time, new and expanded assumptions related to a more desirable, more complex (e.g., more valid, consistent, congruent) way of knowing are brought into a conversation with the current ones so that a clear comparison between the two can be made, as well as justifying the choice for the way the client would like to engage in their roles, relationships, and actions going forward (phase five).

In these last two elements of the coaching model (Figure 5.7), both related to Mezirow's (1978a, 1978b) phases three (i.e., *A critical assessment of assumptions*) and five (i.e., *Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions*), coaches indeed enact their role in a way as suggested by Cox (2015). Specifically, when working with clients on critically assessing their assumptions (phase three), coaches encourage critical reflection to help the client identify the frames of reference and structures of assumptions that underpin and influence their perception, thinking, decision-making, feelings, and actions, and challenge the client with the intention of provoking a tension that creates new opportunities for learning and development. They do this by, for example, helping the clients look at a range of alternatives to replace the "lost" perspective, comparing alternatives to help with

decision-making, and helping the client analyze a variety of interpretations and alternative scenarios along with the potential roles and relationships these might create (pp. 33–35).

The final part of the coaching model, *Experimenting with and integrating a new way of knowing*, incorporates Mezirow's (1978a, 1978b) last five phases (see Table 7.2). Specifically, in this phase, after the bridge between the current and new ways of knowing has been constructed, coaches engage the clients in planning a course of action (phase 6) in order to experiment with their new and expanded way of knowing in the “real world.” This is the process of acquiring new knowledge and skills needed to implement their plan (Phase 7) and provisionally try out of their new roles (phase 8), from a new-way-of-knowing space. As the data suggest, this process of provisional integration gives them the space to evaluate, review, and adjust their new perspectives, beliefs, and approaches further, thereby giving them confidence for further integration (phase 9). Finally, once the client is ready, reintegration into their life and society with the new ways of knowing (now more internalized) can occur (phase 10). This process of *Experimenting with and integrating of a new way of knowing* also aligns with how Cox (2015) saw the coach's role in facilitating this phase of transformative learning (for a reminder, see Table 2.4).

One interesting discrepancy between the findings in this study, as presented in the overarching model representing the coaching process and practices for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight (see Figure 5.7) and Mezirow's (1978a, 1978b) ten phases of transformative learning, is the emphasis given to the *Experimenting with and integrating of a new way of knowing*. While the data from this study indicate that coaches do not spend much time in the phase with their clients (i.e., only one coaching practice theme, and only at the process reflection level related to these kinds of practices, namely, “Experimenting with and integrating new approaches”; see Table 5.7), Mezirow gives it much more attention (i.e., five out of ten phases is dedicated to this learning space). Cranton (2016) noticed the same thing, saying how “in more recent years, the emphasis has been much more

on encountering the disorienting event and critically questioning or responding to the assumptions and expectations that make it disorienting” (p. 16). This is more in line with my findings, which indicate that coaches spend the majority of their time working with clients in the space where their current way of knowing is explored and (in)validated, focusing on identifying the contours and characteristics of a desired new way of knowing. By far, they spend most of their time on constructing bridges between the current and new way of knowing so that clients can, later, move into the integration phase with the clarity, motivation, and readiness necessary to transfer their new and expanded way of knowing into applications in the real world (see Table 5.7 for an overview of coaching practice themes belonging to each of these spaces).

I will now look at my findings in relation to Terblanche’s (2020) research, which explored how (transitional) coaching could contribute to leaders’ transformative learning. This will be an interesting comparison given that, in his study, the coaching techniques captured were the ones that managers themselves perceived as helpful for their own transformative learning process (vs. from the coaches’ perspective, as done so in this study). I am happy to report that there is a substantial overlap between these two perspectives. Of the 13 techniques that managers perceived as helpful for transformative learning, the ones they cited most frequently are also the ones that were prominent in the descriptions of coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight by 21 executive coaches in this study. These include active experimentation, questioning, reflection, challenging views/providing different perspectives, and using frameworks and theories (see Table 2.6 for a reminder and the full overview). While Terblanche did not explore levels of reflection related to these coaching approaches, my findings indicate that most of these approaches may be enacted at all three levels of reflection. For example, questioning, challenging views/providing different perspectives, and using frameworks and theories can be used to engage the learner in reflection at content, process, and premise levels, depending on where the learner is in the transformative

learning process and the related primary intent behind the practices used at that time. The only exception is practices related to active experimentation, which, in my study, only occur at the process reflection level and belong to the “experimentation and integration of new way of knowing” part of the overarching model of the coaching process and practices for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight (Table 5.7).

Broadening the perspectives included in studying the coaching processes that may lead to transformative learning, Terblanche’s 2022 study included not only managers’ perspectives (ones receiving coaching) but also executive coaches’, HR practitioners’, and one leader’s line manager’s perspectives. Using the data from this diverse group, Terblanche arrived at his Transformative Transition Coaching (TTC) framework. The findings revealed a total of seven aspects of the TTC framework, including contextual, contractual, anticipatory, procedural, temporal, technical, and efficacious (see Table 2.7 for a full overview). The majority of aspects included in Terblanche’s TTC framework have, in various ways, shown up in my data. First, four out of the seven aspects relate to this study’s *client-focused, non-reflective* coaching practices, “context and conditions,” namely, Contextual, Contractual, Anticipatory, and Temporal aspects (see Table 7.3 below). All of these aspects, just like “context and conditions” practices, are aimed at providing (timely) support and information appropriate for the learner’s current context, needs, and challenges and ensuring that it is clear what coaching is (is not) and the nature of the coach-client relationship (including confidentiality and the extent of obligations to the employing organization). Two aspects from Terblanche’s framework, Procedural and Technical, align in their descriptions with this study’s reflective practices. These aspects, just like the overall intent or reflective practices, are, as Terblanche’s puts it: “Identifying and transforming leader’s problematic perspectives preventing them from succeeding in their new roles” (p. 286) or, in a more general context, are related to

succeeding in whatever goals leaders set for themselves (i.e., Procedural aspect) and “applying coaching tools and techniques to facilitate deep, permanent changes” (i.e., Technical aspect, p. 288).

Table 7.3

Relating the General Coaching Practices Categories (Halgren) to Aspects of Terblanche’s Transformative Transition Coaching (TTC) Framework

General Practices Category (Halgren, 2023)	Aspects of TTC Framework (Terblanche, 2022)	
Context and Conditions	Role of the Coach	
	1. Contextual	The coach must share frameworks and theories about career transitions and transformative learning with the leader
	2. Contractual	Spell out the rules of engagement, with emphasis on the confidential nature of the coaching, to the exclusion of the organization
	3. Anticipatory	Engage with the client in the goal-setting process to ensure that the focus of the coaching remains within the context of the career transition and to provide the client with structure and accountability
5. Temporal	Encapsulates the timing elements of the intervention (e.g., coaching starting prior to the career transition)	
Self-as-Instrument	n/a	
Reflective Practices (Content, Process, Premise)	4. Procedural	Identifying and transforming leader’s problematic perspectives preventing them from succeeding in their new roles: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Initiate</i>: define coaching context and identify the transitioning leader’s most pressing challenges 2. <i>Understand</i>: analyze the current perspectives held by the transitioning leader according to Mezirow’s eight perspectives (Mezirow, 1994): sociolinguistic, moral-ethical, epistemic, philosophical, psychological, health, political, aesthetic 3. <i>Identity and design</i>: identify the most problematic perspective from the list in the previous step. Reflect on the origins of this perspective and its negative effects. Conceptualize the desired new perspective and design a behavioral experiment to change the problematic perspective 4. <i>Reflect and redesign</i>: reflect on the progress of transforming the problematic perspective using Hoggan’s transformative learning criteria (Hoggan, 2016) and design a new behavioral experiment to deepen the transformative process 5. <i>Complete</i>: This state is reached when the transitioning leader shows an acceptable level of perspective transformation according to Hoggan’s criteria. A strategy is defined to secure the transformation, put stretch goals in place and decide to terminate the coaching or select a new problematic perspective to transform
	6. Technical	Application of identified coaching tools and techniques, including questioning, reflection, active experimentation, using frameworks and theory (about career transitions and transformative learning), and challenging views and assumptions

Source: Terblanche (2022, pp. 283–288)

Drawing attention to Terblanche's (2022) Procedural aspect, which most closely resembles the kinds of reflective coaching practices I investigated, strong similarities are found with the Coaching Process and Practices Model for Facilitating Transformative Insight (Figure 5.7). In order to identify and transform leaders' problematic perspectives that prevent them from succeeding, the Procedural aspect starts with the *Initiate* step, focused on defining the coaching context and identifying the leader's most pressing challenges (p. 286), just like the intent of the practices belonging to the first element in my model, namely, *Identifying Resonant Focus Areas for Coaching*. Terblanche then moves to the *Understand* step, focused on analyzing the leader's *current* perspective, once again aligning with an element in my model: *Exploring and (In)validating the Client's Current Way of Knowing*. Something that coaches, understandably, do not mention is explicitly looking at Mezirow's (1994) eight perspectives—sociolinguistic, moral-ethical, epistemic, philosophical, psychological, health, political, and aesthetic—to guide them in that process, as recommended by Terblanche (2022). I find these perspectives to be helpful to have so the coach can (be aware of and) engage in targeted assumption-level reflections across these perspectives when relevant for the client's presenting challenge. In the third step in Terblanche's framework, *Identity and design* (p. 286), the focus is on identifying the leader's most problematic perspective from the list in the previous step (relating to *(In)validating the Client's Current Way of Knowing* element in my model), reflecting on its origins and negative effects (relating to *Constructing Bridges Between the Current and New Ways of Knowing*), conceptualizing the desired *new* perspective (*Identifying the Contours and Characteristics of a Desired New Way of Knowing: Weighing Criteria, Choices, and Consequences*), and, finally, designing a behavioral experiment to change the problematic perspective, including, as an extension, the next *Reflect and redesign* step (*Experimentation and Integration of New Way of Knowing*). As demonstrated, these descriptions are very much aligned with the reflective coaching practices as presented in the Coaching Process and Practices Model for Facilitating Transformative Insight (Figure 5.7). Both

processes depict the movement away from the *current* (and limiting) way of knowing, which stands in the way of the client's (identified) challenge resolution, and toward success in a *new* (and desired) way of knowing. As this happens, the gap between the two is exposed, and the movement toward the inclusion and integration of the new way of knowing into the learner's life through experimentation and refinement is spurred on—an overarching process that aligns with Corrie and Lawson's (2017) theoretically-derived Transformative Learning Coaching Model (see Table 2.5).

The last step of the Procedural aspect of Terblanche's (2022) framework, *Complete*, is reached when the client “shows an acceptable level of perspective transformation according to Hoggan's criteria” (i.e., depth, breadth, and relative stability; Hoggan, 2016) as a way of securing transformation (p. 286). This step of the Procedural aspect is closely related to Terblanche's Efficacious aspect, intended to be an evaluation of a coaching intervention, once again using Hoggan's three criteria to determine to what extent the leader has experienced transformative learning. This aspect of the framework was not discussed by my coach participants. However, it is an important aspect of the framework that all coaches should pay attention to. Drawing attention to figures from Chapter 1, given that the field of leadership development is a USD 366 billion industry (Beerel, 2020), coaches need to find ways to measure and confirm that the deep learning necessitated by the demands of leaders' complex contexts has occurred. Only then will the return on investment in leadership development, an investment that ultimately needs a return of greater leadership effectiveness (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005; Strang & Kuhnert, 2009), be seen as having paid off.

Finally, one general practices category that did not appear in Terblanche's framework is self-as-instrument. However, given that Terblanche (2022) collected the data not only from the coaches (the “instruments” of coaching) but also from the coaching clients, HR practitioners, and leaders' managers, this discrepancy is not surprising.

The alignment of Terblanche’s findings, from both his 2020 and 2022 studies, as well as other work reviewed above, with my own more than confirms a pattern behind the process of facilitating transformative insight. As such, these models can form a basis for further exploration of how to leverage transformative learning and constructive-developmental theories in the coaching context for the benefit of the learner and the coach. Seen together, not only in theory but also in practice, these two lenses, which are in their essence both about evolving meaning-making, are essential scaffolds for supporting the development of the coaching field toward it becoming a third-generation one (Stelter, 2014a, 2014b), and one that will therefore literally and figuratively put “development back into professional development” (Helsing et al., 2008, p. 437).

Discussion of the Influence of Coaches’ Forms of Mind on the Facilitation of Reflective Coaching Practices for Transformative Insight

I turn now to the developmental findings and their synthesis to explore the emerging theoretical implications and the extent to which they are (mis)aligned with constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994) and the related theoretical and empirical literature that examines the influence of a coach’s form of mind on their facilitation of client learning in coaching. This is in response to my second research question: *What relationship, if any, exists between the coaches’ forms of mind and how these coaches describe what they do in their coaching practices for different levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, and premise reflection) to facilitate transformative insight?*

The Chapter 6 findings conclude that executive coaches with various forms of mind (or developmental capacities) do indeed differ in their descriptions, reasoning, and use of reflective coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight. And while the *intent* behind these practices was the same across all forms of mind (i.e., all coaches discussed using reflective coaching practices belonging to each of the themes at all three levels of reflection), the *approach* to engaging the clients through these practices differed. Those differences were very much in line with what one might expect, given the form-of-mind-related characteristics, strengths, and challenges as described by

constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994; see Tables 2.2 and 2.9, Chapter 2). First, these differences followed the transcend-and-include principle behind the developmental trajectory (i.e., the subject-object evolution; Kegan & Lahey, 1983; McCauley et al., 2006; see Figure 6.7). That is, the reflective practices described by coaches with each subsequent, more complex form of mind included and transcended the ways in which these reflective practices were described and used by coaches making meaning from a previous, less complex form of mind. The data clearly showed this “build-up” of additional elements included in the coach facilitation process by each subsequent form of mind, including the main *focus of reflection* emphasized, the *input* upon which the reflection was based, the practical *approaches* taken to meet that intent, and the *style* with which these practices were put to use (for a reminder, see Table 6.5).

The exploration of these findings, now seen in relation to the literature on the influence of coaches’ forms of mind on their work with coaching clients (presented in the Chapter 2 section “Executive Coach’s Form of Mind and the Facilitation of Transformative Insight”) reveals a few interesting synergies and disconnects. First, looking at the differences in how coaches with different forms of mind discussed using reflective practices, these findings can be, to an extent, related to the theoretical model of coach development by Bachkirova and Cox (2007; see Table 2.10 in Chapter 2). Their model is anchored in the work of various developmental theorists (e.g., Cook-Greuter, 1985; Kegan, 1982; Loevinger, 1987) and based on theoretical analysis and their observation of groups of coaches they worked with (i.e., their work has no empirical support) in which they outlined the developmental tasks coaches with various forms of mind might be effective at facilitating (for a reminder and an overview, see Table 2.10). However, in their model, the form of mind distinction made is less refined than the one in the current study since they only made a distinction between (1) fully Socializing form of mind (i.e., the SOI score of 3; coach as the Helper—a form of mind not found in the current study’s research sample), (2) the Socializing to Self-authoring form of mind

transition space (i.e., the SOI scores of 3(4), 3/4, 4/3, and 4(3); coach as the Questioner—in their work, this transition space includes both dominant Socializing and dominant Self-authoring groups coaches from this study), and (3) fully Self-authoring form of mind coaches (i.e., the SOI score of 4; coach as the Acceptor—in their study corresponding to this study’s fully Self-authoring group of coaches). As such, a direct comparison can only be drawn between Bachkirova and Cox’s (2007) Acceptor and the group of fully Self-authoring coaches from this study. When comparing the Acceptor coach to the fully Self-authoring coach participant group, several similarities can be observed. For example, the findings support Bachkirova and Cox’s claims regarding the typical pattern of working with coaching clients for this group, including imposing minimal structures to the coaching process, letting things unfold, exploring things as they are rarely what they seem, working with paradoxes, spontaneous interventions, and accepting any expression of individuality. However, Bachkirova and Cox’s descriptions of some of the tasks that they believe only fully Self-authoring coaches could be effective in facilitating were also observed in the other two less complex form of mind groups in this study. While for this study, nothing can be directly said about the effectiveness with which the facilitation of these tasks occurs, the dominant Socializing and dominant Self-authoring coaches participating in this study also clearly described enacting these tasks as well as the reasoning behind them. These include developing unique individuality and authenticity, exploring role-personality matches, and discovering the meaning of critical situations or specific stages in life.

The reason for this discrepancy might be found in the above-mentioned fact that Bachkirova and Cox (2007) did not consider the finer distinctions in developmental transitions that this study explored. The Subject-Object Interview (SOI) (Lahey et al., 1988) is the only developmental tool that can identify such finer developmental distinctions (i.e., four developmental transitions between each of the full stages/forms of mind can be identified through the SOI). This is an essential aspect

of this tool and the approach taken in this study, as it was demonstrated that even a single transitional form of mind score, up or down in one's meaning-making complexity, can very clearly influence how one understands and interacts with the world. Additionally, a common tendency among coaching practitioners whose practices are informed by constructive-developmental theory is to make snap judgments based on surface-level observations about where an individual (coach or client) may be on the developmental continuum. This lack of analytic rigor and in-depth understanding of constructive-developmental theory can lead to oversimplifications in its application and, therefore, erroneous evaluations of a coach or client's developmental capacity and what that might mean for the way they engage with challenges. This tendency might, to an extent, be related to the complexity that the learning process around constructive-developmental theory presents to coaches who are keen to use developmentally informed practices but are not used to the depth of understanding and rigor of application required by that theory. In order to fully grasp the nuances of adult development in this fine-grained way (something that this doctoral study's findings call for), a coach must engage as a learner in a highly intensive and long-term learning process to gain a full understanding of and fluency in the theory and the methodology behind it (i.e., the SOI). Without having such deep knowledge, the overzealous use of this lens can lead to coaches making inappropriate, simplistic, and hasty judgments in their generalizations related to the client's form of mind. Given the need to address the gap between a current way of knowing and a new way of knowing, a coach could be derailed by assumptions about what the gap is. This can lead to incorrect coach assumptions and decision-making regarding which kinds of coaching interventions the client might benefit from—or not benefit from (Bachkirova, 2014; Bachkirova & Borrington, 2018; Berger, 2006). This echoes Kegan's (1982) realization and recognition of the concern that "amongst the many things from which a practitioner's clients need protection is the practitioner's hopes for the client's future, however benign and sympathetic these hopes may be" (p. 296) and that "there is

no justification for imposing, on another, one's own conception of the direction toward which personal change should tend" (p. 291). Given that the use of coaching practices informed by constructive-developmental theory is on the rise, it is important to find better ways to educate and train practitioners in the theory and its methodology. By bringing this kind of expertise and experience to the dialogue, coaches can meet their clients where they actually are developmentally and not where the coach assumes they are or wants them to be.

