Microanalysis of the coaching process: developing an instrument and comparing typical sessions by different coaches

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Main intention of the project

Create an instrument for:

- Comparing and contrasting different coaching genres and traditions
- Other research purposes
- Coach training
- Supervision
- Continuing professional development of coaches

Research objectives:

- **To develop an instrument that would allow description and measurement of differences and similarities between various approaches by evaluating the elements of a coaching session**

- **To test this instrument**

- **In testing the instrument to see what it could tell us about the nature of coaching process at a level of a coaching session.**

Decisions that we made

- **Use for both purposes: consideration of subjective views and identification of actual processes**

- **Whole session - differently from de Haan et al (2010) critical moments**

- **Both, coach and client contribution – differently from Greif et al (2010) behaviors of the coach**

Methodology

- **Conceptual encounter**
- **Focus groups in the UK, US, and Canada to derive a set of 80 statements**
- **Online feedback on statements**
- **Multiple reviews and enhancements by researchers**

- **Online q-sort using new instrument for describing a typical imaginary session**
- **Factor analysis**
- **Feedback from users**

Q-Sort Results

- No significant second factor / Consensus

- One out-of-pattern case, rating the following as characteristic:
  - Coach offers possible solutions
  - Coach gives advice
  - Coach interrupts client
  - Client interrupts coach
  - Coach is verbose

Factor Array

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
53	47	13	6	9	1	10	5	2	4	41
54	58	43	8	16	3	17	7	27	30	63
	64	45	18	19	12	24	11	37	36	
(2)	70	46	21	29	14	25	15	39	79	(2)
		59	28	42	20	26	31	40		
	(4)	60	32	48	22	34	35	75	(4)	
			44	49	23	65	38			
		(6)	51	56	33	66	57	(6)		
			78	61	50	68	73			
				67	52	71				
			(9)	69	55	72	(9)			
				76	62	74				
					77					
				(12)	80	(12)				
					(14)					

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

Themes of the factor array

- Focus on the client

- Connection and positivity

- Fluidity of the process

- Collaboration vs Expert mode

- Role of important but unusual events

Q-Sort Top Responses

Most Characteristic	Most Uncharacteristic
New possibilities	Coach's agenda
Helping client to elaborate	*Uses intervention mechanistically*
Client's aim for the session	*Verbose*
Strong rapport	3d party's agenda
Underlying mindset	Highly structured
Empathy	Interrupting
Overall goals	*Discussion of potential referral*
Checks understanding	*Fast paced*
Client's values	Encourages to feel more deeply
Engaged	*Discusses termination*

What does it mean?

Broad agreement on what coaching is and is not

However:

Specificity of the sample

Issues with the instrument

Potential issues

- Instructions
- User interface
- Degree of consensus / variance explained
- Number of items / Missing items?
- Possible asymmetry of list -> discomfort
- Items for actual vs theoretical use
- Q / R Methodology

Potential future uses of instrument

- Actual sessions
- Outcomes
- Training
- Supervision
- "Objective" use (training for high inter-rater reliability)

Potential tools for using the inventory

- Use MS Word list as-is
- Format as cards for card sort
- Use q-sort websites for sorting and analysis
- Create document with Likert scale
- Use sites like Surveymonkey with Likert scale

Future research questions

- Are there different patterns in imagined sessions and actual sessions?

- Can subtypes of coaching be identified?

- Are specific patterns linked to outcomes?

- Do patterns vary by coaching engagement phase (beginning, middle, end)?

- Are items missing?

References

- Complete report on this research project can be found on

  http://www.instituteofcoaching.org/Index.cfm?page=breakingresearch