

Do Coaching Circles Use The Same Methodology And Lead To Similar Outcomes As Action Learning?

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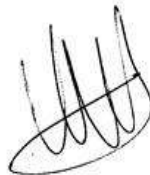
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of Action Learning and Coaching Circles, in order to understand whether Coaching Circles have used the same methodology and reached the same outcomes as Action Learning. A comprehensive literature review of Action Learning and Coaching Circles established the basis for the models that were used to understand their processes. A Mixed Methods research strategy was used to develop models to demonstrate these impacts. The qualitative interview and data collection process that was performed at ABSA with Coaching Circle participants revealed that participants developed *Self Awareness* and *Teamwork* through the creation of an *Adult Learning Environment*. This was supported by the quantitative survey questionnaire which was used to augment the findings from the qualitative process.

Through use of the models developed from analysis the areas of similarity and difference between Action Learning and Coaching Circles were ascertained. Coaching Circles have incorporated the methodology of Action Learning and these were the areas with the most commonality. However, in terms of impacts there were certain common areas which pertained mainly to impacts on the individual as opposed to impacts on the organisation. This was due to the difference in purpose for the programmes. Action Learning focussed on individual, team, and organisational learning while Coaching Circles are focussed on participants learning the skills of being a coach.

KEYWORDS: Action Learning; Adult Learning; Coaching Circles; Mixed Methods; Self Awareness; Teamwork

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

1. **AL:** Action Learning
2. **ALC:** Action Learning Coach
3. **ALE:** Adult Learning Environment
4. **ALT:** Action Learning Team
5. **CC:** Coaching Circles
6. **CfC:** Center for Coaching
7. **Coachee:** The person being coached
8. **Coach:** The person doing the coaching
9. **Conversation for Relationship:** Exploring feelings, attitudes, beliefs, offering support
10. **Conversation for Possibility:** Evoking possibilities, stimulating new ideas, exploring and assessing options
11. **Conversation for Action:** Making and implementing the decision
12. **ICP:** Integral Coaching Programme at ABSA
13. **MM:** Mixed Methods
14. **SOI:** Structure of Interpretation
15. **Somatic:** Awareness of the body
16. **QUAL:** Qualitative approach is dominant
17. **quan:** Quantitative approach is less dominant

1. Introduction

There is a need in the current climate for companies to be high performance organisations and gain competitive advantage. According to Senge this can be achieved through building learning organisations which “marry the individual development of every person in the organisation with superior economic performance” (Senge, 1994, p. 10). Furthermore Jung and Wendler (as cited by Arthur, Day, Jaworski, Jung, Nonaka, Scharmer and Senge, 2000) argue that for managers to do well they need to learn to pay attention to a different set of skills namely, “soft” skills like intentions, identity, and interpretations. This is supported by Sieler (2003, p. xiii) who states that “Coaching to the human soul makes good business sense, for when people are at their best, organisations benefit from their enhanced performance, productivity, and creativity.”

Even though the traditional view of leadership according to Senge (as cited by Smith, 2001, p. 340) was seen “as special people who set the direction, make key decisions and energize the troops as deriving from a deeply individualistic and non-systemic worldview”, there is a greater need for leaders to be designers, stewards, and teachers. Ultimately there is currently a greater demand for individual employees to be empowered.

1.1 Context

Coaching Circles (CC) has developed as a new modality in South Africa in response to the rising need to support human learning and development. This is discussed by O’Flaherty and Everson (2005, p. 1) which “opens the possibility for innovative and impactful ways to work with development of human capital”. According to Everson (2011) CC in South Africa were designed and developed by the Center for Coaching (CfC) as a programme and as a way of teaching spontaneous coaching to executives. CC have evolved into a formalised method used by organisations in order to teach coaching skills to their management teams. Brassard (2003) states that CC evolved out of a necessity to develop learning organisations and Action Learning (AL) is one of the processes by which this is achieved.

A programme has been introduced at ABSA called the Integral Coaching Programme (ICP) and is aimed at training the managers to become in-house coaches. This programme has

become permanent within the Human Resources Department as they have employed a Specialist Coaching, Mentoring and Talent Development Manager. It is this programme and the employees that have been approached and voluntarily signed up to be trained as coaches that will be explored to understand CC.

AL has been developed since the 1950's and is recognised in organisations worldwide that have used it as a learning model, while CC are new and are less recognised. Hence the purpose of the research study is to define AL in order to gain a deeper understanding of the applications, outcomes, and benefits. The aim is also to define CC development, applications and benefits to understand whether CC are aligned to the same methodology and outcomes for individuals and organisations.

Brassard (2003) explains that adults learn better in the conditions created by AL groups due to the cycle of action and reflection as they are able to observe their own behaviour and receive feedback in a safe environment. As Revans explains, AL is a method to generate learning from human interaction occurring as learners engage in real-time work problems.