Second, the only work that empirically explored the ways in which a coach's form of mind might influence how coaches approach their work with clients is a qualitative dissertation study conducted by Perry (2014). As described in Chapter 2, this qualitative exploration of the form of mind-related differences in coaches' understanding of their coaching engagements led Perry to outline three broad types of coach profiles: the Interpersonal Coach (fully Socializing form of mind), the Observer Coach (fully Self-authoring form of mind), and the Transformational Coach (fully Self-transforming form of mind). For a full overview of the characteristics of each of these profiles, refer to Table 2.11 in Chapter 2. And while Perry mentioned the broad transitional developmental spaces (e.g., the entire transition space between the Socializing and Self-authoring form of mind, including all SOI transition scores between these two forms of mind: 3(4), 3/4, 4/3, and 4(3)), no explicit coach profiles were developed for any of these developmental transitions, broad or otherwise. This makes it impossible to draw any comparisons between Perry's and my findings, except between Perry's Observer Coach and this study's fully Self-authoring group of coaches, making it an even less nuanced distinction than that of Bachkirova and Cox (2007). This comparison revealed some broad-stroke similarities in descriptions, which align with the data collected from the coaches in this study—specifically, the idea that fully Self-authoring coaches can devise their own ways of approaching the coaching process based on their experience, having the ability to stand back and observe their client's development, see multiple perspectives, engage in self-regulation, as well as

defining and validating perceived success or failure in coaching by their own observation and the evaluative nature of their internal, self-authored voice (p. 73). Some of the other more specific descriptions outlined by Perry cannot be (dis)confirmed, as they were not the focus of my explorations. These include this group of coaches helping define the rules of engagement and coaching ethics in the coaching field, teaching in coaching programs or mentoring new coaches, creating their own coaching theories and programs and marketing them to other coaches, defining the client selection process, and rarely experiencing failure because of their selection process. A few aspects that Perry found to be related to the fully Self-authoring coach profile do not align with my own findings, specifically that these coaches are more experienced and that they are members of a professional organization. First, when looking at the relationship between some of the coach participants' demographics and their form of mind, my data indicate that when it comes to the coach's experience, no clear trend is observed (these data are not reported in Chapter 6, but for the purpose of this comparison, the data are presented in Appendix H). If anything, of the seven fully Self-authoring coaches, not a single one had between 12 and 25 years of active coaching experience. Second, when looking at the relationship between coaches' forms of mind and their memberships in professional organizations, my data indicate no particular form of mind difference in the extent to which various form of mind coaches had the International Coach Federation (ICF) Certification and related ICF membership (Appendix I). As a final remark, when reflecting on Perry's (2014) work, one should bear in mind that her findings should be interpreted with caution due to the lack of rigor in analyzing the participant coaches' Subject-Object Interview data (and hence the questionable reliability of the findings) on which coach profiles were based. As already mentioned in Chapter 2, only 10% of the SOIs in Perry's study were scored by an additional experienced SOI scorer as a way of ensuring inter-rater reliability. For specifics behind this argument, refer to the "Executive Coach's Form of Mind and the Facilitation of Transformative Insight" section in Chapter 2.

Self as Instrument Practices and Coach Form of Mind

One developmental finding that was not the main focus of my research question but deserves attention relates to the differences observed in the extent to which coaches with different forms of mind discussed engaging in the coach-focused, self-as-instrument practices in the process of facilitating transformative insight. While coaches across all forms of mind discussed engaging in client-focused, reflective practices at three levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, premise) and client-focused context and conditions practices to approximately the same extent (see Figure 6.1 for distribution of each of these general practice categories across forms of mind), dominant Socializing coaches discussed engaging in coach-focused, self-as-instrument practices the least compared to the dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches. Specifically, out of 168 self-as-instrument practices, 20.24% belonged to dominant Socializing, 45.24% to dominant Self-authoring, and 34.52% to fully Self-authoring coaches.

Self-as-instrument practices reflect the idea that coaches themselves are one of the main instruments of what happens in coaching and, as such, they need to pay attention to their own experiences as well as those of the client. Coaches need to be aware of their own perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and behavior and the influence they may therefore have on the coaching process and client during facilitation (Bachkirova 2016, 2020). This imposes an additional responsibility on the coach, as “this level of self-understanding requires a much higher degree of self-awareness because it implies a double focus during the session, including both the client and the coach” (Bachkirova, 2020, p. 5). Bachkirova (2020) further emphasized that this kind of self-understanding comes with experience to coaches once “they begin realizing that they are much more than just a ‘bag of tools,’ however useful and productive these tools may be” (p. 4). Bachkirova relates this to the growing perspective of a coach who needs to develop the ability to build trust and constructive working relationships with clients, not just add or improve a skill and knowledge base. Looking at

the study's findings through the lens of constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994), another dimension emerges to describe the self-as-instrument coaching practices. That is, dominant Socializing coaches, who have not yet grown into Self-authorship to the extent that it is a leading structure organizing their meaning-making, will still, to a large extent, rely on external authority in the form of tools, knowledge, and expertise in their facilitation in coaching (stemming from the dominant Socializing perspective) rather than relying on themselves as instruments of coaching. Dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches, who have that internal compass (further) developed, will be able to step back from leveraging external sources of authority and rely more on their own authority and experience, their own self-authored judgment, standards, values, and principles for (self)direction. This was observed in how these coaches approached client-focused, reflective coaching practices (see Table 6.5 outlining Form of Mind-Related Coach Profiles Across Various Aspects of Reflective Coaching Practices). The developmental data analysis showed that dominant Socializing coaches approached the facilitation of transformative insight by using clear, tangible approaches and explicit models and theories. In contrast, dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches relied more on themselves as instruments to facilitate a form or focus of reflection. These coaches used more explorative and abstract approaches (e.g., poetry, analogies, religious symbolism) and were more focused on co-creation and deep or root-cause exploration, as well as (in the case of fully Self-authoring coaches) on engaging the client in free-flowing, emergent, and evolving dialogue.

Another interesting finding related to self-as-instrument practices is that the dominant Self-authoring coaches discussed engaging in these practices most frequently than the other coaches. While the above discussion, as well as the strengths and challenges associated with the dominant Socializing form of mind (see Tables 2.2 and 2.9 in Chapter 2), provide explanations for the finding that dominant Socializing coaches engaged in self-as-instrument practices the least, another question surfaces: Why would dominant Self-authoring coaches discuss engaging in self-as-instrument

practices more than fully Self-authoring coaches? Once again, a nuanced look at developmental transitions (designated as X, X(Y), X/Y, Y/X, Y(X), Y; Lahey et al., 1988; see Chapter 3 section “Phase One: Form of Mind Assessment—The Subject-Object Interviews” for a reminder) as defined by the constructive-developmental theory offers a potential answer.

First, fully Self-authoring coaches are fully grounded in their self-authorship. As such, they make meaning from a space of equilibrium (i.e., Y or SOI score of 4), meaning that they operate smoothly and without any fundamental doubts and insecurities about that very meaning-making system. This group of coaches pays attention not only to clients’ experiences, feelings, and thoughts but, at the same time, to their own thoughts during facilitation (Bachkirova, 2016, 2020). This may be an easier load to bear for this group of coaches because of their ability to hold multiple and contradictory perspectives simultaneously and with ease, take full responsibility for their own feelings, choices, opinions, and actions, and have a clear sense of self-direction and a tolerance for ambiguity (Berger, 2012; Drago-Severson, 2009; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Popp & Portnow, 2001). Therefore, engaging in self-as-instrument practices, such as, for example, “Bringing my whole self into coaching,” “Making sure not to collude,” or “Paying attention to developing myself as an ‘instrument’,” might come naturally to them and be understood as a standard part of coaching. As such, it might not be a set of practices they feel they need to discuss at length.

A second explanation could relate to the fact that dominant Self-authoring coaches are not yet fully grounded in their self-authorship and, hence, make meaning from a space of disequilibrium (i.e., Y/X, and Y(X), or SOI scores of 4/3 and 4(3)) in their current way of knowing. As such, while Self-authoring is a leading structure organizing their meaning-making, there are still remnants of the Socializing structure active in “pulling them back” into an “old” way of making meaning. This means that these coaches must exert the energy necessary to maintain the lead the Self-authoring structure has, all the while resisting the Socializing pull, a pull that no longer exists once one arrives

at a fully Self-authoring space. This combination of, on the one hand, what is at stake (i.e., a felt sense of Socializing form of mind pull) and, on the other, having enough awareness and capacity to understand the importance of self-as-instrument practices for themselves and the coaching process (i.e., stemming from the dominant Self-authoring perspective) might make this group of coaches particularly attuned to these observing practices in reflection and action, as was demonstrated by the frequency with which they brought coach practices of self-as-instrument into the discussion.

This finding once again demonstrates the importance of looking at development from a more nuanced perspective as described through its transitions (vs. at a full developmental stage). If we are to more fully understand the (micro)dynamics by which the facilitator's form of mind influences the ability to foster transformative learning, it is important for researchers and practitioners alike to get a deeper understanding of the many different worlds one can inhabit, and the differences they represent for the system of facilitating transformative insight, at every step of the way along the developmental journey.

The Distribution of Coaches' Forms of Mind: Fact or Fiction?

One final point I wish to draw attention to, and as prompted by Perry's (2014) findings and the discussions between the coaches in the field, is related to the distribution of forms of mind in the coach population. In her dissertation, Perry attempts to answer the following question: "What is the current state of developmental consciousness (i.e., forms of mind) of professional coaches?" (p. 65). To answer that question, Perry presented the distribution of forms of mind (i.e., the SOI scores) found in her research sample of 36 certified professional coaches (see Table 7.4 below). When comparing Perry's form of mind distribution findings to my own initial research sample, as well as to the distributions reported by Kegan (1994), some major discrepancies are observed.

Table 7.4*Perry's (2014) Distribution of Coaches' Forms of Mind as Compared to This Study's and Kegan's (1994) Data*

Source	Perry (2014)	Halgren (2023)	Kegan (1994)	
Sample size*	N=36	N=25*	N=282	N=207
Population	Certified professional coaches		General adult	Professional highly educated
Form of Mind: SOI score	% Found in population sample			
Fully Instrumental: 2	0%	0%	5%	2.5%
Instrumental to Socializing transition: 2(3), 2/3, 3/2, 3(2)	0%	0%	8%	2.5%
Fully Socializing: 3	0%	4%	14%	15%
Socializing to Self-authoring transition: 3(4), 3/4, 4/3, 4(3)	28%	68%	32%	33%
Fully Self-authoring: 4	44%	28%	34%	40%
Self-authoring to Self-transforming transition: 4(5), 4/5, 5/4, 5(4)	22%	0%	6%	7%
Fully Self-transforming: 5	6%	0%	0%	0%

*The sample size of 25 represents the total sample size of participants considered for inclusion in this study, all of whom completed the SOI assessment and before the final section of 21 coaches occurred for the purposes of achieving an even distribution of form of mind groupings.

Specifically, major discrepancies can be seen in the distributions of participants representing the Self-authoring to Self-transforming transition and fully Self-transforming forms of mind. First, as can be seen in the above table, Perry (2014) found an incredible 6% of coaches making meaning from a fully Self-transforming form of mind, while my own and Kegan's (1994) findings have this number at 0%, including from both the general adult and professional highly educated samples (Kegan, 1994). Further, Dr. Popp, who has scored around a thousand SOIs, reported that she has not yet analyzed a single SOI from a fully Self-transforming form of mind individual (private communication). The same claim has been made by Kegan in one of his podcasts (Fuller, 2019). Second, Perry (2014) found that 22% of coaches out of the total 36 she assessed were in transition

between the Self-authoring and Self-transforming forms of mind, a number that, according to findings reported by Kegan (1994), is closer to 6 or 7% and equal to 0% in my own research sample of the 25 participants initially assessed. Assuming that choosing and engaging in the coaching profession for one's livelihood does not immediately equate to a higher measure of a coach's actual form of mind than the one found in the general population or even in a professional, highly educated population, I take strong issue with Perry's SOI findings. If anything, my findings indicate that most executive coaches (68%!) make meaning from a Socializing to Self-authoring transition space. It is reasonable to assume that this inflation in Perry's form of mind scores and distribution may have been a consequence of a lack of rigor in analyzing (and perhaps even in collecting) the SOI data (i.e., only 10% of the SOIs in Perry's study were scored by an additional experienced SOI scorer as a way of ensuring inter-rater reliability versus 100% of SOIs in this study). Additionally, Perry (2014) notes that "some experts suggest professional coaches operate at or above the fourth order of developmental consciousness (i.e., at or above the fully Self-authoring form of mind), while others claim the opposite (e.g., Jennifer Berger Garvey, personal communication, 2012; M. Cavanagh, personal communication, 2010)" (p. 90). This suggestion might have also introduced a bias in Perry's SOI scoring process, leading to this form of mind score inflation. I, too, take issue with this claim, as any inflation to one's own or others' form of mind scores only leads to a missed opportunity to respect and work from one's own true strengths and to sit in a development space that is resonant and relevant to an individual and in line with one's own experience. Anything else brings a developmental disservice to the learners, as well as to the facilitators of learning.

To conclude this section, I urge coaches (and all other facilitators of learning) not to look at this deeply human theory as a "bigger-is-better theory" (Berger 2012, p. 49). Even though each successive form of mind represents a qualitative shift in meaning-making complexity, and each successive meaning-making system transcends the previous one, no single form of mind is

necessarily *better* than another (Berger, 2012; Kegan, 1982). Instead, this theory is about the fit between the demands a person has to navigate and the person's capacity to do so (Berger, 2012; Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002; Kegan, 1994, 2009). In the context of executive coaching, what matters most is the extent to which the leader (and a leader of learning, the coach) can successfully meet the demands of her role, given her current form of mind.

Limitations and Future Research

Due to the explorative nature of this research, the complexity of the topic, and the related choices I made regarding my focus, research design, and methods of data collection, some limitations need to be discussed. These areas are important ones to acknowledge, as they present an opportunity for further development of both theoretical and practical knowledge in the areas I explored with my two research questions and as presented in my conceptual framework (see Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2).

This study's exploratory approach was chosen because not much prior research on the topics I investigated was available to form an anchor for a more specific data collection methodology. From that perspective, this qualitative, multiple-case study design was a strength. However, at the same time, this design has its limitations. Specifically, since I aimed to gather as much relevant information as possible on the coaching practices for facilitating reflection toward transformative insight, I did not impose any major restrictions on the coach participants' perspectives on the matter, and as such, I have kept my semi-structured interview protocol relatively broad and general. The upside of that approach was the broad spectrum of coaching practices that emerged, including the ones that were not directly relevant for answering the research questions on the *client-focused*, *reflective* coaching practices at three levels of reflection (i.e., *non-reflective* coaching practices "context and conditions" and *coach-focused* "self-as-instrument" practices). The downside of that choice is that, by keeping my inquiry broad, I missed an opportunity to explore these practices in a more focused,

targeted way, for example, by including questions inquiring specifically about the ways in which these coaches facilitated their clients' reflection on the *what* (content reflection), *how* (process reflection), and *why* (premise reflection) behind their thinking, feeling, and behaving. Also, given that in the transformative learning literature, premise reflection is seen as the most promising level of reflection for achieving perspective transformation or the subject-object move (Cranton, 216; Mezirow, 1990, 1991), I could have explored these less frequent and less clearly defined practices in more depth. And while this was not achieved, the global inquiry it did create allowed me to say something about the extent to which coaches naturally think about and engage in these kinds of practices (i.e., premise reflection practices were by far the least discussed, covering only 9.27% of a total of 410 reflective practices captured), which itself is a valuable finding.

While I have already offered various explanations for why these premise reflection practices might have been underrepresented in the collected data, there are various other potential explanations for this finding. Other explanations could be, for example, that coaches who are not familiar with transformative learning (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000) and constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994) might be less aware of the important role these kinds of practices play in the process of facilitating deep learning toward transformative insight and were, as such, much less inclined to apply them (especially given the complexity of their facilitation). It might also be that their clients might not have been ready, for various reasons, to engage in this form of deep reflection, something I have often encountered in my own experience with coaching leaders. I find that some leaders, even with assistance, have difficulty moving past content (and process) reflective thinking during coaching, often getting stuck in an ongoing story on which they cannot take a broader or deeper perspective. However, my data do not allow me to answer this question beyond speculating on it. As such, a deeper exploration of facilitative practices for premise reflection and the

potential reason behind their apparent underrepresentation in coaching is worth the effort of further research.

Another reason that might explain why premise reflection practices were so underrepresented might be related to the approach I took when coding reflective coaching practices from the semi-structured interview data. Specifically, and as previously emphasized, when coding coaching practices, my focus was on capturing the *intent* of the practice as described by the participant, that is, the goal they were trying to achieve while facilitating reflection with their clients. As such, for a coaching practice to be included in any of the three levels of reflection, including premise reflection, the participant had to *explicitly* describe their *intent* to impact the reflective process in a specific way. If that intent met the criteria used to define the three levels of reflection in theoretical (Cranton, 2013, 2016; Mezirow, 1991) literature and empirical research (Oosterbaan et al., 2010; Wallman et al., 2008; based on Mezirow, 1991; see Appendix G), then that practice would be categorized as belonging to a set of practices for that specific level of reflection. As such, it may not be excluded that some of the practices that were categorized as content or process level reflection practices could have *potentially* led to premise reflection. This is a reasonable assumption given that, as we have seen in the system-level perspective on the data (i.e., Figure 5.7) as well as from previous research (e.g., Mbokota et al., 2022) and theoretical writings (e.g., Cranton, 2016), that content and process reflection practices often precede premise reflection. In order to preserve the integrity of the findings, I took this into account during the coding and kept strictly to the terms as previously defined. I felt that a less “strict” coding process could lead to a misinterpretation of explicit intent being communicated by the participants as well as necessitating additional assumptions about whether or not some practices may have led to premise reflection. The best solution to this dilemma would have been to capture the actual reflective process from the client’s perspective, a clear limitation of this study, which I will discuss next.