Furthermore AL is able to address problems encountered in conventional training which “often overlooks the need to surface tacit knowledge to convert it to learning” (as cited by Raelin 2006, p. 2). In an effort to manage these challenges in a compelling way AL “enables organisations to simultaneously solve problems, develop leaders, build teams, create learning organisations, and increase the abilities of individuals to continuously learn and improve” Marquardt (2011, p. 16).

Adult Learning is a crucial component within this context and according to Knowles (1998) there is a misconception that organisations exist to get things done. However he argues that this is their ‘work purpose’. Knowles (1998, p. 107) argues that the organisation has a ‘human purpose’ which is the social system that allows people “to meet their needs and achieve their goals.” Knowles (1998, p. 107) states that “Adult education is a means available to organisations for furthering both purposes.”

Finally businesses are changing the way they view the involvement and development of their employees. This has allowed an opportunity for AL groups to become an important way of facilitating this process and has been an influence in the original emergence of CC.

1.2 Research Area and Problem

AL according to Marquardt (2004, p. 1) “has quickly emerged as a tool used by organisations for solving their critical and complex problems. It has concurrently become a primary methodology utilised by companies around the world for developing leaders, building teams, and improving corporate capabilities.”

Group coaching has increasingly become a tool used by organisations to create high performance organisations as stated by (Kets de Vries, 2005) in response to the kind of observations by Owen (as cited by Marquardt, 1999, p. 75) that “There was a time when the prime business of business was to make profit and a product. There is now a prior, prime business, which is to become an effective learning organisation. Not that profit and product are no longer important but without continual learning, profits and products will no longer be possible. Hence the strange thought: the business of business is learning-and all else will follow.” This statement encapsulates the shift that is taking place within organisations that have recognised the need to change the emphasis to develop their employees to insure greater sustainability for the organisation. This is reiterated by Wheatley (2005, p. 32) who explains that “These days, a different ideal for organisations is surfacing. We want organisations to be adaptive, flexible, self-renewing, resilient, learning, and intelligent –attributes only found in living organisms. The tension of our times is that we want our organisations to behave as living systems, but we only know how to treat them as machines”

Kets de Vries (2005) advocates the benefits of leadership coaching in a group setting. He argues that although one-on-one coaching can be very effective, durable changes in leadership are more likely to occur in the group setting. He states that leadership coaching establishes a foundation of trust, allows for constructive conflict resolution, leads to greater commitment and contributed to greater accountability. Furthermore he argues that change methodology centered on leadership coaching allows for the development of high performance teams and prevents organisational silo formation.

Due to the emerging prevalence of programmes which focus on developing employees within organisations; the researcher saw an opportunity to explore CC which is being used at ABSA as part of the ICP being run through the CfC and then as part of a voluntary ongoing learning community of internal coaches within the organisation. CCs have been designed and applied

by CfC since 2003 as a way of embedding the learning and application of Integral Coaching in organisations, and the Human Resources Department intends to include it as a continuous programme.

CC are a product of Integral Coaching and it is alleged that CC use AL as part of its methodology. Therefore the researcher saw a need for a study on CC, using the Mixed Methods approach to:

- Research and Analyse the impact of CC on the individuals within organisations
- Research and Analyse the impact of CC on the organisation
- Assess whether AL is in fact part of CC methodology
- Understand whether CC and AL lead to similar outcomes

A selection of individual participants who have been part of CC as well as the coaching facilitators will be interviewed to gain an understanding about the process they underwent, how they were impacted by the experience and whether the CC had an impact on coachee behaviour.

Due to the lack of research which has been performed on Integral Coaching using CC in a real world context; there is an opening for the exploration of how they impact the learning process of individuals and ultimately what is achieved through this process for the organisation.

Furthermore the link between AL and CC will be explored in more detail and verified through performing this research.

The researcher believes that this research is relevant to coaching as a methodology to develop individuals and organisations. It aims to develop an understanding of the impact that CC have on the learning process for individuals, the group and the impact on the organisation as a whole.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To ascertain whether CC use AL methodology
2. To demonstrate differences and similarities between CC and AL
3. To demonstrate and compare the value gained from AL and CC.

1.4 Research Assumptions

The research will be focussed on an organisation that currently uses CC and the impact it has had on the individual participants.

The assumptions made are as follows:

- The interviewees that take part in the interviews are representative and reflective of the overall group experience
- Given the limited time to perform the interviews and hence the ability to build a rapport with interviewees, the researcher assumes the interviewees were comfortable enough with the interviewer to give truthful and accurate responses.

1.5 The Research Question

Do Coaching Circles use the same methodology and lead to similar outcomes as Action Learning?

Subproblems:

- What is the impact of CC on the organisation?
- What is the impact of CC on the individual?

1.6 Assumptions and Ethics

1.6.1 Assumptions

The following assumptions were made about the research to be undertaken:

1. There will be companies that have implemented CC and are willing and open to communicate and discuss what their experience has been of CC.
2. That some of the participants in the CC will be present to contribute through interviews or questionnaires.
3. That all participants interviewed will be honest and forthcoming in their responses to realistically reflect their viewpoint and experience.

1.6.2 Ethics

According to Diner and Crandall (1978) there are four main transgressions in the area of ethical principles in business research. These are harm to participants, lack of informed

consent, the invasion of privacy and deception, (as cited by Bryman and Bell, 2003). The University of Cape Town has certain strict ethical considerations. “Ethical clearance is required by the South African Government for all research directly involving human or animal subjects conducted by faculty and students in universities” (Hamman, Koelble., & Ryan., 2011, p. 13). Therefore the researcher was required to submit an ethical clearance form to the University Commerce Faculty before proceeding with any fieldwork. Furthermore informed consent was received before proceeding with the interviews and the information gathered from the interviews will remain confidential.

2. Literature Review

The literature review is an assessment of the Coaching Circle programme methodology that the CfC has designed to create an Adult Learning Environment. AL and CC will be defined and explained in this research paper, in terms of theory, conditions within which they operate as well as benefits and outcomes. This research paper primarily aims to explore the similarities and differences between AL and CC. In addition the research will also explore whether AL has been incorporated in the methodology which forms the foundation of CC and whether they reach the same outcomes. Furthermore the research will also explore the impact that CC has on an organisation and on the individuals that partake in the process.

2.1 Action Learning

“For many organisations around the world, action learning has quietly become one of the most powerful action-orientated, problem solving tools, as well as their key approach to individual, team, and organisational development” Marquardt (1999, pg. 3). This has been achieved because AL is “typically applied in a group setting that seeks to generate learning from human interaction arising from engagement in the solution of real-time work problems” (Pedler, 1991; Marquardt 1999; Raelin 2000 as cited by Raelin 2006, p. 153)

AL is described by Marquardt (1999) as a process and powerful programme which focusses on group learning and how the organisation and individual can benefit from that learning. He explains that the greatest value gained from AL is the ability of the organisation, team, and individual to effectively adapt to change; and that AL becomes strategic rather than tactical due to the learning process. Marquardt (1999, p. 4) lists examples of various organisations (British Airways, General Motors, U.S Army) that have incorporated AL to “solve problems,

develop global executives, identify strategic competitive advantage, reduce operating costs, creating performance management systems and becoming learning organisations.”

Furthermore academic and corporate centres are following suit as Harvard University has shifted from the case study method to using AL programs instead, as stated by Michael Porter (Harvard University Professor) “education is not truly valuable unless it is translated into action” (Marquardt, 1999, p. 4) . Dotlich and Noel (1998) explain how AL can also change cultures and break habits by engaging the whole person from a cognitive and emotional aspect. Dotlich and Noel (1998) argue that it is challenging to inspire people to make long-term changes and the ability to catalyze permanent changes requires an integrative approach, which is holistic and exercises the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual muscles.

2.1.1 Origins of Action Learning

Reg Revans is the pioneer who introduced AL according to Marquardt (1999) which began in the 1930’s observing how scientists asked each other questions, shared problems and received group support. Thus every member contributed even if a particular field was not in their range of expertise. He successfully implemented action-learning programs starting in coalmines, hospitals, and the progressing to government organisations. This transformed the Belgium economy. Furthermore he states that the power of AL lies in the integration of theories and practices spanning over education, psychology, management, systems thinking, political science, ethics, anthropology and sociology (Figure 1). It is through these disciplines that Marquardt (1999) claims AL is able to develop leaders, build organisations and solve problems.

Marquardt (2004) confirms that AL works effectively because it interweaves principles and best practices seamlessly into fields of management science, psychology, education, political science, sociology, ethics, anthropology and systems thinking.



Figure 1: Theoretical Roots of Action Learning

Source: Marquardt (1999, p. 21)

2.1.2 Dynamics of Action Learning

The process of AL is defined as a “small team process that enables team members to solve real problems in real time while also enhancing team member’s capacity to learn about themselves, participative problem solving and decision-making, intergroup dynamics, and organisation as dynamic systems” (Freedman, 2011, p. 12) . This definition is affirmed by Marquardt (1999, p. 4) who states that “Action Learning is both a process and a powerful program that involves a small group of people solving real problems while at the same time focussing on what they are learning and how their learning can benefit each group member and the organisation as a whole.”

Freedman (2011, p. 8) explains how AL is most appropriate when the “problem is complex, desired outcome is vague and the solution is uncertain or unknown”, and he emphasised that there should be a level of complexity to the problem that enables learning opportunities, the building of knowledge, and specialized skill development.