My choice to include only coaches' perspectives in this study did not allow me to directly verify, from a client's own perspective and experience, if certain coaching practices actually triggered the level of reflection as intended by coaches. It did not allow me to investigate if the transformative insight, as described by coaches, actually occurred. Having this verification for the coaching scenarios shared, where transformative insight occurred (i.e., critical incidents), would strengthen my inquiry and research findings. However, in lieu of client perspectives, in my initial participant selection process, I did include a "check" of verification on transformative insight via an online survey. A part of that survey asked the potential coach participants to think of a recent executive coaching client case where, in their perspective, the client experienced a transformative insight during coaching. Transformative insight was defined as an insight where a client experienced a "turning point," meaning a profound change in their understanding of how they view themselves or their relationships with others, how they understand or view the world around them, thereby changing their deeply held beliefs, developing a greater sense of responsibility and perspective-taking, changing their goals for the future, or making major life changes. Coaches' descriptions of perceived client transformative insights were carefully reviewed, and only those participants whose descriptions met the transformative insight criteria as outlined by its definition were invited to participate further in this study.

Further, as an additional check of participants' understanding of the outcomes I was looking to investigate, during the first part of the semi-structured interview, I asked them to elaborate on what those turning points were about. Coaches were asked what specifically changed in their client's thinking, how they knew that the transformation of belief occurred, as well as how their clients experienced those moments (see Appendix C for details). Overall, coaches had no difficulty answering those questions and had very specific descriptions of their clients' transformative insight. This increasing my comfort and confidence in that I was indeed looking at the practices geared

toward achieving those kinds of insights. (For an overview of, per coach, the reported client challenges and related summaries of their transformative insights, please refer to Table 4.3 in Chapter 4.) Nevertheless, identifying transformative learning outcomes from the client's perspective is key if we are to draw connections, with some degree of certainty, between those moments and the practices that led to them in the first place. For that purpose, in the future, the researchers should, whenever possible, include the client's perspective and experience as well as identify additional criteria for judging those outcomes. In that process, my definitional space and related criteria for transformative insight may be useful (see "Toward a Conceptualization of Transformative Insight" section in Chapter 2).

Additionally, related to the absence of the coaching clients' perspectives, in this study, and more specifically the absence of information on client forms of mind, another limitation of this study and an important way in which this study can be expanded surfaces. As coaching clients are at the receiving end of the coaching practices for transformative insight, knowing how they experience them and how that might relate to how they make meaning (as determined by their form of mind) would further inform the coaches, as facilitators of learning, how to meet their different development needs. What is clear by looking at the profoundly different ways in which adults can experience and make sense of themselves and the world is that no one coaching approach can meet the different developmental needs of individuals with different forms of mind. By adjusting their styles, approaches, and perspectives to the client's range of understanding, coaches can meet their clients at the edge of their current meaning-making capacity to facilitate their learning in a more powerful and meaningful way (Berger, 2012). In this area of constructive-developmental theory's application to coaching, Berger (2006, 2012) made a most notable contribution by suggesting a variety of coaching approaches that could be helpful, as well as potential pitfalls coaches should consider in each of the developmental spaces, arguing that "if coaches are to be able to support

leaders well, it is vital that they understand the many different worlds these leaders may inhabit” (Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002, p. 28). However, all of Berger’s suggestions are theoretically derived and need to be empirically explored if we are to draw any conclusions about the kinds of practices that would be optimal for moving leaders with various forms of mind to the edge of their knowing, not too far beyond (or under) their current capacity, so that these practices can help them “surface their hidden assumptions about the world” (Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002, p. 30) in an optimal way so they can “look at them” versus “looking through them” (Kegan, 2001, p. 80).

Given the limited time and resources in this study, I opted for collecting data on coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight primarily via semi-structured interviews. During these interviews, coaches shared the practices they used with their clients who, from their perspective, experienced transformative insight. The advantage of that choice was that I could probe for coaches’ intent and reasoning behind the shared practices. However, given that the practices were shared retrospectively, from the coaches’ recollection, and were not captured in real-time as the facilitation was occurring, I was not able to separate which parts of the practices shared were based on coaches’ *espoused* theories (i.e., comprised their beliefs, attitudes, and values) versus those based on their *theory-in-use* (i.e., the theory that coaches actually employed; Argyris, 1995). As such, in the future, this kind of investigation would benefit from capturing practices through direct observations, ensuring that they are indeed the practices coaches used, and providing an additional depth in the stepwise process inherent to their facilitation.

One final thought relates to my assumptions going into this study, which drew heavily on the cognitive, rational aspects of the process of transformative learning. My understanding of cognitive development was, at the time, primarily based on my learning and studies of the work of Mezirow (1978, 1991, 2000), Brookfield (1987, 1992, 2009), and Kegan (1982, 1994). Along the way, as other perspectives, descriptions, and dimensions emerged in the data, I started learning about other

theories of cognitive development (e.g., Basseches' (1984) work on dialectical thinking, King and Kitchener's (1994) work on reflective judgment). While I have not yet had a chance to examine and connect the presence of these practices within the reflective coaching practice findings, I feel very strongly about the depth they can add. Additionally, examining and tapping into various domains in ways of knowing (e.g., somatic, emotional, spiritual) through coaching practices, above and beyond cognition, and related levels of reflection, was not my focus in this study. At the same time, the data clearly show the importance that participant coaches place on those non-rational practices and the powerful impact they may have in the process of facilitating transformative insight in coaching. As such, I believe that focusing future investigations specifically on these practices would serve not only to deepen and expand our understanding of the transformative learning process but also to enrich the array of coaching practices that may be used to facilitate it. Tapping into all these different domains in ways of knowing through a more integrated approach to transformative learning (a need that scholars in the field of transformative learning have already recognized as valuable) would serve in "deepening our relations with ourselves as well as others," "reflect an appreciation for the multiplicity of selves that make up who we are as individuals," as well as "who we are becoming" (Dirkx, Espinoza, & Schlegel, 2018; p. 6).

Significance, Practical Implications, and Recommendations

Executive coaching's value in leadership development lies in its ability to provide a tangible return on investment by effectively addressing complex, adaptive challenges. The contribution and impact realized in delivering these outcomes depends on the field's ability to respond with the developmental perspectives, practices, quality, and quantity of executive coaches who can facilitate learning and growth related to real leadership demands. Coaches, as the facilitators and instruments of learning, play a crucial role in guiding the learning process that tackles both the professional and personal challenges faced by clients. The resulting growth in leader capacity does not only benefit

organizations in terms of growth in performance, people, and culture. At the root of these outcomes lies a wider and deeper developmental impact related to the evolution of related individual perceptions, thinking, feeling, and behaviors, positively impacting interactions in life and society. As executive coaches grow in their application of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000) and constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994) in their work with clients, it is important to understand that the influence of these practices extends beyond the coaching conversation and business impact to how leaders and leaders of learning navigate complexities within themselves, others, and the world.

This study can, in various ways, benefit scholars and practitioners within the leadership development, and specifically, the coaching field, who are looking to investigate and apply evidence-based practices informed by these lenses to foster the kind of learning that is on par with the challenges leaders face today in their environments and in themselves. First, understanding the process of facilitating transformative insight and the practices necessary for it will help coaches understand the greater landscape and dynamics of structuring, hosting, and enabling a transformative process with developmental impact. A strength (and applicability) of this study's findings on coaching practices (at all three levels of reflection: content, process, premise), which emerged, is that these practices are specific to the intent the coaches were trying to meet (e.g., "Increasing contextual understanding," content reflection coaching practice theme). While concrete examples are also provided by coaches in this study (e.g., using relationship or stakeholder mapping techniques, stakeholder or sponsor interviews, diagnosing organizational culture, norms, and values), coaches still have the freedom to meet that intent in a way that feels most optimal for them and their clients. In this way, coaches can apply their learning, experience, education, and related tools and practices while at the same time keeping to the overall intent of a practice, thereby ensuring that they attend to the overall system for facilitating transformative insight. The system ensures that the client

is challenged in their current way of knowing to transcend and include it so that a more complex way of knowing can emerge and become the driver and compass for a new perspective, way of thinking, feeling, or behavior. At the same time, it is important to ensure that the learning process is not experienced as “emotional and traumatic” (Cranton, 2016, p. 109) by structuring a conversational arc in such a way that content and process reflection become pivotally important, in their own right, and as portals to premise reflection.

Secondly, the study and its system for facilitating transformative insight places more emphasis for coach educators on the need for development in a coach’s perspective, knowledge, and skill around reflective practices. Of specific importance are the reflective practices focused on systems of beliefs, as demonstrated by the extent to which premise reflection practices were underprivileged in this study. While often seen as a key coaching competency (e.g., Columbia Coaching Certification Program [3CP] specifies “Testing assumptions” as one of the core coaching competencies), a greater understanding of how to facilitate this process would increase the coach’s ability to do so explicitly and in targeted ways in coaching.

As such, this study’s findings can inform coach education programs regarding fostering new insights and connections for transformative learning with developmental impact. By providing a unifying, comprehensive, and prescriptive system of coaching processes and practices enabling transformative insight such as this study has identified, a versatile range of educational traditions and coaching specialties can now be *connected* through their distinct strengths and differences, now visible in context and interdependence. Imagine the implications for practice and recommendations for future research, which become possible when these interdependencies, which already existed but were not visible in these ways, now become easier to see, debate, and grow through. As educators, researchers, and facilitators of coaching, and those who agree that insight of the transformative kind leads to growth in capacity, the system of transformative insight provides us a worthy gathering

place to connect where we are, where we are not (yet), and the unknowns, synergies, and beauty of not knowing where we will be next.

This is especially important to attend to now in the context where, as mentioned before, a fast-growing trend is emerging, and, sadly, in my experience, in a superficial form, gaining commercial traction and “trust” under the label “vertical development” (i.e., a niche in coaching anchored in the transformative learning and adult development lenses). This space of “vertical development,” promising profound, accessible, and rapid growth in capacity, often focuses on the promises of becoming Self-transforming. In my experience, coach educators who are leading learning with deep expertise, an understanding of dilemmas and possible ways forward, and critical debate are few and far between. In the field of adult education, and certainly, for those operating within the context of corporate education, it is important to learn from our limitations, insights, and opportunities if we are to evolve our practices and ourselves to facilitate learning for capacity. Are we going deep enough? Are we challenging each other enough?

There are various ways in which coach educators could help coaches learn to engage in this more developmentally informed form of coaching without necessarily letting go of their own dominant educational traditions and the coaching specialties driving their curricula. It seems to be the strength of the coaching process and practices model for facilitating transformative insight (see Figure 5.7), presented in this dissertation, that practices from many forms of coaching can lend themselves to achieving transformative insight (e.g., whether predominantly focused on cognitive, somatic, or affective aspects of the client’s experiences) as long as sufficient attention has been given to every step in that process. After all, this model emerged by analyzing the practices of 21 coach participants who had different experiential and educational backgrounds, and hence privileged different coaching models and paradigms in their facilitation. As such, explicitly teaching about the developmental learning arc depicted in the coaching model for facilitating transformative insight

(Figure 5.7) would provide coaches with an overarching lens that can help them stay close to the process, which could serve to move the clients from their *current* way of knowing, which is limiting them, to a *new* way of knowing necessary for resolving the challenges they face. Additionally, explicitly teaching coaches about different levels of reflection and their dynamics would go a long way in ensuring that coaches have a more targeted and conscious way of engaging their clients in reflection, where enough emphasis is placed on these various reflective mechanisms versus staying in one or another reflective level. As we have seen from the extent to which premise reflection was underrepresented in this study's data, and its importance for the transformative learning process, this is something that may well be worth the effort.

If indeed the previously offered explanations related to premise reflection potentially being perceived by coaches as being too far from the pragmatic focus of coaching or as a “tricky” therapy-like terrain hold true, this too may inform coach educators about how to teach this sort of reflective practice. Coach educators could emphasize and demonstrate its value through, for example, engaging learners in various exercises to experiment in pairs with premise reflection on their own challenges to demonstrate how it can directly lead to understanding the crux of their challenge and, as such, to a more impactful and a longer-term challenge resolution that could extend to another context in their lives (even though on the surface it may seem too abstract or too far from the presenting challenge). Additionally, as Kauffman and Coutu (2009) noted, it may be helpful to take (more) time to provide mental health training during the coaches' education so that they can be better equipped to recognize where coaching stops and therapy starts. Once they are, they may be more confident and, hence, more inclined to engage in premise reflection on the client's *whys* behind their thinking, feeling, and behaving.

Another significant perspective this study offers, which can have valuable practical implications, is the finding that coaches with various forms of mind facilitate coaching practices for

transformative insight in different ways. And while they have all, to a similar extent, engaged in the same practices across the three levels of reflection (content, process, premise), the way they went about meeting the intent behind those practices differed in, for example, the primary focus of reflection (e.g., outward in or inward out) or style (e.g., primarily actively supportive or actively challenging). As such, we have seen that coaches across all forms of mind, in the developmental space, from dominant Socializing to fully Self-authoring, discussed engaging their clients in every single part of the overarching model of coaching process and practices for facilitating (reflection toward) transformative insight. However, as forms of mind became more complex, so did the coach practices, which followed the transcend-and-include principle as outlined by constructive-developmental theory (Kegan & Lahey, 1983; McCauley et al., 2006; see Figure 6.7 in Chapter 6). This “complexification” in reflective practices can serve to inform coaching education models and methods in several ways. First, it can help design spacious educational curricula appropriate for learners making meaning from various forms of mind. For example, knowing that dominant Socializing coach learners might be inclined to privilege focusing on more narrow/focused (i.e., work, life) contexts closely related to relationships and important others (e.g., boss, colleagues), an educator can take time to include and explicitly reinforce the role of broader systemic/societal/significant picture contexts (e.g., organizational, cultural, societal norms) that dominant and fully Self-authoring coaches would naturally privilege. Having coaches experiment with different complexities in the facilitation of various practices, educators can create *scaffolds* not only for competency-based learning but also for capacity-based learning. I believe that this kind of education would help learners (in this example, a dominant Socializing one) reach just above their current meaning-making and enable them to facilitate, to an extent, aspects of coaching practices (in this example, Self-authoring ones) that are valuable to them but not yet naturally accessible. And while I

cannot say, based on this study's findings, how far that stretch could go, we do know that we learn best when we engage with just above where we are (Kegan, 1982; McGowan, Stone & Kegan, 2008).

For individual coaches to reap the most benefit (and their clients, as an extension) from this finding when it comes to learning or improving their practices in a more targeted way, whether as part of coach education or in general, they can invest in growing their awareness of how their own needs, biases, preferences, and perceptions show up in coaching. This can include an awareness of how their form of mind influences their facilitation. Having this form of mind information via the Subject-Object Interview, for example, would also put coaches' own self-reflexivity, and not only their clients', at center stage. This would allow for the coach's self-reflection on which aspect of their *client-focused* coaching practices might be under- or over-represented (e.g., dominant Socializing coaches relying on the client's story/narrative as input for reflection versus also bringing their own (somatic) experiences and perspectives in the "reflective mix"). Additionally, and related to *coach-focused* self-as-instrument practices, having an idea from where in their developmental journey they are making meaning would help make explicit which self-as-instrument aspects might be getting in the way of their facilitation of the coaching process. These efforts might also help open the coaches up to being vulnerable, getting into their own subjectivity and the structure behind thinking, feeling, and behaving, as well as dealing with not knowing or being wrong. This would expose pathways for their own developmental growth and, through reducing the impact of those limitations in coaching, aid them, as "instruments" of coaching, in finding clearer pathways of growth for and with their clients.

Having this nuanced perspective on the form of mind-related differences in the process of facilitating transformative insight (for example, including a perspective on their own form of mind) can also help coaches make more informed judgments about the extent to which certain practices might or might not be appropriate for the client. While the coach's form of mind could itself offer a

transcendent space, it could also create a dilemma for a client for whom that space is not yet developmentally relevant. Form of mind-related differences illustrate the need for coaches to ensure that their way of knowing and related interests and preferences do not undercut or overwhelm a client. Practically speaking, if a coach has an understanding of different forms of mind, or the “qualitatively different way of understanding the complex world around us” and our ability “to cope with complexity, multiple perspectives, and abstraction” (Berger, 2012, p. 10), they can adjust their approaches to meet the clients in their current way of knowing and for the purpose of optimal transition into a new one. At the same time, as argued above, if coaches take time to “get real” about understanding their own form of mind (as they often feel is important for their clients to do), they would be much better equipped to understand the strengths and limitations of their own perspectives in the process of facilitating transformative insight. Given the increasing number of coaches interested in applying adult development theories and, at the same time, the large discrepancies in the data with regard to various projections of where the coach population might be developmentally (e.g., Kegan, 1994; Perry, 2014, Halgren, 2023), it is important more than ever to take responsibility for the realities of our own development as coaches.

In conclusion, if coaches are to facilitate reflection toward transformative insight, understanding these kinds of coaching practices and the system and processes around them is of the essence. Of equal importance is understanding the organizing principles behind their clients and their own ways of knowing across multiple domains (e.g., cognitive, emotional, somatic, spiritual), which are expressed in different ways depending on the developmental space a person occupies (i.e., form of mind). While the practices and processes for facilitating transformative insight, found in this study, can be facilitated without this additional form of mind information, understanding this “hidden curriculum” driving “the mental demands of private and public lives on adults” (Kegan,

1994, p. 10) makes it easier to talk about, relate to, and make use of it, as well as understand the kind of “instrument” the coach herself is.

A Word of Hope

The path, and luck, that led me to learn about transformative learning and constructive-developmental theory and ultimately have a chance to explore these theories individually and together through this study, have represented a journey I could never have expected, and certainly would not have wanted, in the ways I understand and can value it now. I want to start this word of hope by sharing my gratitude for the thought leaders and many incredible individuals whose hard, thoughtful, and beautiful work is cited in this dissertation. I applaud and thank the compassionate and engaged executive coaches whose stories, strategies, and experience will help further our collective understanding of how to facilitate transformative insight. And I want to recognize the very poignant human disorientation, dilemmas, and voices to which transformative learning and constructive-developmental theory attempt to respond and attend with such care and honor.

As new to all of this as I still am, I already invite you to join me on this journey. If you do, and your experience is anything like mine, you will find yourself tested beyond what you could have imagined possible, perhaps also realizing that curiosity, purpose, and faith are such worthy perspectives when little else is clear except a feeling that something of importance is happening. If your experience is anything like mine, you will find yourself gifted with the incredible experience of being privy to sacred moments of human meaning-making: witnessing and holding an experience of another person that is hard-fought and precious in its current and new meanings, one that represents a path or portal to new knowing. You will find yourself in a space that is so moving and tender to experience, a space of examination and incubation that is one of the greatest equalizers I have known. It is here, among other significant findings you will make, that you will be able to look past the deceptions of rightness, privilege, and power in yourself, others, or the world around you, and

see the distortions, disadvantages, and disempowerment those same beliefs and assumptions truly represent. It can be shocking to realize that perception, thinking, feeling, and behavior are not footholds, they are pitfalls; that what you thought would bring happiness, in fact, brought you distance to it. It is here where you will sense empowerment, recognizing and feeling it in the places and parts where you are more free, grounded, and alive.