The Six Components of AL (Figure 2) are described by Marquardt (2011, p. 2) as:

1. A problem
2. AL group or team
3. A working process of insightful questioning and reflective listening
4. Actions taken on the problem
5. Commitment to learning
6. AL Coach

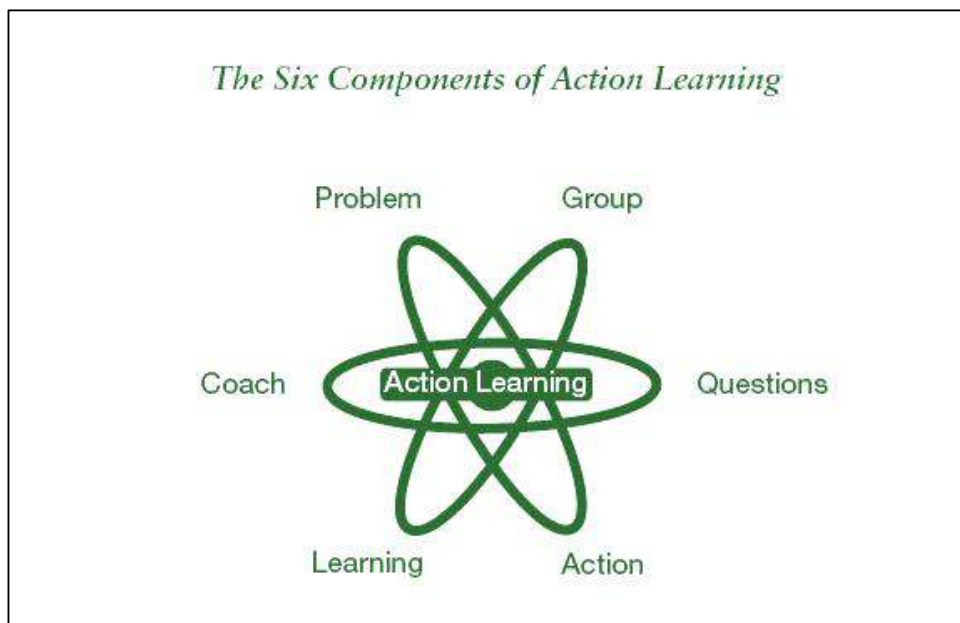


Figure 2: The Six Components of Action Learning

Source: Marquardt (2011, p. 3)

Marquardt (2011, p. 3) explains these components, where the *problem* is defined as a project, challenge, opportunity or task which is of importance to the team or organisation, and an *AL group* or *team* is made up of four to eight individuals who form the core entity in AL and examine the problem which has no obvious solution. *A working process of insightful questioning and reflective listening* emphasises the questions and listening aspect where the focus on the right questions allows action groups to be less fixated on the right answers and therefore become more aware of what they do not know. *Actions taken on the problem* means the group must be able to take action on the problem, because if the process remains on recommendations the momentum and commitment will be lost. *A commitment to learning* is important for the group process and “unless the group learns, it may not be able to creatively solve a complex problem” (Marquardt, 2011, p. 4). An *AL Coach (ALC)* is considered necessary so that the group is able to concentrate on the learnings and resolving the problem.

The ALC encourages reflection on *what* the group members are learning and “*how* they are solving problems” (Marquardt, 2011, p. 4). The ALC is able to help the group members develop leadership skills and improve their performance by selectively intervening to focus on how they listen or could reframe the problem, as stated by Marquardt (2011).

The steps in this process according to Marquardt (2011, p. 13) are as follows:

1. Formation of group
2. Presentation of problem or task to group
3. Reframing the problem
4. Determining goals
5. Developing action strategies
6. Taking action
7. Capture learnings

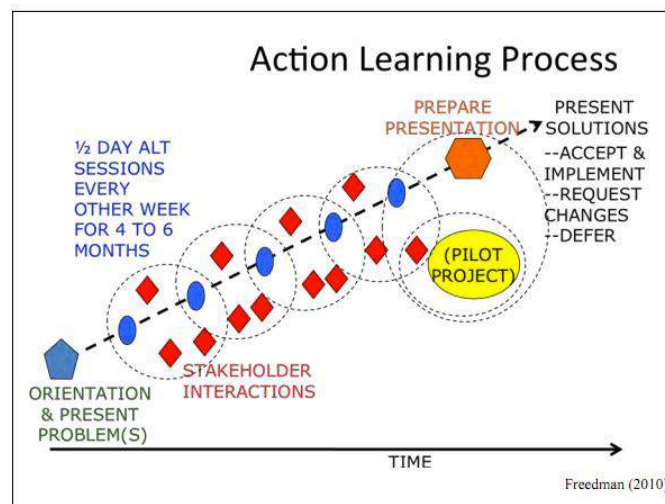


Figure 1. The Action Learning Process

Figure 3: The Action Learning Process

Source: Freedman (2011, p. 9)

Marquardt (2011) explains that the *multiple problem group* has each member bring their own individual problem or task or project to the group in order to solve it collectively. In this setting each member’s problem will be allocated thirty minutes of the three hour meeting and could meet monthly for a few months or extend to years. A variation on this time frame (Figure 3) is explained by Freedman (2011) which requires a four to six week period and is spaced out to meetings every two to three weeks and last approximately three to four hours.

Marquardt (2011, p.8) explains that the ground rules are put in place by the ALC in order to create stability and clarity and are an important factor in insuring a successful process. Due to the pivotal importance on the key learning behaviours of reflective inquiry and learning, Marquardt (2011, p.8) sets out the ground rules which are: “Statements should be made only in response to questions and the ALC has the power to intervene.”