These theories teach us that in our meaning-making, and wherever we are, or are not (yet), in our ways of knowing, we are responding to challenges with what we later understand to be our best attempt, at the time, to navigate our worlds, to be, and to be together. However differently I realize it sometimes feels or looks in the day-to-day, I, too, have seen up close and consistently that there is such oneness in our struggle and yearning to do this. In this process, we are strong, and we are weak; we are true, and we are false; we are whole and we are part, and all the nuances in between. Witnessing this experience is what has called me to find, choose, and persevere with this topic, committing to it at a time when the complexities of the world remain the conversation of the day and I don't have any "answers" for my children, Max and Sophie, other than that I will seek to understand and share.

As a facilitator of transformative learning with developmental impact, as someone who hopes to contribute to this community and the larger community we are all part of and serve, I bring my attention, focus, and resources to transformative insight right now as my own "lean in" and step forward. In my experience in this work over the last nine years, I have come to learn that my next step is not where I will take these theories and their practices but instead where they will take me. Why does it matter what practices executive coaches are using in facilitating transformative learning with developmental impact? Why does it matter what the influence of perspective sharing on perspective taking is as it relates to transformative insight?

Looking back, the questions that led me to take the bow that my dissertation grants me, and with it, shoot an arrow of learning of the transformative kind up high and far away, piercing right into what I see as the heart of meaning and personhood in the making remain valuable to me still today. If the arrow lands, which we will soon discuss and debate together, I am hoping I will find it embedded in a space it had been looking for, a space just one heartbeat away from an experience of greater knowing, a space that does not bypass truths but transcends and unites them, and more importantly, a space clearly connected with the biggest truth I have seen uniting all the client work I do: that a sense of loving and feeling loved is the greatest knowing of all.

And we will develop.

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Appendix A: Subject-Object Interview Protocol

The Subject-Object Interview protocol as described in “A Guide to the Subject-Object Interview: Its Administration and Interpretation” by Labey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, and Felix (1988) will be slightly adapted for the purpose of this research. This adaptation will involve framing the interview to happen within the context of the participants’ executive coaching practice. The following is extracted and summarized from the guide as related to using the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) for this research.

Resources:

Verbal prompts of ten subject topics, phone conferencing with audio recording, and additional tape recorder as backup.

Preparing the participant:

In order to establish that the participant knows what s(he) is agreeing to, the participant needs to know that:

- a) (s)he is participating in an approximately 60-minute interview, one that is phenomenological in nature
- b) the goal of which is to learn “how you think about things,” “how you make sense of your own experience,” etc., within the context of his/her executive coaching practice
- c) (s)he doesn’t have to talk about anything (s)he doesn’t want to
- d) his/her participation is voluntary
- e) s(he) can stop the interview (or ask any questions) at any time
- f) the interview will be audiotaped, with his/her permission and transcribed
- g) the confidentiality of the participant’s identifiers and any materials obtained will be maintained

Part I: Generating content - The inventory, the preparation

The participant is given ten verbal prompts to consider addressing, the prompts are:

1. Angry
2. Anxious, nervous
3. Success
4. Strong Stand, Conviction
5. Sad

6. Torn
7. Moved, Touched
8. Lost Something
9. Change
10. Important to Me

Next, the interviewer tells the participant that the prompts are to help the participant jot down things he/she might want to talk about in the interview. The participant is told, “We will spend the first 10 minutes or so with the prompts and then talk together for about an hour or so about those things you jotted down which you choose to talk about. We do not have to talk about anything you don’t want to talk about. Again, please frame your thinking in this interview around the experiences you’ve had within your work or role as an executive coach.”

Part II: Probing for meaning-making structure - The interview itself

“Now we have more than an hour or so to talk about some of these things you’ve recalled or jotted down. You can decide where we start. Is there one prompt you felt more strongly about than the others? (or a few prompts, etc.) ...”

Now the probing-for-structure part of the interview begins...The participant keeps selecting prompts, and the interviewer probes for meaning-making structure around them, for example through the following interview questions per verbal prompt...”

1. *“Now let’s take the first prompt (**Angry**). If you were to think back over the last several weeks, even the last couple of months, and you had to think about a time you felt really angry about something, or times you got really mad or felt a sense of outrage or violation - are there 2 or 3 things that come to mind? Take a minute to think about it, if you like, and jot down whatever you need to remind you of what they were.” (If nothing comes to mind, let’s skip it and go on to the next prompt.)*
2. ***(Anxious, Nervous)** “...if you were to think of some time when you found yourself being really scared about something, nervous, anxious about something...”*
3. ***(Success)** “...if you were to think of times when you felt kind of triumphant, or that you had achieved something that was difficult for you, or especially satisfying that you were afraid might come out another way, or a sense that you had overcome something...”*
4. ***(Strong stand, Conviction)** “...if you were to think of times when you had to take a strong stand, or felt very keenly ‘This is what I think should or should not be done about this,’ times when you became aware of a particular conviction you held...”*

5. **(Sad)** “...felt really sad about something, perhaps something that even made you cry, or left you feeling on the verge of tears...”
6. **(Torn)** “...felt really in conflict about something, where someone or some part of you felt one way or was urging you on in one direction, and someone else or some other part was feeling another way; times when you really felt kind of torn about something...”
7. **(Moved, Touched)** “...felt quite touched by something you saw or thought or heard, perhaps something that even caused your eyes to tear up, something that moved you...”
8. **(Lost something)** “...times you had to leave something behind, or were worried that you might lose something or someone; ‘good-bye’ experiences, the ends of something important or valuable; losses...”
9. **(Change)** “As you look back at your past, if you had to think of some ways in which you think you’ve changed over the last few years - or even months, if that seems right - are there some ways that come to mind?”
10. **(Important to me)** “If I were just to ask you, ‘What is it that is most important to you?’ or ‘What do you care deepest about?’ or ‘What matters most?’ - are there 1 or 2 things that come to mind or anything else?”

Throughout the interview, the interviewer focuses on probing for a form of mind structure in order to more clearly understand how the person’s subject-object construction is shaping their perception of real-life experience. This means that the focus is on eliciting the “whys” in participant responses. That is, while the participant will give the “whats” (e.g., what is important, what felt successful) in describing his/her experience, the interviewer must learn the “whys” (why is it important? why does that constitute success?) behind that experience. Additionally, to allow a more pleasant participant experience while at the same time obtaining the information needed, the interviewer must wear “two hats” in the conduct of the interview - that of an empathetic, receptive listener, and that of an active inquirer.

Further information, advice, and (sympathy) guidelines about all of the activities involved can be found in: Lahey, L., Souvaine, E., Kegan, R., Goodman, R., & Felix, S. (1988). *A Guide to the subject-object interview: Its administration and interpretation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Graduate School of Education, Laboratory of Human Development.

Appendix B: Pre-Interviews Survey:
Critical Incident and Online Demographic Survey

(Sent by email)

The following email invitation will be sent to the research participants to give them an overview of the process and provide them the link to the online survey:

Dear [Participant Name],

I very much appreciate your interest and your willingness to dedicate your time to this research project. I hope that our work together may contribute to the knowledge and practices of the executive coaching field.

As a first step, and before the two interviews, you will complete a short online survey. This survey will invite you to think about one specific executive coaching client case that relates to facilitating client insights and the kind of coaching practices you found helpful in this specific case. You will also be asked to share some basic demographic information. If you are uncomfortable answering any of the questions in the survey, you can leave them empty.

After I've received the necessary survey responses, I will follow up with you on the next steps regarding your participation in this study.

To complete the survey, please click on the link below:
< *Insert Personal survey link* >

Please complete the online research survey by <date tbd, to happen within a week of sending email>.

With thanks and greetings from Amsterdam,

Jessica

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Below the online survey:

Demographic Data

1. General information:

1.1 Your gender:

- Female
- Male
- Other, please specify

1.2 Your age <drop down list>:

- 20-24
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50-54
- 55-59
- 60-64
- 65-69
- 70-74
- 75+

1.3 Which national culture(s) do you most strongly identify with? (drop down, please select all that apply):

<Drop down list>

1.4 What is your current country of residence?

<Drop down list>

1.5 Highest level of education completed (please check only one category):

- High school graduate
- Trade or vocational school
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- MBA
- Doctorate
- Other (please specify)

2. Professional information:

2.1 Which ICF credential do you currently hold:

- no ICF credential, but I have completed an ICF-approved coach training program
- ACC
- PCC
- MCC

2.2 From which ICF-approved institution (academic or otherwise) have you earned your coaching certification? _____

From which ICF-approved institution (academic or otherwise) have you earned your coaching certification? Institution name: _____

2.3 How would you characterize the main lenses from which you approach your coaching work (please select all that apply):

- Behavioral/performance
- Ontological
- Neuroscience
- Positive psychology
- Developmental coaching
- Adult learning
- Somatic
- Gestalt
- Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP)
- Transactional analysis
- Systemic coaching
- Other (please specify): _____

2.4 Looking at your overall coaching practice, please characterize your client base over the following categories of management roles & responsibilities. Please use percentages to indicate the proportion of your client base represented in each category.

- % Individuals in upper management role: Strategic Focus – For example, long-term goals for markets, products; job titles like CEO, COO, CFO or President, Vice President.
- % Individuals in middle management role: Tactical Focus – For example, translates strategy into plans, actions; Responsible for multiple teams; job titles like Manager.
- % Individuals in lower management roles: Operational Focus – For example, implements plans, responsible for one team or individuals; job titles like team leader, assistant manager, supervisor.
- % Individuals in non-management roles: Job/Role Focus – For example, implements tasks and contributes to teams but does not have managerial responsibility for others.

2.5 How many years of active coaching experience do you currently have?

Client Case from Your Executive Coaching Practice

Please think of one specific executive coaching client case related to a client of yours in a *manager- or executive-level* role that:

- 1) you can recall really well
- 2) seemed to be a **“turning point”** for the client during the coaching; more specifically, where the client had a **change in understanding or belief** related to:
 - how they view themselves or their relationships with others
 - how they understand or view the world around them
 - changing their deeply held beliefs
 - developing a greater sense of responsibility toward others
 - changing their goals for the future or
 - making major changes in my life*
- 3) you believe the coaching was particularly helpful or powerful for the client in facilitating this/these insight(s)?

**Based on Cox (2017)*

Client Case:

With this specific coaching client case in mind, think about and please answer the following questions.

Please choose the category that best characterizes this client, based on his/her management-level role and responsibility:

- ___ This client is an individual in an upper management role: Strategic Focus – For example, long-term goals for markets, products; job titles like CEO, COO, CFO or President, Vice President.
- ___ This client is an individual in a middle management role: Tactical Focus – For example, translates strategy into plans, actions; Responsible for multiple teams; job titles like Manager.
- ___ This client is an individual in a lower management role: Operational Focus – For example, implements plans, responsible for one team or individuals; job titles like team leader, assistant manager, supervisor
- ___ This client is an individual in a non-management role: Job/Role Focus – For example, implements tasks and contributes to teams but does not have managerial responsibility for others.

<i>Describing the client's challenge:</i>	
From your perspective as the coach, what do you see as this client's main dilemma or challenge?	
<i>Describing the client's change in understanding or belief ("turning point"):</i>	
Related to the client's dilemma or challenge, what specifically do you believe changed in your client's understanding in terms of how they see themselves, their relationships with others, how they understand the world around them?	
<i>Your coaching practice/ approach at that time: (please fill out the questions in this section with as much detail as you can)</i>	
In your coaching at that time, what were you doing that was helpful for facilitating this client's "turning point" i.e., change in understanding or belief. Please elaborate as concretely as you can.	
What specifically about this approach do you believe was the most helpful for facilitating this client's "turning point," i.e., change in understanding or belief?	

Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Intro: Interview background, process and guidelines & participant rights (10 Minutes)

I'd like to start by thanking you for agreeing to participate in this interview today. As described in my email and the informed consent form, I am investigating how executive coaches make sense of those moments when clients had a **change in understanding or belief**: an “aha” kind of insight during coaching, representing a turning point related to how they see themselves, their relationships with others, how they understand the world around them, etc., in the coaching process.

Before we start, I'd like to put out some guidelines I'll be following to make the most of our time together. I will use an interview protocol as a guide for our conversation. To be respectful of your time, I may move forward from one question to the next. If you feel this is taking away from a chance for you to elaborate further, please let me know and we can continue in the question we were working through. To focus as much as possible on you sharing your experiences, I will refrain from commenting during the interview, but continue to probe for clarifications and understanding where helpful. If anything is unclear to you, please let me know that you would also like clarification. If you have a need for any other information, please feel free to ask for it, at any time. If there are any questions you don't feel comfortable answering, or if at any time you would like to stop the interview, just let me know.

With your permission, I will audiotape this interview so that I can transcribe it, as a way of fully and accurately capturing your responses. This will allow me to fully focus on our conversation and less so on recording your responses. I will be writing notes for myself as reminders or as possible follow-up questions. To preserve your confidentiality, I will be using numbers and pseudonyms for you and your clients in the cases you bring in. Only I will be aware of the pseudonyms assigned and any identifiers will be removed to protect your complete confidentiality.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we start?

Part 1: Exploring executive coaching practices via critical incidents (35 minutes)

In this set of questions, we are going to focus on your past coaching work, and in doing so, on the specific **coaching practices** you have found helpful for facilitating client **“turning points”** in coaching. Before our interview, I asked you to think of one specific client case in which you believe a client experienced such a “turning point” during the coaching; more specifically, where the client had a **change in understanding or belief** related to:

- how they view themselves or their relationships with others
- how they understand or view the world around them
- changing their deeply held beliefs
- developing a greater sense of responsibility toward others
- changing their goals for the future or
- making major changes in my life.

Before we get into the case, regarding client “turning points”, i.e., change in understanding or belief, I'd just like to know, from your own experience:

- **How do you make sense of *what these moments are?***
- **How do you make sense of *how these moments come about?***

We are going to focus on that case and those moments in the coaching that you believe could have led this client to experiencing a “turning point” of such nature. Working from your client case you filled out, I’d like to check in with you to make sure I fully understand what you are sharing with me, and perhaps explore some points further with you:

1. From your perspective as the coach, what do you see as this client’s main **dilemma or challenge**?
2. **What specifically do you believe changed** in your client’s understanding or beliefs in terms of how they see themselves, their relationships with others, how they understand the world around them?
 - What specifically changed in the client thinking?
 - **How do you know or sense when a client’s understanding or belief was transformed?**
 - **What did your client express about their experience of this “turning point”?**
3. In your coaching at that time, which **practices** were you using that were helpful for facilitating this client’s “turning point”? Allow space for emergent thinking and elaboration.
 - **Could you please describe exactly what you would be doing?**
 - What are the different “ingredients” involved? What makes them important?
 - Are there specific steps to this process you can name? What makes them important?
4. And **why? What specifically about this approach do you believe was the most helpful for facilitating this client’s “turning point”?**
 - **What key ingredients need to be in place to make this work?**
 - How would you describe **how you showed up and were present** in this case?
 - **What makes this different** than other approaches you are using?
 - When does such a practice work/not work in your experience?
 - **What was the goal you as a coach had in mind** as you were approaching these conversations with your client?
5. **What would you do differently now in terms of coaching practices** if you were to do this specific coaching case again?
6. Is there any other information related to this case you would like to add before we move on?

Part 2: Exploring executive coaching practices via a vignette, a hypothetical coaching client case

In this next part of the interview, we are going to focus on a hypothetical coaching client case. In this exercise, the idea is for you to imagine that you are the coach for the client in the scenario you will read about. I’d like to start by outlining how this exercise goes, and then we’ll get started on it and I can answer any questions you have about this client case.

In terms of process, I’ll first ask you to read a short description describing this client case, you can take the time you need for that. Then, I will ask you to describe how you as a coach would approach this case if it was your client. I’m also very interested in which specific **coaching practices** you believe would be helpful **for facilitating a client “turning point”, i.e., change in understanding or belief related to the self, relationship or the world**, relevant to this particular case, i.e., how would you approach this and what would you be doing? Not unlike we discussed for the case you brought in.

Ok, before we get started, do you have any questions about this process?

To start, let me give you a bit of background about the case you are going to read. The client in this case is named Richard. He has the opportunity to go up for an upper management/ senior leadership role in his organization which he is very interested in. To prepare for this next phase of his career, he has sought coaching, which he is paying for privately. You have already had a kick-off with Richard, in which you got to know him, he spoke about his coaching objectives and the feedback he has been getting. You are now preparing for the coaching sessions in the engagement itself and thinking about how you would like to approach this.

Please take a few minutes to read the client case. *(10 minutes)*

Ok, great. Do you have any questions, or need any further clarifications on the case? Ok, now, please read back through the client case, and jot down notes for yourself about how you would approach facilitating “transformative insight” in a conversation with Richard.

Great. Now let’s talk through this client case: *(35 minutes)*

1. What do you, as his coach, see as Richard’s main **dilemma(s) or challenge** in this case?
2. What kind of **“turning point”** of understanding or belief, in terms of how he sees himself, his relationships with others, how he understands the world around him, might help Richard resolve his dilemma/challenge?
 - Why do you think this change in understanding will help Richard?
3. How would you describe the **overall process** you’d take in approaching the Richard’s case?
4. Which **practices** would you consider as being helpful for facilitating Richard’s possible “turning point(s)”? Allow space for emergent thinking and elaboration.
 - **Could you please describe exactly what you would be doing?**
 - Which ingredients are involved? What makes them important?
 - Are there specific steps to this practice that you can name? What makes them important?
 - And **why? What specifically about this approach/these approaches do you believe would be the most helpful for facilitating client “turning points”** of understanding or belief, in terms of how he sees himself, his relationships with others, how he understands the world around him?
 - **What was the goal you as a coach had in mind** as you were approaching these conversations?
 - How would you describe how you would show up and be present in this case?
 - When does such a practice work/not work in your experience?
4. **What would you find most challenging** about working with a client like Richard?
5. Is there any other information related to coaching Richard effectively that you would like to share before we move on?

Part 3: Testing assumptions/beliefs

1. **What have you learned to date about the role that clients' assumptions and beliefs play in coaching?**
2. **Which specific practices are you using?**
 - **Could you please describe exactly what you would be doing?**
 - Which ingredients are involved? What makes them important?
 - Are there specific steps to this process you can name? What makes them important?

Regarding the whole idea of turning points, that is, of facilitating transformative insights in coaching, what are some questions I should have asked you today and didn't?

Have you had any insights today that you can share?

I'd like to close by thanking you very much for your time and what you have shared with me. After I've completed all these interviews, I will analyze the data. I'd like to ask your permission to contact you for clarification/and or any additional questions that may arise in later interviews. Would that be ok?

Appendix D: The Vignette – A Hypothetical Uniform Coaching Client Case

This hypothetical coaching client case will be used as input for discussion during the semi-structured interview.

Background shared with the participants:

1. Richard has the opportunity to go up for an upper management/senior leadership role in his organization which he is very interested in.
2. He himself has sought coaching to prepare for this next phase of his career
3. Richard is paying for this coaching engagement privately, this is not sponsored by his organization
4. You have already had a kick-off with Richard, in which you got to know him, he spoke about his coaching objectives and the feedback he has been getting
5. You are now preparing for the coaching sessions in the engagement itself and thinking about how you would like to approach his case.

Case:

Richard has been in his role for three years. He is known as a “no-nonsense,” “take no prisoners” type of manager. He has made great contributions to the company, but recently his level of turnover has started to increase and getting people to transfer into his department is difficult at best. There are rumblings in the company amongst his peers that his style is causing a lot of friction working with units other than his own. Richard is not sure why these things are happening but he’s having a harder time getting projects accomplished. He feels that he’s a straightforward person and doesn’t want to change that about himself. He would like to be put forward in the company for a more senior level position but has been told that he’s “not ready.”

Richard has decided to seek help from an executive coach. In your kick-off coaching meeting Richard explained his dilemma to you as: “I don’t know what everyone complains about. I get the job done. Period. If people’s feelings are hurt, that’s their problem. I’m a straight shooter and I like that about myself. But they say my approach is too forceful and it’s holding me back. I don’t want to change who I am, but I evidently need to do something different. I just don’t know.”

You are now preparing for the coaching sessions in the engagement itself and thinking about how you would like to approach this, which is what we will discuss together.

Source: <http://www.thecoachingassociation.com/managing-career-transitions/>

Appendix E: Comprehensive Overview of Context and Conditions Coaching Practices

Theme	Subtheme	Description	Example Practices
1. CLARIFYING A CLIENT'S CURRENT STATE OF BEING AND SITUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Exploring the organizational context behind coaching b) Exploring support on the job c) Assessing coachability d) Assessing engagement and motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Exploring the organizational context behind coaching.</i> The focus is on bringing the perspective of the “person-environment fit” into coaching. Coaches do this by exploring and assessing the fit between the client (values, skills, behavior, etc.) and his or her environment (job/role demands; the team, organization, culture; direct manager, peers, and key stakeholders, etc.). b) <i>Exploring support on the job.</i> The focus is on providing support for the transfer of learning. Coaches do this by investigating the quality and presence of sponsorship from the direct manager for the client’s coaching objectives; examining the sense of safety and support a client has to “try things out” on the job after coaching; inquiring into organizational resources for additional (technical) support; and addressing possible ethical issues in a client’s work environment. c) <i>Assessing coachability.</i> The focus is on exploring whether coaching is an appropriate methodology for the client at this time, as assessed by the coach; through inquiry into the client’s internal readiness and capacity for change, the coach compares the client’s “internal resources” and questions with the demands of the coaching process. The coach investigates the client’s willingness, ripeness, and “openness” to engaging in coaching and the personal work it entails; ensuring that the client is asking for help; and investigating the client’s beliefs about change being possible. d) <i>Assessing engagement & motivation.</i> The focus is on evaluating whether a client’s internal drive and desire for coaching is suitably aligned with the support outcomes envisioned. Coaches do this by understanding goal motivation and personal motivation; what makes the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inquiry - Performance reviews - Client intake/information form - Sponsor/stakeholder conversations

Theme	Subtheme	Description	Example Practices
		client tick and their desire to change; showing curiosity; clarifying client engagement expectations; ensuring that the client has a positive agenda; and clarifying that the client wants to work with this specific coach.	
2. UNDERSTANDING AND ALIGNING WITH CLIENT NEEDS AND PREFERENCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Keeping coaching aligned with client agenda and goals b) Understanding the client as a person and his/her preferences c) Ensuring the appropriateness of coaching (timing, directiveness, client language, load, depth, safety, approach, meeting preferences) d) Noticing and clarifying what gets evoked in a client. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Keeping coaching aligned with client agenda and goals.</i> The focus is on making sure the coaching process is aligned with what resonates with the client. Coaches do this by paying attention to letting the client lead; not telling a client they have to transform; respecting, co-creating, and expanding the client agenda based on what is important to them; ensuring alignment of coaching with the client's (not the coach's!) happiness; explicitly contracting at engagement level, contracting at conversation level, circling back to/checking in on agenda during meetings; building commitment through involvement and co-creation. b) <i>Understanding the client as a person and his/her preferences.</i> The focus is on being able to recognize, embrace, and align with a client's inherent wholeness and idiosyncratic preferences in support of, and not challenging, their authenticity, needs, and personal process. Coaches do this by engaging the client as a (whole) person; inquiring about relevant client perspectives and experiences; investigating the client's current awareness of their challenges and asking for clarity on needs; assessing a client's ability to handle other perspectives; exploring attachment style; what is "true" for the client; and identifying learner, personality, cognitive, emotional, cultural preferences, task vs. relationship orientation, and life circumstances. c) <i>Ensuring the appropriateness of coaching.</i> The focus is on letting the client lead the coaching process, with the coach adapting their approach and style to the client's needs. Coaches do this by paying attention to not bringing attention to things beyond a client's own interest, staying in the safe, productive zone, checking in on client readiness; not overwhelming the client; not challenging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inquiry - Client intake/information form - Client debriefs - Contracting - Coach observations - Coach feedback - Reviewing prior performance appraisals or psychometric assessments

Theme	Subtheme	Description	Example Practices
		<p>to the point a client shuts down, not pushing, not overly confronting a client; adapting timing, speed, pace, directiveness, level of questioning, coach roles and styles, in-depth vs pragmatic focuses; facilitating dialogue within a client's own "language," communication preferences and understanding; paying attention to cues that the client is shutting down, lacks energy, or experiences cultural (in) sensitivity, and that the client has enough self-esteem to handle a specific focus area at that time; accommodating preferred meeting location (virtual, F2F, phone, walk outside) and timing for coaching.</p> <p>d) <i>Noticing and clarifying what gets evoked in a client.</i> The focus is on bringing attention and awareness to possibly valuable, underlying, unspoken, or underserved needs that the client might not be aware of but that emerge in coaching. Coaches do this by being attentive to client authenticity and psychological, developmental, and intellectual needs; reacting to client somatic and emotional responses that can be seen in the face and breathing and in the tone, tempo, and pitch of the voice; and making space to clarify what evolves and emerges as important for the client, including noticing that support from a different coach might be more beneficial and providing a referral.</p>	
3. COMMUNICATING COACH BACKGROUND AND STYLE	<p>a) Having relevant expertise in coaching</p> <p>b) Being explicit with the client about signature style</p>	<p>a) <i>Having relevant expertise and experience in coaching.</i> The focus is on which knowledge, expertise, competencies, skills, and forms or applications of professional and ethical conduct are seen by coaches as relevant for coaching. Coaches do this by being informed and curious about coaching, developing an understanding of human dynamics; having relevant life and or/ executive experience; adhering to high standards of ethical conduct.</p> <p>b) <i>Being explicit with the client about signature style.</i> The focus is on being clear and upfront about a coach's personal style to help the client understand, commit to, and select this approach to benefit from the coaching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inquiry - Discussion - Contracting - Chemistry meetings - Coach training

Theme	Subtheme	Description	Example Practices
		<p>process. Coaches do this by being attentive to the client’s general need to be comfortable with the particular interests, style, method, and approach a coach uses (e.g., coach has a preference for somatic work; coach does developmental coaching; or coach does not do performance coaching); the importance of chemistry and rapport for both parties; the need for both the coach and client to be able to disengage from a coach-client pairing that is not working; and being forthcoming with potential clients that the coaches themselves have ideal clients with whom they work, and sharing that profile honestly and openly.</p>	
<p>4. APPLYING GENERAL COACHING PRACTICES</p>	<p>a) Managing expectations about what coaching is or isn’t</p> <p>b) Providing structure and accountability</p> <p>c) Engaging in inquiry and reflection</p> <p>d) Sharing relevant information and literature during or after coaching</p>	<p>a) <i>Managing expectations about what coaching is or isn’t.</i> The focus is on bringing clarity and definition to the alignment between coaching methodology, relational expectations, and possible outcomes. Coaches do this by inquiring into the client’s previous experience in coaching; clarifying what coaching is, discussing difference between coaching vs. therapy and coaching vs consulting; explaining the effort required of clients; clarifying what can be expected to happen in coaching and being explicit about what can’t be guaranteed; sharing information about how referrals to therapy work to prepare the client if that comes up during coaching.</p> <p>b) <i>Providing structure and accountability.</i> The focus is on inviting clients to take and maintain self-directed ownership of their engagement: that is, coaching focus, meeting productivity, engagement productivity, and results. Coaches do this by clarifying client responsibilities in coaching, letting clients do the work, being clear with clients that between-session time is their game; regularly communicating overall process, current position and next steps; as necessary, being strict, firm, patient, punctual; making sure meetings happen consistently; asking clients to create their own personal support networks; following-up coaching with coach reflection and client homework; circling back to big moments from the previous</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inquiry - Sharing resources about coaching - Coach intake forms - Therapy referrals - Action plans - Client support networks - Client debriefs - Asking clients to define rewards for their progress - Sending follow-up notes after coaching - Client homework - Mirroring - Prioritizing time for reflection - Coach feedback - Sharing articles - Coach storytelling - Sharing new concepts, models, theories

Theme	Subtheme	Description	Example Practices
		<p>session; being an accountability partner; letting clients do the work; not giving deadlines to clients; and keeping in contact with their coaching sponsor.</p> <p>c) <i>Engaging in inquiry and reflection.</i> The focus is on generating rich and thought-provoking dialogue. Coaches do this by trying not to ask predictable questions; being curious, being inquisitive; leaving as much space for reflection as possible; privileging listening, considering client questions and options wholly and truthfully; framing things for clients to reflect on, slowing clients down for strategic and reflective time; finding ways to help clients take fresh perspective; and giving clients the opportunity to comment.</p> <p>d) <i>Sharing relevant information and literature during or after coaching.</i> The focus is on expanding the client's knowledge and engagement with a topic of interest to them. Coaches do this by sharing information on topics in which the client has expressed interest, on topics they find could be interesting for the client or relate to what they think the client is "missing." This includes sending "bite-sized," "learner appropriate" reading materials such as non-academic books or articles (e.g., Forbes, HBR); providing exposure to new concepts, models and theories (e.g., emotional work, development, how change works, leadership or executive agendas); mentoring or guidance, coach storytelling, sharing coach experience, and referring the client to a skill-based course.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Referring clients to skill-based courses - Including moments of mentoring - Sponsor check-ins
5. ENSURING A CONDUCTIVE HOLDING ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Building trust and intimacy b) Creating and protecting psychological safety c) Building chemistry and rapport d) Maintaining coach-client boundaries 	<p>a) <i>Building trust and intimacy.</i> The focus is on reducing the influence and distraction that doubt about the intentions of the coach or coaching can play in coaching. This is done to help clients feel and believe they are safe so they can be open as fully as possible to coaching, the relationship, process, new ways of thinking, and their own truth and authenticity, and so the coach can be authentic, give feedback, and be provocative with the client. Coaches do this by, <i>as related to trust</i>: showing they are on the client's "side"; showing respect;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inquiry - Sharing Coach ethics - Addressing confidentiality - Discussing emotions explicitly and up front - Creating a therapeutic alliance as client and ally

Theme	Subtheme	Description	Example Practices
		<p>acting as a solid sounding board, showing up as consistent and reliable; clarifying confidentiality; establishing that coaching is not only a commercial relationship, emphasizing that the coach does not have ulterior motives; affirming a client for getting a coach; using related listening, questioning, presence, and related competencies; <i>as related to intimacy</i>: creating a relaxed, almost informal setting; fostering a deeply personal relationship; meeting with the client face-to-face, for drinks, in person, even when it requires significant travel; making space for intimate moments to emerge.</p> <p>b) <i>Creating and protecting psychological safety.</i> The focus is on creating conditions for clients to show up as themselves, with their opinions, ideas, and needs and without fear of negative consequences for their feelings or self-esteem. Coaches do this by letting clients know in advance that emotions may come up, that the coach will never blame or shame them; ensuring clients feel respected, seen, heard, safe, confident, and secure; holding a client's goodness; letting the client know they are fully accepted and received, that it is ok to be vulnerable; openly and explicitly supporting client potential, the decisions and choices that are the best for them; giving clients permission to be who they are, showing compassion, empathy, positivity; asking for permission to ask a question, encouraging, calling out acts of courage, showing kindness; checking in on feelings of safety, affirming a client for seeking a coach, sharing that others experience similar things and there is nothing wrong with them; and normalizing client experiences and feelings as natural and universal.</p> <p>c) <i>Building chemistry and rapport.</i> The focus is on increasing the harmony and energy shared by the coach and client. Coaches do this by trying to create energetic exchanges, making eye contact, mirroring the client's body language, showing the client "we are not separate, but in this together," and celebrating a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asking about a client's life - Holding a face-to-face meeting - Clarifying and sharing coach's philosophy about client trust, intimacy, and safety - Asking for permission - Modeling Unconditional Positive Regard (Carl Rogers) - Using compassion, empathy, positivity - Energy practices - Mirroring body language - Eye contact - Boundary setting - Awareness of therapeutic phenomena in coaching

Theme	Subtheme	Description	Example Practices
		<p>client's milestones and meaningful moments.</p> <p>d) <i>Maintaining coach-client boundaries.</i> The focus is on ensuring the relationship and priorities remain clear and oriented to the professional context and process. Coaches do this by creating a clear demarcation between professional and personal lives, being aware of transference, making sure clients don't become dependent on them, not bringing in personal stories too often.</p>	

**Appendix F: Full Overview of the Data on the Demographic Groupings'
Differences and Similarities Across All Coaching Practice Categories**

DEMOGRAPHIC	COACHING PRACTICE CATEGORY					Fre- quency	% of Total Sample
	Levels of Reflection			Context and Conditions	Self-as- Instrument		
	Content	Process	Premise				
Gender							
Female	53.7%	48.6%	24.5%	51.6%	47.1%	15	71.4%
Male	46.3%	51.4%	75.5%	48.4%	52.9%	6	28.6%
Age Group							
20-24	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%
25-29	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%
30-34	10.6%	6.6%	0.00%	23.7%	27.3%	1	4.8%
35-39	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%
40-44	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%
45-49	13.1%	23.0%	6.3%	18.7%	12.1%	5	23.8%
50-54	18.6%	9.9%	5.2%	14.3%	24.9%	4	19.0%
55-59	18.1%	19.3%	39.8%	12.2%	16.8%	5	23.8%
60-64	19.5%	21.6%	17.4%	16.7%	5.2%	3	14.3%
70-74	20.1%	19.6%	31.4%	14.3%	13.7%	3	14.3%
75+	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%
Highest Level of Education (Degree)							
Associate	0.0%	13.9%	29.03%	17.2%	36.2%	1	0.0%
Bachelor's	30.5%	30.4%	10.9%	22.1%	16.7%	4	19.0%
Master's	25.8%	28.9%	29.0%	30.3%	17.6%	9	42.9%
Doctorate	32.0%	26.8%	31.1%	30.5%	29.4%	7	33.3%
Coaching Certification/Credential							
Academic	20.0%	24.2%	38.1%	26.8%	29.9%	9	42.9%
Professional	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	0	0.0%
ACC	22.8%	33.2%	0.00%	23.3%	17.3%	2	9.5%
PCC	24.6%	23.0%	42.9%	24.4%	39.4%	8	31.1%
MCC	32.5%	19.6%	19.0%	25.5%	13.4%	2	9.5%
Years of Active Coaching Experience							
0-5	22.6%	32.7%	3.6%	14.1%	8.4%	3	14.3%

DEMOGRAPHIC	COACHING PRACTICE CATEGORY					Fre- quency	% of Total Sample
	Levels of Reflection			Context and Conditions	Self-as- Instrument		
	Content	Process	Premise				
6-10	23.0%	17.6%	19.6%	19.7%	18.6%	5	23.8%
11-15	17.6%	15.6%	18.7%	20.3%	21.2%	7	33.3%
16-20	13.7%	13.6%	25.4%	27.5%	34.3%	3	14.3%
21-25	23.2%	20.4%	32.7%	18.3%	17.6%	3	14.3%
% Of Clients in Upper Management/Strategic Focus Roles							
0-20%	28.1%	41.3%	11.2%	7.5%	2.9%	1	4.8%
21-40%	14.1%	11.3%	25.3%	16.8%	18.6%	4	19.0%
41-60%	23.3%	12.7%	12.9%	19.5%	34.0%	7	33.3%
61-80%	19.1%	22.3%	24.4%	23.7%	11.0%	6	28.6%
81-100%	15.4%	12.4%	26.2%	32.4%	33.5%	3	14.3%

Appendix G: Guidelines for Coding Coaching Practices at

Three Levels of Reflection: Content, Process, and Premise

<p>Reflection <i>(general)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends - we <i>see through</i> the habitual way that we have interpreted the experience of everyday life in order to assess rationally the implicit claim of validity made by a previously unquestioned meaning scheme or perspective - the process of critically assessing the content, process, or premise(s) of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to an experience - more than simple awareness of our experiencing or of being aware of our awareness - situation is identified in relation to an actual experience - problem must somehow be analyzed in order for the task to be executable - previous knowledge is used in the specific situation and is questioned and criticized when necessary - there should be questioning or an interpretation of behavior - an assessment is made of what is being reflected upon - reflection as a cognitive and affective process that is evoked by a state of doubt in a particular situation, involving an analysis of that particular situation and leading to an addition to existing knowledge or even to a change in perspective, depending on the strength of the reflection process
<p>Content</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pertains to <i>what</i> one perceives, thinks, or feels, or how one acts when doing a task - reflection on a content of a problem - one does not reflect upon why the action taken works or how their own behavior developed - what effect the thought, feeling, or act may have should be discussed - there is no reflection on <i>why</i> the action taken works or how certain behavior developed - the dynamics by which our <i>beliefs – meaning schemes</i> – are changed, that is, become reinforced, elaborated, created, negated, confirmed, or identified as problems (problemized) and transformed
<p>Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an examination of <i>how</i> we perform these functions of perceiving, thinking, feeling, or acting - involves an assessment of our efficacy in performing them; assessment of how effective the performance is (why a certain approach works/does not work or how one’s own behaviour or attitude came about) - involves both reflection and critique of how we are perceiving, thinking, judging, feeling, and acting - process of problem-solving – that is, critically reviewing the grounds for assumption pertaining to the strategies and procedures of problem-solving - there should be a proposal for, or an interpretation of, behavior - the dynamics by which our <i>beliefs – meaning schemes</i> – are changed, that is, become reinforced, elaborated, created, negated, confirmed, or identified as problems (problemized) and transformed
<p>Premise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - involves our becoming aware of <i>why</i> we perceive, think, feel, or act as we do

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - premise reflection relates to why one apprehends, thinks, feels, or acts the way one does and the consequences of that existing knowledge sets the framework for how one acts in different situations - involves the process of “theoretical reflectivity” that may cause us to become critical of epistemic, social, or psychological presuppositions - critique of presuppositions (which postulate a pre-existing condition upon which subsequent reasoning rests) - involves awareness and critique of the reasons way we have done so - it must involve a hiatus in which a problem becomes redefined so that action may be redirected - the dynamic by which our <i>belief systems – meaning perspectives</i> – become transformed; leads to more fully developed meaning perspectives, that is, meaning perspectives that are more inclusive, discriminating, permeable (open), and integrative of experience - this should include an analysis of the whole situation/problem; “what” and “how” should be put into context - consequences should be considered so that they can be included in a deeper understanding or reinterpretation of the problem - alternative methods should also be considered, often leading to questioning of prejudice based on a theoretical reasoning. This could lead to a reinterpretation of the situation so that the starting point is different the next time the same kind of problem occurs, and thus the action becomes different. - this can be very hard to identify in written essays; the behavior must be controlled the next time it happens - includes an analysis of the whole situation/problem - consequences should be considered and included in a deeper understanding or reinterpretation of the problem; alternative methods should be considered as well - the reinterpretation of a situation can lead to a different starting point the next time the same kind of problem occurs, resulting in different/’new’ behaviour
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Source: Dewey, 1933 p. 9; Mezirow, 1991, pp. 99-117; Wallman et al., 2008, Appendix 1, p. 9; Oosterbaan et al. (2010); Basseches, 1984, p. 22.