Action Learning Coach

It is important to note that Marquardt has changed his definition from calling a ‘Facilitator’ (Marquardt, 1999, p. 160) an ‘Action Learning Coach’ (Marquardt, 2011, p. 4) in his latest book ‘Optimizing the Power of Action Learning’. This is because Marquardt (2011, p.159) views these roles as significantly and critically different as he explains “the facilitator’s primary role is to help the group improve its functioning...by observing and occasionally offering advice on what the group could do better.” Marquardt (2011) explains further that there is also a dependence on the facilitator to guide the group. The differences are seen in Table 1 which details how the roles differ, and is explained by Marquardt (2011, p. 160) who states that “the primary role of the Action Learning Coach is to enable the members to take responsibility for themselves to learn how to develop as a team, to increase their awareness of how they are doing, and to generate norms and processes that will improve their effectiveness.” This process is further explained by Marquardt (2011) as connecting learning to action and that reflective questioning becomes part of the learning and results in an increase in confidence to manage the group process and capability to complete the task.

The ALC helps the team members to (Marquardt, 2004, p.4):

- Reflect on what they are learning
- How they are solving problems
- How they listen
- How they could reframe the problem
- How they give each other feedback
- How they are planning and working
- Pointing out assumptions that may be shaping beliefs and action

TABLE 6
Facilitator's Role versus Learning Coach's Role

Facilitator	Learning Coach
Focus on group process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Team norms ▶ Decision making ▶ Communications and feedback 	Focus on learning and improving team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Performance and actions ▶ Making learning explicit
Statements	Reflective questions
What happened <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Focused on desired outcomes 	Why and how it happened <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Aligning intentions and action
Dependence	Independence
Single-loop learning	Double-loop and triple-loop learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Connecting learning to business ▶ Skills of learning
Focus on the present/past/future	Focus on the future/present
Focus on the facilitation tools	Focus on the why
Generates reaction	Generates reflection
Depends on expertise and experience	Depends on perspective
Values participation	Values wisdom
Asks questions and occasionally facilitates with statements	Only asks questions
Generates discussions	Fosters critical thinking
Focus on success of group	Focused on success of individual, group, and organization

Table 1: Facilitators Role versus Coach's Role

Source: Marquardt (2011, p. 160)

Marquardt (2011) explains that the coaching role is circulated amongst the group members and it is a voluntary programme. In addition the group members can be:

- From a variety of organisations
- Independent consultants
- Currently unemployed

An AL Team (ALT) is formed, according to Freedman (2011) from four to eight individuals who all have diverse work experience and different backgrounds, which facilitates a broad spectrum of viewpoints which will have the potential to be innovative. These teams are formed from different departments and hierarchies, or various outside organisations and professions, with some team members serving as *observers* and others as *problem presenters*.

Action Learning Process

The requirement from the team members is to engage by crafting insightful questions, which allow for reflection, response and taps into the group wisdom. According to Freedman (2011, p. 8) these *Questions* are aimed at:

- Clarifying the exact nature of the problem
- Identify possible solutions
- Determine implementation acceptable to senior management

The *Reflective Inquiry* is aimed at:

- Building team cohesiveness
- Promote systems thinking
- Introduce innovative strategies
- Generate individual and team learning

Skipton and Marquardt (2010, p. 134) state the governing variables which determine how well AL works are identified as the following key ingredients:

- Questioning
- Taking action
- Learning from each other
- Listening
- Diversity of team membership
- Feelings of confidence and well being
- Safe environment
- Coach

According to Marquardt (1999) the AL groups are aimed at learning from the problem that is being solved, the assumptions that are being challenged and from confronting the actions. Therefore the AL program is not a task force or quality circle focussed on a specific problem, rather it is “identifying the organisationwide, environmental, systemic elements in which the problem resides, and which must also be affected if lasting change is to take place” Marquardt (1999, p. 8). Raelin (2006) explains that the fundamental key to AL’s success in comparison to other training programmes is that the actions that are taken are subject to inquiry and reflection about their effectiveness as well as assessing how the theory was applied in practice.

Marquardt (1999) has listed the following levels of learning:

- Individual learning
- Group or team learning
- Organisational learning

Furthermore Marquardt (1999) explains the various types of learning that take place, namely *adaptive learning* which encourages reflection and experience, *anticipatory learning* where a vision-action-reflection approach is used, *generative learning* where reflection, analysis or creativity leads to learning and finally *single-loop* and *double-loop* learning where the degree of reflection on the action determines how this type of learning is differentiated. Argyris and Schon (as cited by Knowles 1998, p. 140) explain single and double loop learning as “ Single loop learning is learning that fits prior experiences and existing values , which enables the learner to respond in an automatic way. Double-Loop Learning is learning that does not fit the learner’s prior experiences or schema. Generally it requires learners to change their mental schema in a fundamental way.”

2.1.3 Action Learning to Develop Leadership

According to Vail (as cited by Marquardt, 2004, p. 119) there is a need for “today’s managers to have a high aptitude for both action and reflection. He notes that self awareness and astute understanding of one’s personal motives is the most critical of all leadership skills. Equipping them to become reflective practioners will help them become better leaders.”

Furthermore Marquardt lists management theorists namely, Vail (1996) and Senge (1990), as well as the view of CEOs Bill Gates(Microsoft), Chambers(Cisco Systems) and Ollila (Nokia) as sharing the view that leadership is about the ability to ask the right questions, which is also supported by Socrates as the mark of wisdom (Marquardt M. , 2004, p. 74). He explains how the AL process gives each person the opportunity to practice and demonstrate their ability in the art of asking questions, which they will receive feedback on from the group under the guidance of the coach, thereby honing and perfecting the skill. Marquardt (2004, p. 74) states that “Questions require us to listen carefully and reflect. They demonstrate our ability to empathise and care about others. Questions can motivate as much or more than exhortatory statements. Finally, questions cause us and the people around us to think, to learn, and to grow.”

Ultimately, the outcomes of AL have long term benefits, as expressed by Dilworth (as cited by Marquardt 2004) the organisation will gain greater strategic value from the learning, than immediate tactical advantage in problem solving, as new leadership and team skills are being applied which ultimately build long term capabilities.

2.1.4 Action Learning: Case Study

In an effort to solidify the research performed on AL, a case study written by de Haan and de Ridder (2006) was used to demonstrate the result of research performed on 126 participants which explored “How Participants Learn” (de Haan and de Ridder, 2006)

The advantages of AL are as follow (de Haan and de Ridder, 2006, p. 218):

- Reflecting based on practical situations
- Practicing slow thinking which enables one to postpone judgment to allow for new answers
- Learning from the here and now
- Safety, confidentiality and mutual support which develops comprehensive knowledge

Outcomes of the Case Study

The quantitative outcomes of the research yielded the following results according to de Haan and de Ridder (2006), AL appealed to individuals with a divergent learning style who felt they received valuable feedback from the other participants, learnt about their own strengths and weaknesses, gained new perspective and insights, new ways of learning, that they developed the ability to concentrate on the core issues of the problem, and that they learnt more during AL than as a result of AL. The qualitative outcomes reflected that participants saw great value in AL viewing it as a “frank method that at the same time guaranteed a respectful approach to personal issues” de Haan and de Ridder (2006, p. 227). The participants view the strengths of AL as primarily receiving support from colleagues, by learning from strengths of other members of the group and sharing work related issues provides better perspective.

There were important conditions which were stipulated as necessary for AL to be effective, namely; “security, trust, openness, respect, continuity, frequency of meetings, stamina and attention paid to personal learning goals.” de Haan and de Ridder (2006, p. 229).

2.1.5 Outcomes of Action Learning

The three common principles in AL, as explained by Raelin (as cited by Raelin 2006):

- Learning is acquired in the midst of action and is committed to a task
- The collective activity of creating knowledge and utilizing it is recognised as a group undertaking
- Team members are free to ask questions about underlying assumptions by demonstrating learning-to-learn aptitude

AL therefore holds a strong ‘learning’ focus (Figure 2), which is reiterated by Horn (as cited by Marquardt 1999, p. 143), who explains that AL has clear outcomes where “The goal of Action Learning is not simply to define the problem. The reflection process must lead to action-a workable solution” and is further supported by Revans (as cited by Pedler, 2008, p. 5) who states, “There is no learning without action and no (sober and deliberate) action without learning.”

Furthermore Marquardt and Reynolds (1995) explain that AL is outcome orientated and transfers knowledge systematically through the organisation, while also enabling people to learn by doing. Continual learning becomes part of organisational culture with a pro-active approach, which develops skills for critical reflection and reframing. Furthermore it encourages a problem focus rather than hierarchy focus, while creating an environment, which encourages sharing, supporting and challenging assumptions.

The skills that are acquired by individuals through AL are defined by Marquardt (2011, p. 21) as:

- Critical reflection skills
- Inquiry and questioning abilities
- Systems thinking
- Ability to adapt and change
- Active listening skills and greater self awareness
- Empathy, the capacity to connect with others
- Problem solving

Learning skills that Marquardt (1999) says can be acquired through AL are *Systems Thinking* which entails a conceptual framework to create clear patterns and understanding on how to

change them effectively, *Mental Models* which challenge ingrained assumptions that influence our understanding of the world, and how action is taken, *Personal Mastery* where lifelong learning to acquire a high level of proficiency in a subject or skill area is acquired, and *Dialogue* which requires deep listening skills and communication between people, while suspending one's own views.

According to Argyris and Schon (as cited by Raelin 2006) the team member becomes equipped to produce desired outcomes when peers are the sounding board for operating assumptions that underlie interventions, which is further discussed by Freedman (2011) and identifies the learning for the team as developing the capacity for:

- The team to reflect on and improve participative problem solving
- Conflict management
- Decision making
- Goal setting
- Action planning
- Creating strategies

Furthermore Pedler (2008) explains which learning skills are developed through the AL cycle which allows the individual to move around the cycle. Pedler (as cited by Raelin 2006) uses the AL Cycle (Figure 4) to describe how AL is successful if the individuals involved care about the issues, are committed and question the underlying assumptions.