**Appendix H: Distribution of the Form of Mind Groupings
by Years of Active Coaching Experience**

Form of Mind (SOI score)	3-5 N=3	6-10 N=5	11-15 N=7	16-20 N=3	21-25 N=3
Dominant Socializing: Socializing transitioning <i>toward</i> a Self-authoring (3/4)	66.67%	40.00%	42.86%	0.00%	0.00%
Dominant Self-authoring: Self-authoring transitioning <i>away from</i> Socializing (4/3 or 4(3))	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	100.00%	100.00%
Fully Self-authoring (4)	33.33%	60.00%	42.86%	0.00%	0.00%

**Appendix I: Distribution of the Form of Mind Groupings by International
Coach Certification (ICF) and Related ICF Membership**

Form of Mind (SOI score)	ACC	MCC	PCC
Dominant Socializing: Socializing transitioning <i>toward</i> a Self-authoring (3/4)	66.67%	40.00%	42.86%
Dominant Self-authoring: Self-authoring transitioning <i>away from</i> Socializing (4/3 or 4(3))	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%
Fully Self-authoring (4)	33.33%	60.00%	42.86%

Appendix J: Comprehensive Overview of

Self-as-Instrument Coaching Practices

Theme	Subtheme	Description	Example Practices
1. MEETING MY OWN NEEDS SO MY BEST SELF CAN EMERGE FOR CLIENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Setting myself up for success before coaching b) Being present during coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Setting Myself Up for Success Before Coaching.</i> The focus is on how coaches have learned to organize themselves, the meeting context, and their days to make sure they are and can remain at their best during client meetings. Coaches are doing this by organizing meeting settings and schedules that work for them; scheduling space between client meetings (e.g., not having back-to-back coaching meetings) to give themselves breaks, thinking about where to sit, what to have near them; preparing for the meeting; ensuring decompression time after the meeting; eating healthfully and exercising regularly, maintaining spiritual practices, and ensuring personal quiet time. b) <i>Being Present During Coaching.</i> The focus is on achieving and maintaining ideal full attention and presence levels. Coaches do this by centering, connecting to their body, opening their minds, priming themselves for the values and feelings they want to be able to access in the moment, and in showing up for the client. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scheduling client meetings to meet coach preferences, needs, comfort, coach prep, paying attention to mental and physical fitness, making time daily for quiet, yoga, or spiritual practices - Grounding practices, centering practices, meditation, breathing exercises, gratitude, and prayer lists
2. PAYING ATTENTION TO DEVELOPING MYSELF AS AN “INSTRUMENT”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Improving myself as an “instrument” b) Self-monitoring my process in coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Improving Myself as an “Instrument.”</i> The focus is on seeking and receiving the different kinds of support and feedback they need for their development as individuals, professionals, and business owners. Coaches do this by engaging collegial, therapeutic, supervisory, and sounding board support; by continually working on their own transformative insights. They are becoming members of a professional practice community, getting a business coach, getting feedback, focusing on developing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Therapy, coaching, coach supervision, joining a professional practice community, publishing, professional education, client feedback - Coach reflection,

		<p>greater objectivity, and are learning about practices for coaching presence. They also pay attention to revisiting coach competencies and professional practices from coaching frameworks, writing articles about coaching, increasing awareness about (counter) transference and projection in coaching, and are overall focused on investing in developing themselves.</p> <p>b) Self-Monitoring My Process in Coaching. The focus is on engaging a process of active coach reflexivity in coaching. Coaches are doing this by reflecting on what they would do differently next time, by working out what led them to ask a specific question, asking themselves what enabled the most constraint in themselves, and assessing how they are making decisions during coaching.</p>	<p>coach self-evaluation</p>
<p>3. BRINGING MY WHOLE SELF INTO COACHING</p>	<p>a) Being fully authentic</p> <p>b) Trusting my gut instinct and intuition</p> <p>c) Leveraging what is evoked in me (emotional, somatic) as a source of info</p>	<p>a) Being Fully Authentic. The focus is on being true to one's personality, values, and spirit when bringing the self into coaching. Coaches do this by telling personal stories, not pretending they know more than they do, showing vulnerability, being genuine, and being themselves. Coaches use their own personal experience in addition to what they've learned, giving themselves permission to engage in dialogue that is richer, full of imagination, fuller of feeling.</p> <p>b) Trusting My Gut Instinct and Intuition. The focus is on how a coach leverages inner understanding in coaching. Coaches do this by not coaching solely from models, using intuition to be choiceful about models, stepping outside of a traditional coach role to help a client when necessary, making decisions based on their gut and intuition, and trusting whatever they are feeling and bringing it into the sessions.</p> <p>c) Leveraging What Is Evoked in Me (Emotional, Somatic) As A Source of Info. In these sets of self</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coach awareness, coach vulnerability, sharing coach experience - Coach awareness, sharing coach experience - Somatic practices, energy practices, emotional practices, psychological practices, spiritual practices

		<p>as instrument practices, coaches described what they do to make use of the sensations and experiences being evoked in them in coaching. The focus is on what coaches do to notice and share with clients what is triggered in them by bringing it into coaching as feedback and input. Coaches do this by noticing how communications land on them, paying attention to what gets evoked in them and recognizing their feelings. They are being conscious in the moment of their responses to the client and are paying attention to energetic boundaries with the client. Coaches are noticing their own somatic responses/what they feel in their body; they are noticing their emotional, psychological, and spiritual levels; and are trying to tap into a client's intensity, processing it, and bringing it back.</p>	
<p>4. MANAGING MY LIMITATIONS AND BLIND SPOTS</p>	<p>a) Recognizing and admitting the influence of my blind spots b) Managing my ego and emotions</p>	<p>a) <i>Recognizing and Admitting the Influence of My Blind Spots.</i> The focus here is on the ways in which coaches increase awareness and manage their own non-constructive tendencies in the thinking, feeling, and behavior that gets in the way of their open-mindedness and therefore do not serve the client's process. Coaches do this by being willing to admit their blind spots and limitations or not using models and tools the coach doesn't feel confident about. They do not engage in clients' emotional issues when the coaches are still on the learning curve themselves. Coaches try focusing on listening instead of jumping to conclusions; they try being aware of their assumptions and beliefs and their influence; they are making sure to remain objective when a client has different or repulsive values to the coach. Coaches are priming themselves before coaching by thinking about love, care, and best intentions for a client. They work on staying non-judgmental and neutral, walking alongside the client, being aware of</p>	<p>- Coach awareness, coach vulnerability, sharing coach experience - Coach awareness, coach vulnerability, sharing coach experience</p>

		<p>parking, and not interjecting biases. They pay attention to not comparing one client and another, monitoring perceptions around social or cultural intelligence. They try to take special care not to have a goal for coaching and to stay curious about what will be revealed.</p> <p>b) Managing My Ego and Emotions. The focus is on what coaches do to resist giving into negative self-esteem triggers and self-importance that surface in coaching. Coaches do this by trying not to dominate the client, sharing power, and being attentive to their inner voice and ego. Coaches are trying not to be the hero of the conversation and make sure they don't become personally vested in the outcome. They try not to push themselves too hard when coaching is stalling, and the client pays. They practice humility, naming, and sharing feelings of nervousness before challenging a client. Coaches are trying to let go of things out of their control; are paying attention to the energy they show up with; are aware of their emotional triggers or personal reactions when the client doesn't "get it," and engage in coaching. They work to shift/get up and move around if they need to manage their own "energetic" issues.</p>	
5. MANAGING MY DISCOMFORT	<p>a) Managing to stay silent</p> <p>b) Having trust and confidence in myself in navigating the unknown</p> <p>c) Not fighting a client's intensity or emotion</p>	<p>a) Managing to Stay Silent. The focus is on being able to give clients the time and space they need to think. Coaches are doing this by physically reminding themselves to be silent (e.g., setting a timer, sitting on their hands, making a posted note to themselves); by admitting it is the hardest part of coaching for them; by reminding themselves of the importance of silence for being in tune with the client, and by realizing that they have to be able to be ok in silence.</p> <p>b) Having Trust and Confidence in Myself in Navigating the Unknown. The focus is on growing confidence around "not</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-inquiry, leaving oneself physical reminders - Dealing with ambiguity, developing confidence, being flexible - Silence, being open and inviting of emotions and energy, receiving client energy, coach management of

		<p>knowing” as a normal and productive tension in coaching that frees them to focus more spaciously on the client’s (ways of) knowing. Coaches are doing this by recognizing that they will misunderstand at least 50% of what is happening, by recognizing the panic they feel when they don’t have a question pool to draw from to be able to ask the right question in the moment. They are working on developing a willingness not to know, to feel confident about stepping away from tools, and towards having an ability to support clients more flexibly. They focus on their willingness to take risks with the client, experiment, trust themselves more in this process, and tell themselves that it is a good thing that the client will surprise the coach.</p>	<p>own energy and resonance</p>
<p>6. TAKING MY EXPECTATIONS AND AGENDA OFF THE TABLE</p>	<p>a) Staying curious b) Keeping my expectations and advice for the client to myself</p>	<p>a) <i>Staying Curious.</i> The focus is on prioritizing open inquiry and learning as guidelines for coaching. Coaches do this by not making assumptions; by recognizing, prioritizing, and managing the presence and value of their curiosity in an emergent client process.</p> <p>b) <i>Keeping My Expectations and Advice for The Client to Myself.</i> In this theme, coaches described their struggle to avoid influencing the client agenda. They are working on staying neutral and supportive of the client’s process, priorities, pace, and solutions in line with how they want to resolve their challenges and achieve their goals. Coaches do this by trying to allow coaching to unfold; taking time to check in with clients for cues about resonance; resisting the urge to intervene when they see a client stumbling. They try to manage their boredom, disappointment, impatience, preconceived notions, their wish to “fix” the client, and the idea that coaches ideas, passions, beliefs, and feelings that the clients are missing are</p>	<p>- Self-inquiry, listening, meeting prep, practicing presence - Self-inquiry</p>

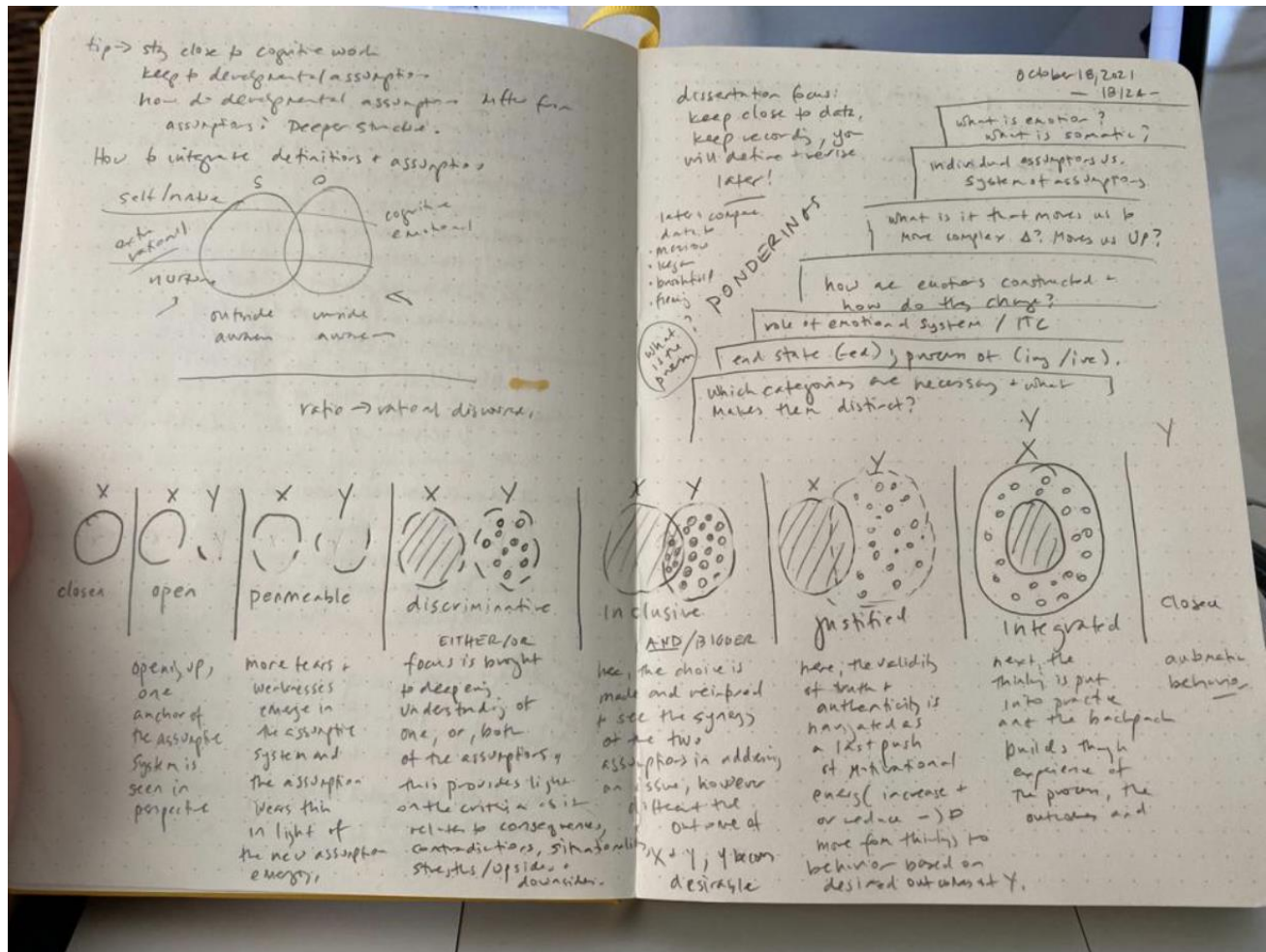
		opportunities that should be pursued in coaching.	
7. MAKING SURE NOT TO COLLUDE		a) <i>Making sure not to collude.</i> The focus is on providing a client with attention for the less conscious but important issues that should not be avoided but, in fact, be discussed and explored. Coaches do this by admitting to themselves they sense collusion, by getting supervision, and by knowing when to step away from a client engagement. They work on managing their admiration for clients and not getting seduced by the client's progress and standing. Coaches focus on the understanding that the coach influences the client, and the client influences the coach. They tell the client they feel nervous upfront instead of not staying explicit about collusion and are asking themselves if they are withholding.	c) Self-inquiry, supervision, knowing when to step away from a client engagement, deciding to challenge a client

Appendix K: The Researcher's Self-Reflective Journal Example –

Understanding Theoretical Lenses

Example 1.

Initial reflections on the process of adult development through the lenses of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000) and constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994), their similarities, differences, and synergies (October 2021).



Example 2.

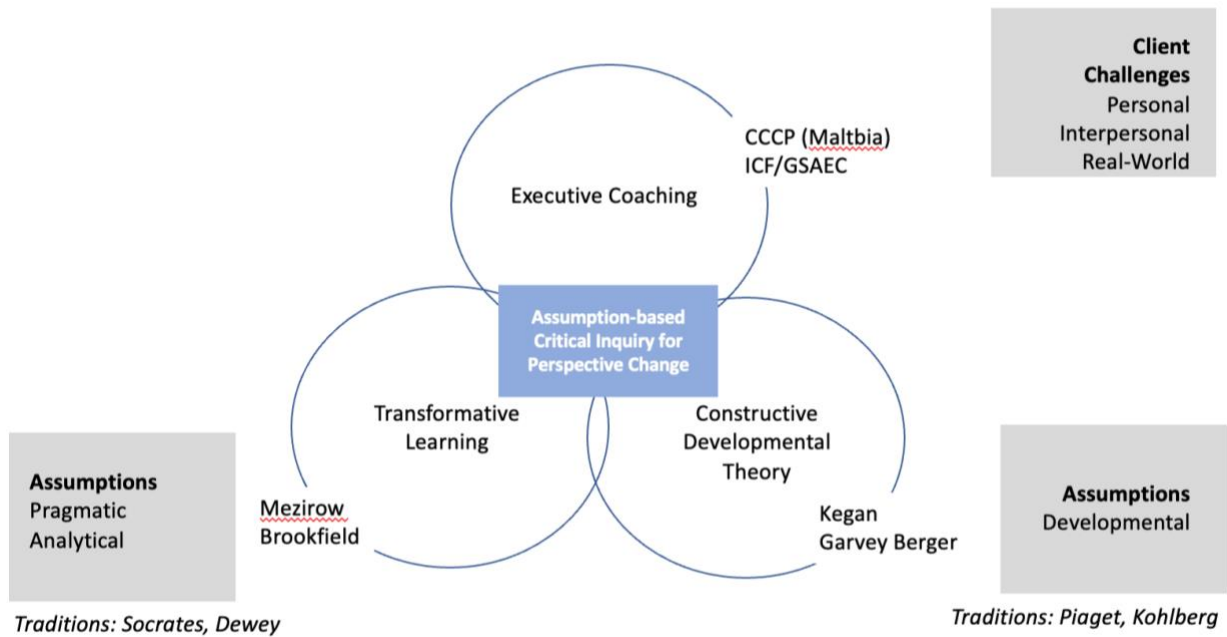
An example of initial reflections on perspectives from various thinkers in the fields of transformative learning and adult development who mention various assumption-based learning practices (e.g., Mezirow, Kegan, Brookfield) for the purposes of deepening my understanding of the application of the lenses I was exploring. (February 2021).

Focus	Socrates	Mezirow/ Brookfield	Kegan/ Garvey Berger
Process	Cognitive, Ethical	Cognitive Critical	Cognitive Psychosocial
Content	Ethical narrative		
Structure (Direct)			
<i>Voiced narrative of the situation leading to personal wish to change</i>		x	x
<i>Assumption Analysis (awareness and definition, recognition of beliefs)</i>		x	x
<i>Assess grounds: Ask for evidence, probe for accuracy and validity</i>	x	x	x
<i>Implications and Complications</i>	x	x	x
<i>Observing ourselves in relation to the assumption</i>		x	x
<i>Biography of an assumption</i>	x	x	x
<i>Contextual Awareness, i.e., "What's Happening"</i>		x	x
<i>Highlight Contradictions</i>	x	x	x
<i>Look for exceptions</i>	x	x	x
<i>Clarify criteria of importance</i>		x	x
<i>Uncovering and analyzing power relations</i>		x	
<i>Uncovering and analyzing paradigmatic hegemonic assumptions</i>		x	
<i>Uncovering and analyzing prescriptive assumptions</i>		x	x
<i>Uncovering and analyzing causal assumptions</i>	x	x	x
<i>Involve intersubjective understanding, perspective-taking</i>	x	x	x
<i>Outline of hidden/ competing commitments</i>			x
<i>Deconstruction of an Idea</i>	x	x	x
<i>Construction of a new/ alternative idea, Exploring and imagining alternatives</i>	x	x	x
<i>Reflective Skepticism (on others)</i>	x	x	
<i>Design a safe, modest test of the assumption</i>		x	x
<i>Take informed action; agency</i>		x	x
Related Mechanisms (Indirect) – good norms of coaching			
<i>Developing authenticity and voice, including self-reflection exercises and assessments</i>		x	x
<i>Active Facilitation of Holding Environment</i>		x	x
<i>Accountability of goal</i>		x	x
<i>Providing a 'saving grace' third voices (mentors, coaches, books, knowledge) to create support</i>		x	x
<i>Offering non-dialectical mechanisms for continued learning (journaling, meditation, performance arts)</i>		x	x

Appendix L: The Researcher's Self-Reflective Journal Example – The Evolution of the Conceptual Framework

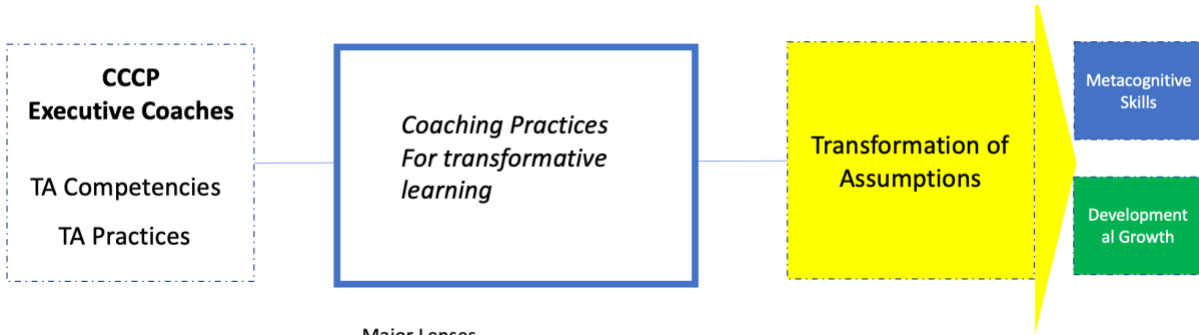
Example 1.

Initial reflections on the variables of interest and toward the development of the conceptual framework (May 2018).



Example 2.

Further evolution of the conceptual framework; moving toward the process perspective on coaching practices with developmental impact (September 2020).



Major Lenses

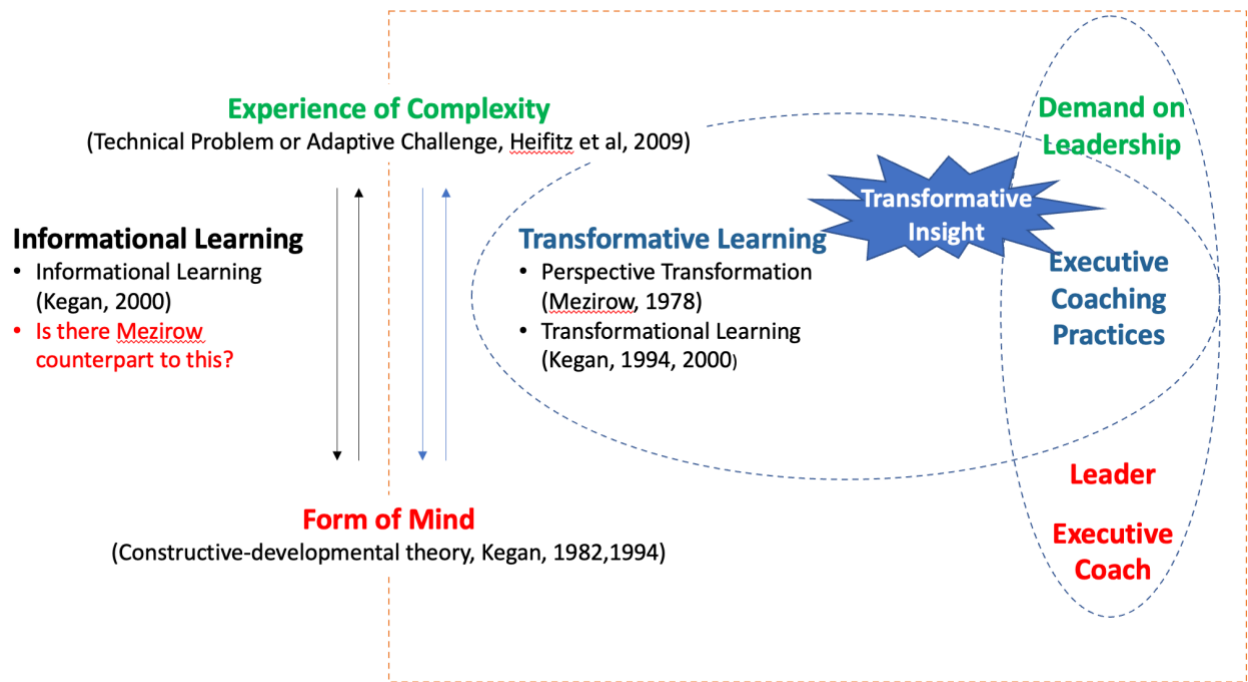
1. Critical Reflection – Brookfield
2. ITC – Kegan
3. Double Loop – Argyris

Other interesting lenses in the field

- ORID/Stanfield
- David Rock?
- Growth Mindset

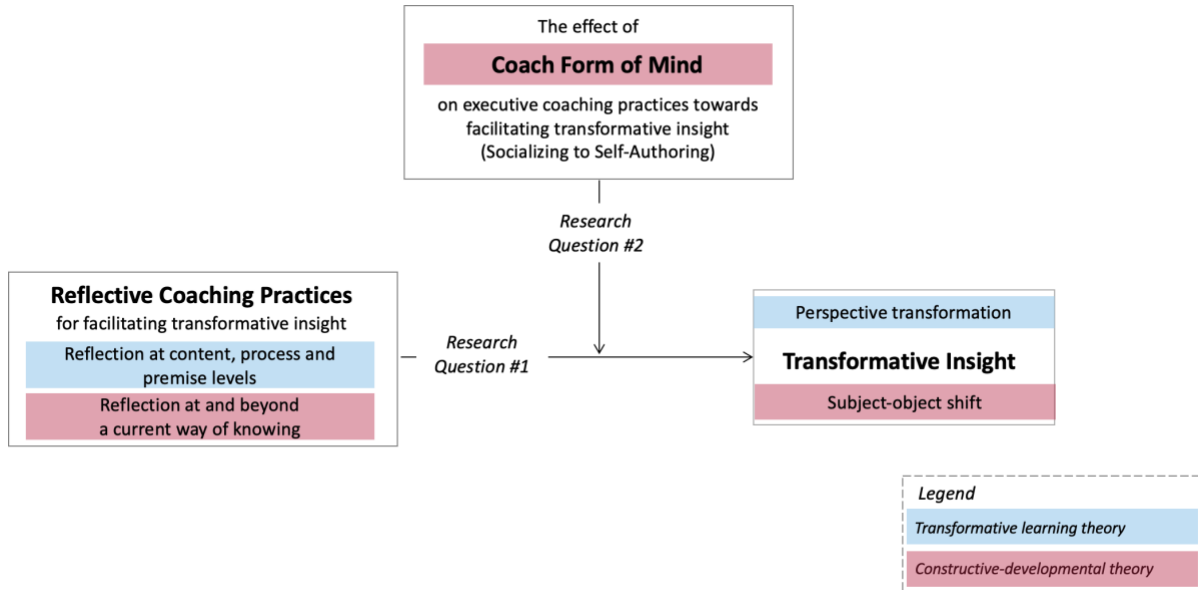
Example 3.

Further evolution of the conceptual framework; narrowing in on the theoretical lenses and their synergies for understanding and depicting the dynamic of facilitating transformative learning with developmental impact (February 2021).



Example 4.

The final version of the conceptual framework driving the research study (December 2022).



Appendix M: The Researcher's Self-Reflective Journal Example –

Understanding Levels of Reflection in the Process of Data Collection, Analysis, and Coding

Example 1.

Deepening my initial reflections on understanding of the three levels of reflection (i.e., content, process, premise) and the distinction between reflective and non-reflective thinking (i.e., introspection, habitual action, thoughtful action) based on various theoretical sources (e.g., Mezirow, Cranton) (April 2021).

Reflection Interpret the meaning of an experience

→ Use words → meaning, silences, house (supposition) knowledge, beliefs, assumptions, feelings, values

+ note source

+ Reflective or Reflective learning?

→ on premise... For = DEVELOPMENT adaptive complex

Valid Test

REFLECTIVE

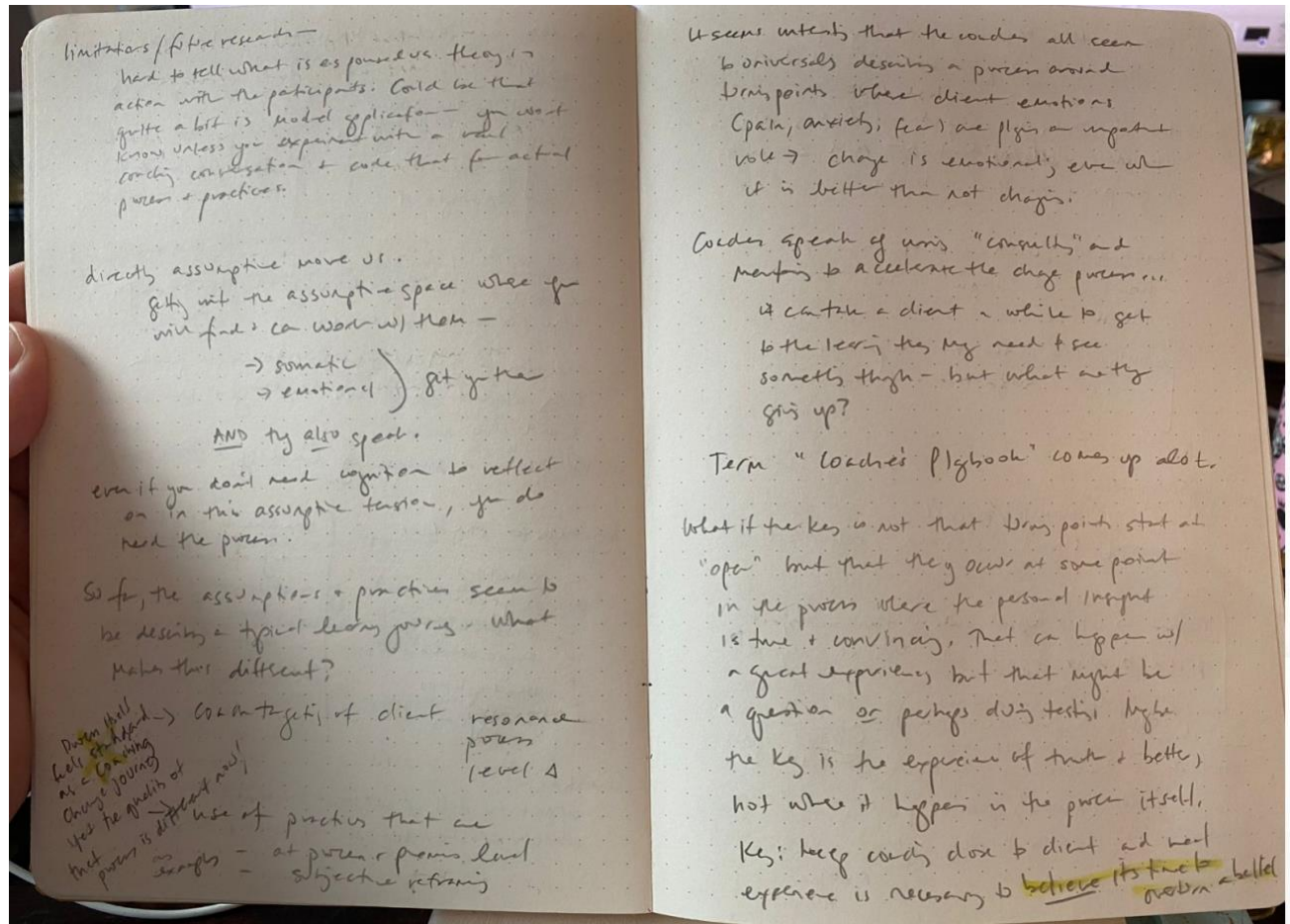
NON-REFLECTIVE

	YES	NOT / GAPS	CRANTON	HALGREN
P₁ Problem posing, -values - why one thinks/feels/operates - consequences - recognizing assumptions & beliefs		relationship to justice?		
P₂ Problem solving - function of posing, thinking/feeling etc. - why the actor - words / doesn't work - strategies			How did this come to be?	
C Problem solving - content or descriptor of problem - questions & interpretation - on instrumental knowledge			What happened here? What's the problem?	
I Thought of oneself / ourselves Thought - feelings & perceptions that Recognition & awareness of feelings		no comparison between tasks no explicit experience no explicit - to - for validity no thought & feelings + why the "affective process" lead.		
TA draws on existing knowledge "application of theory" pre-existing meaning scheme Knowledge action?		questions or interpretation of existing no thought of consequences or effectiveness no appraisal or evaluation "cognitive process" TACIT KNOWLEDGE HERE		
HA Unconscious act learn, subnate				

perspective
Trust
understanding
relationship

Example 2.

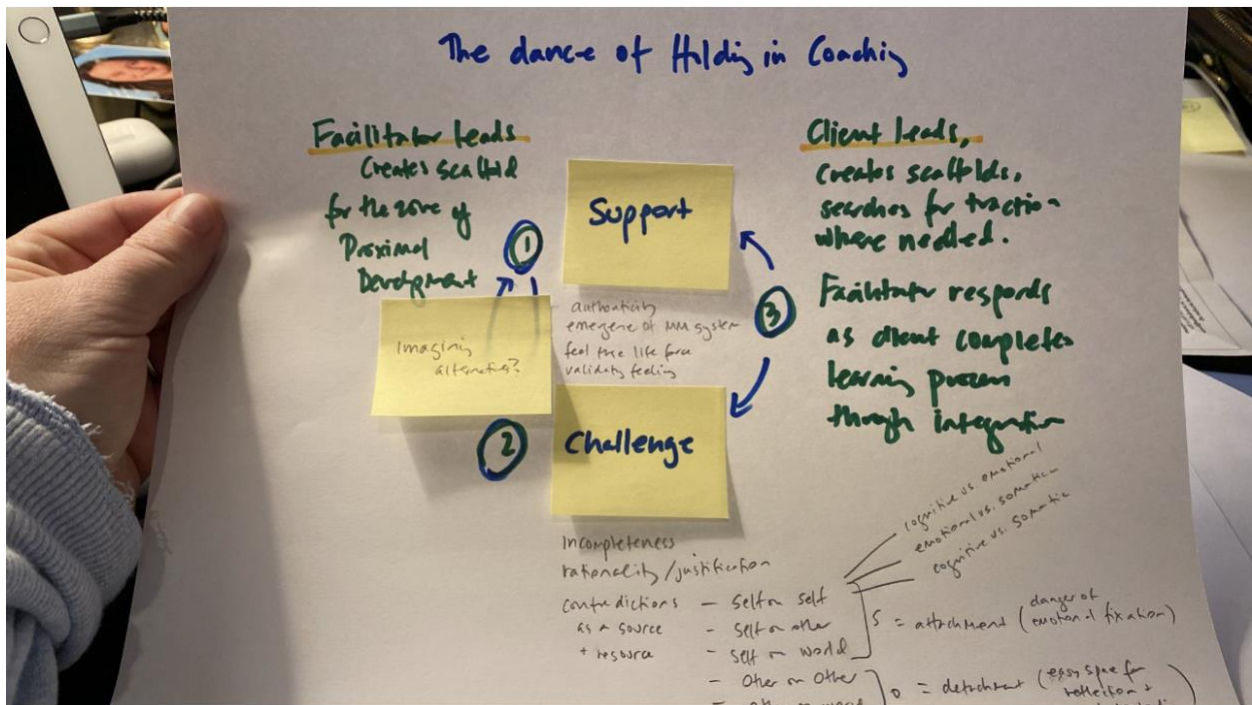
Evolving reflections on emergent patterns in coaching practices that participants discussed during their semi-structured interviews (September 2020).