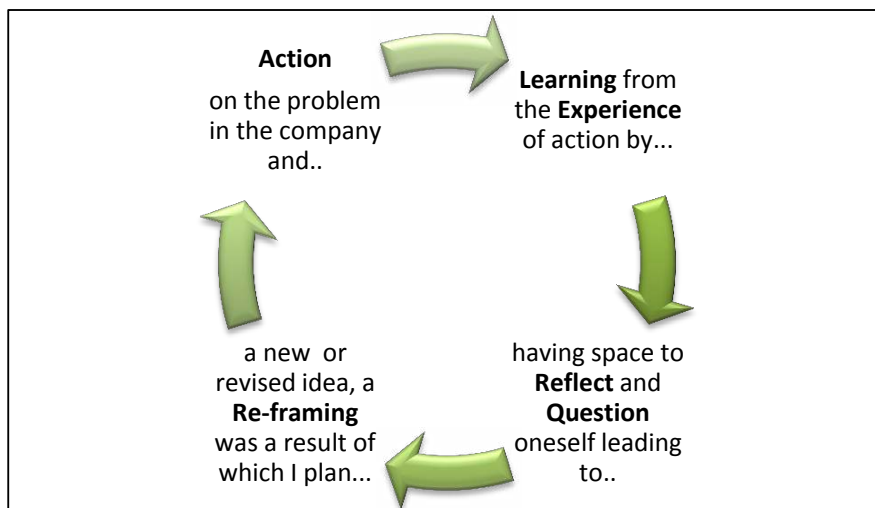


Figure 4: The Action Learning Cycle

Source: Pedler (2008, p. 51)

AL has clear characteristics, which focus on encouraging dialogue, questioning, and reflecting which are defined by Dilworth (as cited by Marquardt, 1999) who explains that AL is an opportunity to build various disciplines, namely reflecting on actions and assumptions that are underlying, as well as promoting deep intense dialogue. It is also a process which encourages individuals to develop a critical collaborative skill of reflection-in action as opposed to reflection-on-action. (Raelin, 2006)

2.1.6 Benefits of Action Learning

“The ability of organisations to change has become inextricably linked to the ability of individual employees to change” (Dotlich and Noel, 1998, p. 149)

Marquardt (2004) claims that individuals who take part in AL recognise the benefit of questions and reflection in allowing them to improve on work performance; hence they become better learners and ultimately better leaders. This is due to a different mindset and skills which have been established and impact the organisation resulting in a culture which is conducive to learning being incorporated as a part of the status quo. Furthermore Wienstein states (as cited by Marquardt, 2004) that individuals who go through the AL process acquire three different levels of learning, namely, intellectual understanding, application of a newly acquired skill and inner development through the experience of AL, which has the potential to lead to personal development, due to the external factor triggering an internal dissonance.

Marquardt (1999, p.4) lists the benefits as:

- Shared learning throughout various levels of the organisation
- Greater self awareness and self confidence due to new insights and feedback
- Ability to ask better questions and be more reflective
- Improved communications and teamwork

Dixon (as cited by Marquardt 1999) argues that organisational problems cannot be addressed unless the people within those organisations are willing to change. Dixon (as cited by Marquardt 1999) states that “Action Learning develops individuals to be more self-aware and cognizant of their impact”.

Every business has a complexity that forms an organisational culture, as stated by Schein (as cited by Senge, 1990), the members have collective mental models which cannot change unless the cultural assumptions are investigated. Through AL these mental models can be explored and dealt with in a safe space that enables communication. Furthermore AL is

deemed as promoting individual transformation which relaxes the individuals need for control in a social setting, as they learn that their viewpoint is no more than a hypothesis for action. (Argyris and Schon, 1974, 1978 as cited by Raelin 2006)

Finally Marquardt (2004) argues that AL has the ability to forge the group quickly into high performing work teams who are able to learn, act, create and think as a powerful entity.

A model (Figure 5) was developed from the investigation into AL which revealed how the theory, dynamics, and process lead to the outcomes found in AL.