Appendix N: The Researcher's Self-Reflective Journal Example – The Evolution of Data Synthesis

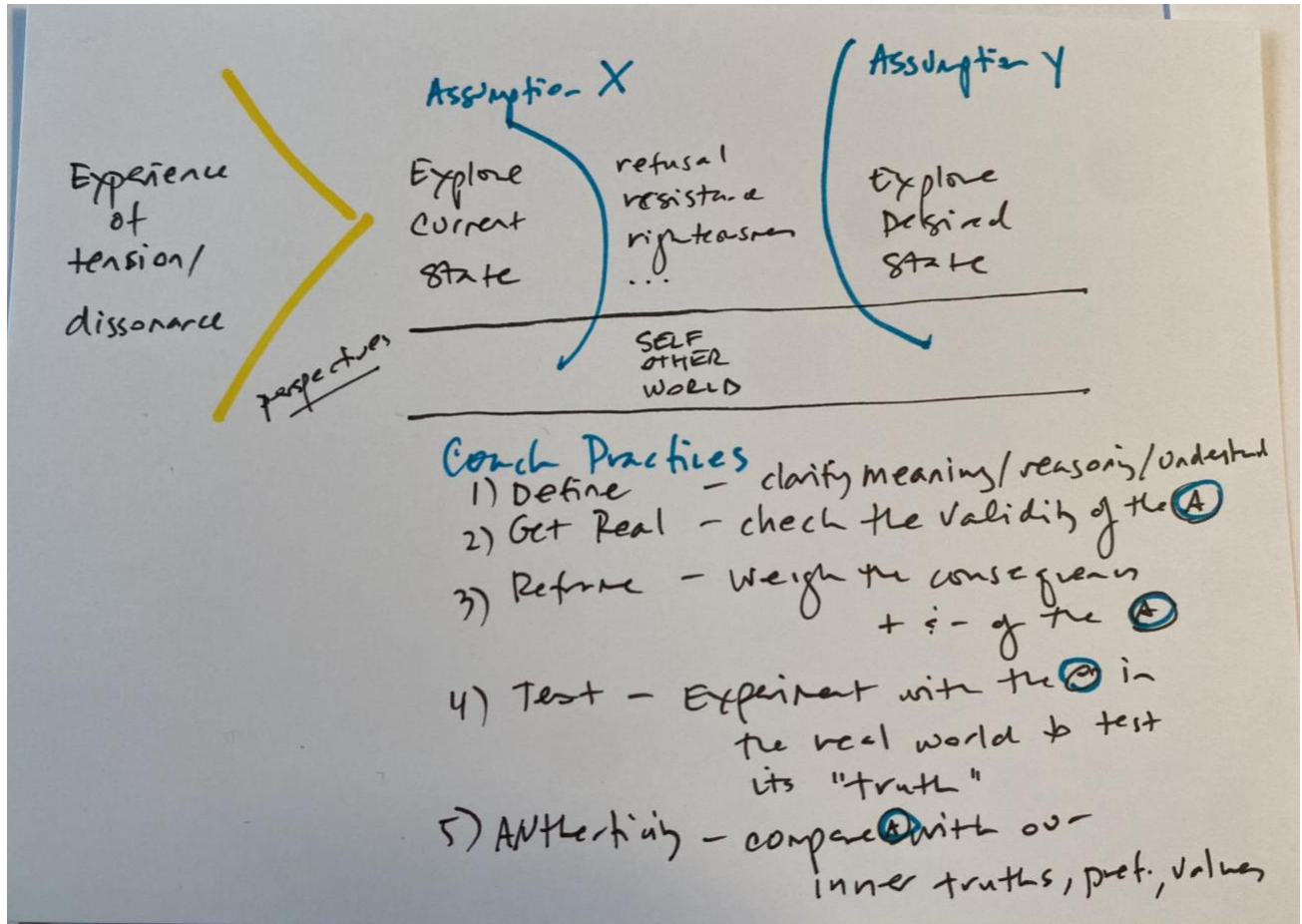
Example 1.

Initial reflections on the dynamics showing up in the data on practices for facilitating transformative insight specifically focused on support and challenge (October 2021).



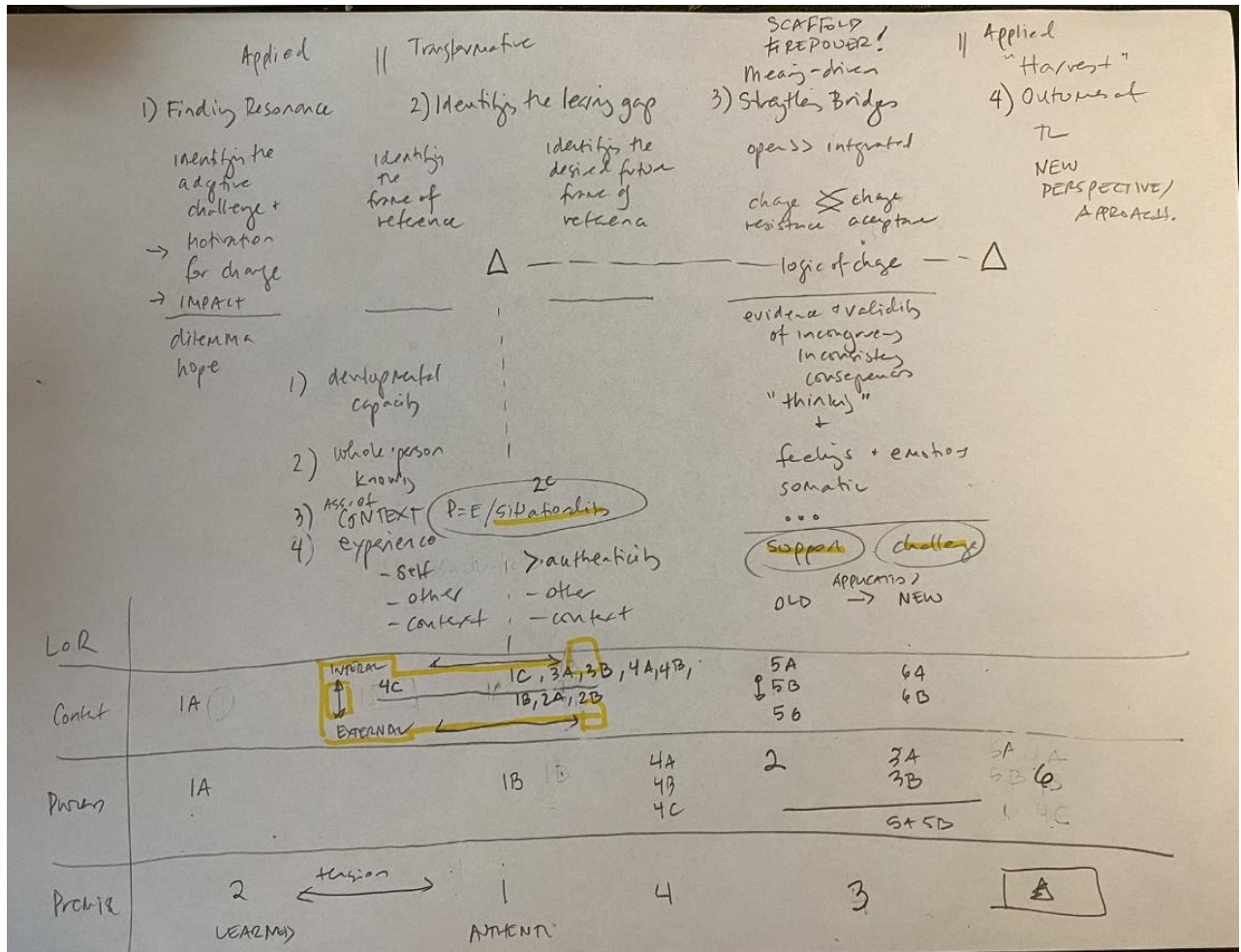
Example 2.

Initial brainstorming and data synthesis of coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight (November 2022).



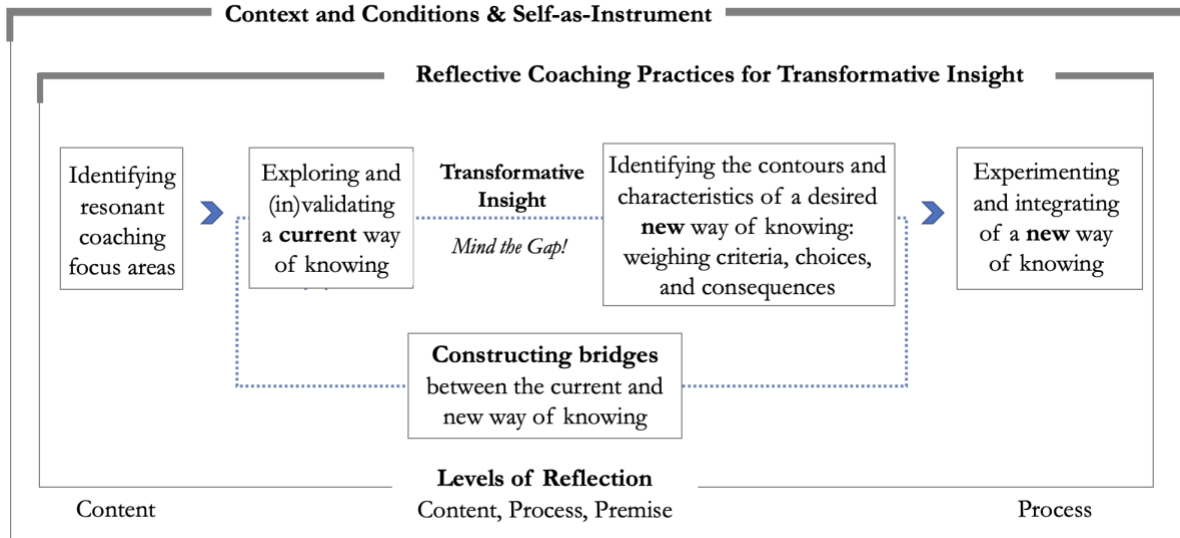
Example 3.

Evolution of thinking about a system of coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight as sketched during the process of data analysis and synthesis (February 2023).



Example 4.

The final model of coaching practices for facilitating transformative insight (March 2023).



Appendix O: The Researcher’s Self-Reflective Journal Example –

Understanding the Term Coach “Practices” in Literature

Example 1.

The process of deepening my understanding of the meaning behind the concept of “practice” by exploring and reflecting on various definitions and related terms in the learning and development literature in response to the lack of clarity behind these terms, their categorization, and their use (February 2023).

Coach Practices: Learning Terms & Definitions (for Learning Design)		
WHY? Philosophies, Contextual Influences, Clarifies form and structure, multi-directional holding environments, guidelines		
Constructivist or Approach	- Approach	<p>According to Hofler (1983), the term “approach” is defined as the basic philosophy or belief concerning a given subject matter. It is a way or direction used to address a problem based on a set of assumptions. These assumptions can often influence the way in which practitioners orient themselves toward all aspects of their work (Hofler 1983). In other words, the approach plays a big role in determining how a problem would be solved. These assumptions originate from a collection of theories, concepts, and working ideas, and they serve as a practitioner’s outlook toward addressing their problem.</p> <p>Like framework, perhaps: <i>They exist to provide structure and direction on a preferred way to do something without being too detailed or rigid. In essence, frameworks provide guidelines.</i></p> <p>- Assumptions</p>
Developmental Pedagogies Developmental Pedagogies of Transformative Learning	Pedagogies: - Adult Learning, Transformative learning - Developmental	<p>Pedagogy, most commonly understood as the approach to teaching, is the theory and practice of learning and how this process influences and is influenced by the social, political, and psychological development of learners. Pedagogy is often described as the act of teaching.^[2] The pedagogy adopted by teachers shapes their actions, judgments, and teaching strategies by taking into consideration theories of learning, understanding of students and their needs, and the backgrounds and interests of individual students.^{[3][4]} Its aims may range from furthering liberal education (the general development of human potential) to the narrower specifics of vocational education (the imparting and acquisition of specific skills). Conventional Western pedagogies view the teacher as a knowledge holder and the student as the recipient of knowledge (described by Paulo Freire as “banking methods”^[5]), but theories of pedagogy increasingly identify the student as an agent and the teacher as a facilitator.</p> <p>- Application of the approach and meaning it brings</p>
Fields	Coaching, therapy, mentoring, a	
Pre-learning	-	
Teaching strategies	- Feedback - Interleaving	Teaching strategies refer to the methods, techniques, procedures, and processes that a teacher uses during instruction. It is generally recognized

Coach strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homework? - Flipped classroom? - Reading? 	<p>that teaching strategies are multidimensional, and their effectiveness depends on the context in which they are applied. There is no single strategy that can guarantee better student outcomes; however, research has highlighted a number of practices that enable learning among students (Hattie, 2009; Marzano et al., 2001; Wayne and Young, 2003). The effect of these strategies is influenced by how the teacher adapts and applies the right strategy to deal with the target group and help students learn the desired course content and achieve the intended learning outcomes. The intended learning outcomes should guide which approach best suits the achievement of those outcomes.</p> <p>Deliberate effort at guiding learning and development based on teacher-defined areas of meaning and their input and output: Something you plan to do beforehand, happens by choice instead of chance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informational? Instrumental, Best Practices? - Contextual/situational? - Teacher-directed
Learning	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflective, focused especially on CR &CRSA - Scaffolded - Targeting adaptive challenges - Supporting authenticity - Ensuring safety
Instructive strategies for adaptive challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Socratic method - Role-playing - Group discussion - 1:1 dialogue 	<p>Instructive strategies are governed by the pupil's background knowledge and experience, situation and environment, as well as learning goals set by the student and teacher. One example would be the Socratic method.[6]...these become learning strategies when a learner uses them independently to meet their own goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergent and synergistic forms, in response to - Spacious, can be directed in different directions or forms - Learning curriculum emerges from the client or interaction - Teacher facilitated - For adaptive challenges - Specific context and conditions for a form of learning and giving it intent, balance (support & challenge), and directionality
/Activities + combination of form + outcome (for Group Discussion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talking circles - Brainstorming - ITC - Dialectical 	Type of instructive strategy, applications of these in new procedures
Learning Transfer		
Structural strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hugging - Bridging 	<p>There are structural techniques that can aid learning transfer in the classroom. These structural strategies include hugging and bridging.[24] Hugging uses the technique of simulating an activity to encourage reflexive learning. An example of the hugging strategy is when a student practices teaching a lesson or when a student role-plays with another student. These examples encourage critical thinking that engages the student and helps them understand what they are learning—one of the goals of transfer of learning[24] and desirable difficulties.</p> <p>Bridging is when instruction encourages thinking abstractly by helping to identify connections between ideas and analyze those connections. An example is when a teacher lets the student analyze their past test results and the way they got those results. This includes an amount of study time</p>

		and study strategies. Looking at their past study strategies can help them come up with strategies to improve performance. These are some of the ideas important to successful to hugging and bridging practices.
Method	How to do ITC	Method is a particular way of doing something (could be a strategy or activity), input to an activity A definition of method is a “particular form of procedure for accomplishing or approaching something, especially a systematic or established one” or “orderliness of thought or behavior; systematic planning or action.” You are not confined to an established method of doing or thinking, although in many areas of life, you can be faced with a “we don’t do things that way.” This will come up when you are a worker bee. In the scientific community, the “scientific method” is used as a guide to help present an idea and its supporting evidence in a manner that has been accepted by the general community.
Process		Process is the step-wise actions involved in implementing the method. So, the process will be different when we carry out a particular job with a different method
Procedure		A procedure is an established method of doing something. A procedure usually involves steps and can be either simple or complex. Simple procedures have a single set of linear steps. Complex procedures have many decision points. These are points throughout the procedure where a learner has to decide which situations exist. Each decision leads to a different path or branch.
S-O Move		Mini directionality of process
S-O Intent	Open, Permeable	
Resources		
Technique	Inquiry	A technique is a way of executing a process that someone experienced in a field learns over time, “tricks of the trade,” as it were. A technique is a specific method or way of doing something, often involving a particular skill or ability. Techniques can be used as part of a process.
Tool	Assessment Worksheet Templates	Resources used for pedagogical purposes that facilitate learning. Among these tools are emphasized communication and assessment tools.
NO		
Intervention		The definition of intervention in the Merriam-Webster dictionary is <i>The act or fact of taking action about something in order to have an effect on its outcome.</i> The definition of intervention in Oxford Languages is <i>Action taken to improve a situation, especially a medical disorder</i>

Appendix P: The Researcher's Self-Reflective Journal Example – Reflection on My Assumptions Through Conversation

Example 1.

An excerpt from a recorded interview-like conversation with a work colleague conducted to allow for my emergent and explicit reflection on my research process as I was finalizing the discussion chapter, including the perspective on how my assumptions changed during the research process (May 2023).

Ljerka London:

Could you talk about the kind of the assumptions you had going in the process of doing this study and in what ways maybe those assumptions changed or shifted as you were going through this process and in the end, what you learned through this investigation?

Jessica Halgren:

Ah, just a second. Well, I for sure was not aware of the role of the various domains of knowing, you know, I have personally privileged the cognitive in a very universal way my whole life. So, I think one of the assumptions I was going into was that different ways of knowing would be cognitive and that this was cognitive work. I really, at the outset, did not understand these other ways of knowing. And it has opened up such incredibly powerful spaces in this work and also in me. So, I would say one of the assumptions is just how diverse and important each of these ways of knowing are. And that when we, you know, privilege the cognitive, we lose so much of who we are and so I think that is really one of the assumptions I had going into the work was that I, I didn't think of as much about other theories. If I would read Dirkx, I'd think, well, that's interesting. Yeah, that makes sense!

Another assumption that I had going in was that it would be, um, more of a discreet process of reflection. Uh, I was very surprised, and of course, it's how I looked at the data, but just how important coaches were finding the whole process of using various reflective practices, because I would've described it as that as well. I would've said those things as well. However, um, um, the degree to which coaches were explicit about and kept talking about reflective practices really came out in the data... It's just really natural, you know? So, uh, I thought I would be going in looking for a transformative learning process, and I came out with a system.

What's another assumption going in? You know, I think I was very, I thought it was very interesting to take kind of the educational versus the psychological perspective over time. And when I went into it, I thought that the constructive-developmental theory would

be more educationally oriented, and it, it really is a psychological theory within the context of adult development and adult education, that is being valued very much. But, you know, in many ways, it seems to people perhaps to be disconnected, for example, if you talk about adult development with somebody in the field of coaching, they say, well, that's, adult development doesn't have anything to do with our work in coaching. Like, we focus on business problems. And, you know, that doesn't, that's like, that's some psychological stuff, right? So, um, I, I did not, you know, quite understand the approach that Kegan could be taking in that transformative learning system and how distinct and important it was. Uh, and I was definitely open to it, but I think that a lot of my understanding of just the wrestling between cognitive and emotion in coaching really came out at the beginning.

And another assumption was I would've thought it would've been easier to prepare a system around the change of frames of reference because who wouldn't wanna learn <laugh>? You know, like, who wouldn't wanna develop? Like, that's like, of course. So the reality of how hard this process is I think a fourth assumption of mine that has fundamentally changed since I started this work.