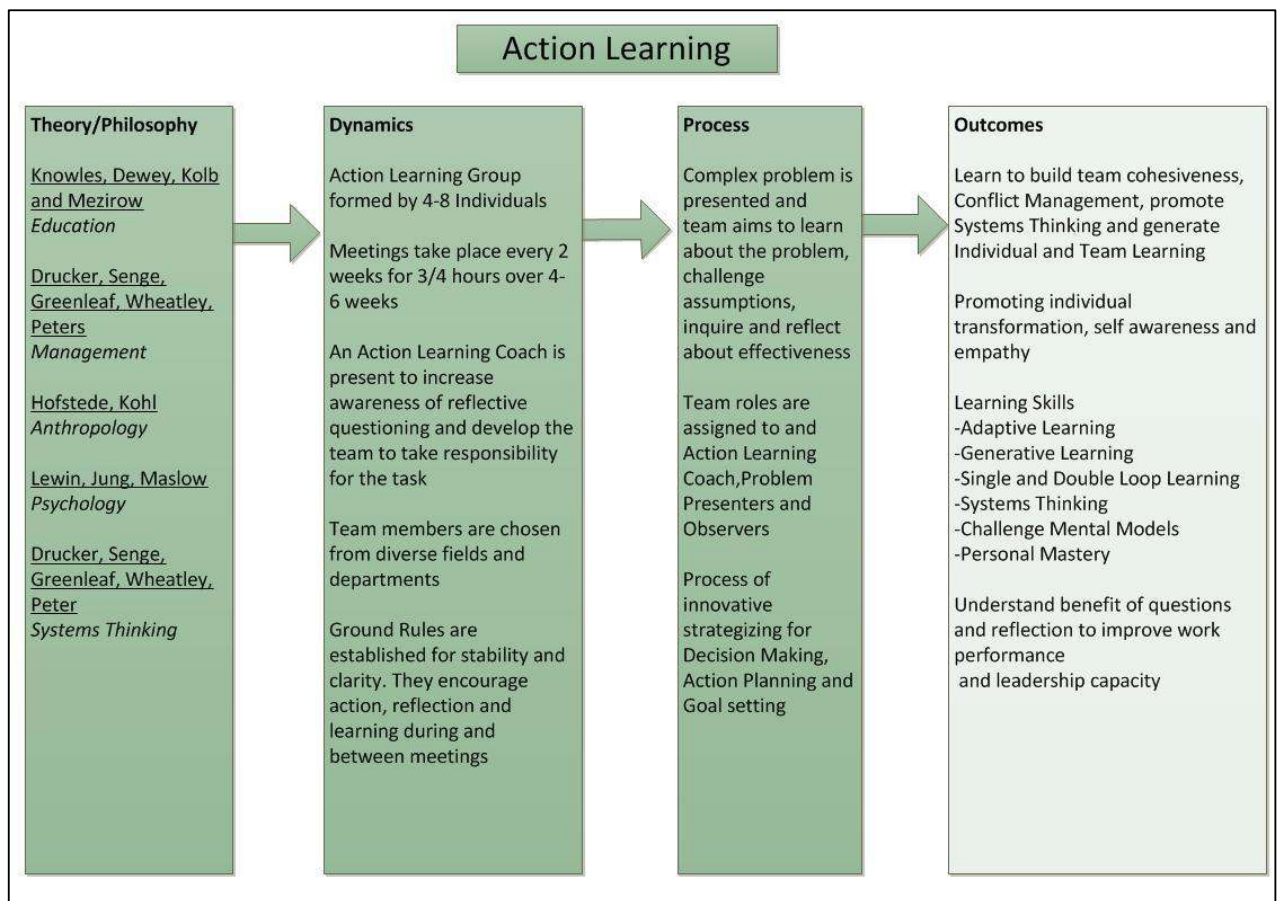


Figure 5: Action Learning Model

Source: Own Diagram

2.2 Origins of Coaching

2.2.1 Integral Coaching

Integral Coaching falls under a philosophical framework that is also called ‘generative’ and ‘ontological’ according to Everson and O’Flaherty (2006), which describes the philosophical and academic perspectives which encompass Integral Coaching. Ontology can be traced back to Ancient Greek philosophers however it is the twentieth century developments in philosophy, biology, anthropology, sociology and quantum physics which gave academic support for ontology as a recognised discipline of professional coaching.

“The theory and methodology of Ontological Coaching enables a coach to observe and work constructively with three essential domains of human existence—language, emotions and body—as a means for supporting coaching clients to develop important new perspectives that generate more effective behaviours.” (Sieler A. , 2003, p. 1)

Ontology encompassed a new comprehension of human beings; human interaction and the perception of behaviour and communication through important developments in biology of cognition, existential philosophy, and the philosophy of language. (Everson and O’Flaherty, 2011)

Fernando Flores founded the discipline of ontological coaching (Figure 6) and was inspired by the work of Humberto Maturana on perception, language, cognition, and communication as explained by Sieler (2003). Sieler (n.d) states that the new discipline allowed the coach to work with three domains that are essential to human existence, namely language, emotions and the body.

Flores aimed to incorporate the philosophical concepts of Martin Heidegger as well as John Searle’s Theory of Speech Acts, to develop a new discipline, which centered on this new understanding of language and communication. “Flores developed a powerful and practical new approach to living, learning and working” (Sieler 2003, p. 7) and called it “Ontology of the Human Observer” (Everson and O’Flaherty, 2011). Everson (2011) explains that Flaherty discontinued working with Flores in the 1980’s and started Integral Coaching through New

Ventures West. According to Sieler (2003) Olalla and Echeverria formed their own company called the Newfield Network in 1990, based on Flores ideas, but incorporating their own interpretations. Sieler (2003, p. 5) states that, “Ontological coaching provides a precise approach for understanding and shifting “inner behaviour “and is a powerful source of organisational transformation.” Sieler developed Newfield Australia becoming leaders in the field of ontological coaching with Olalla and Echeverria.

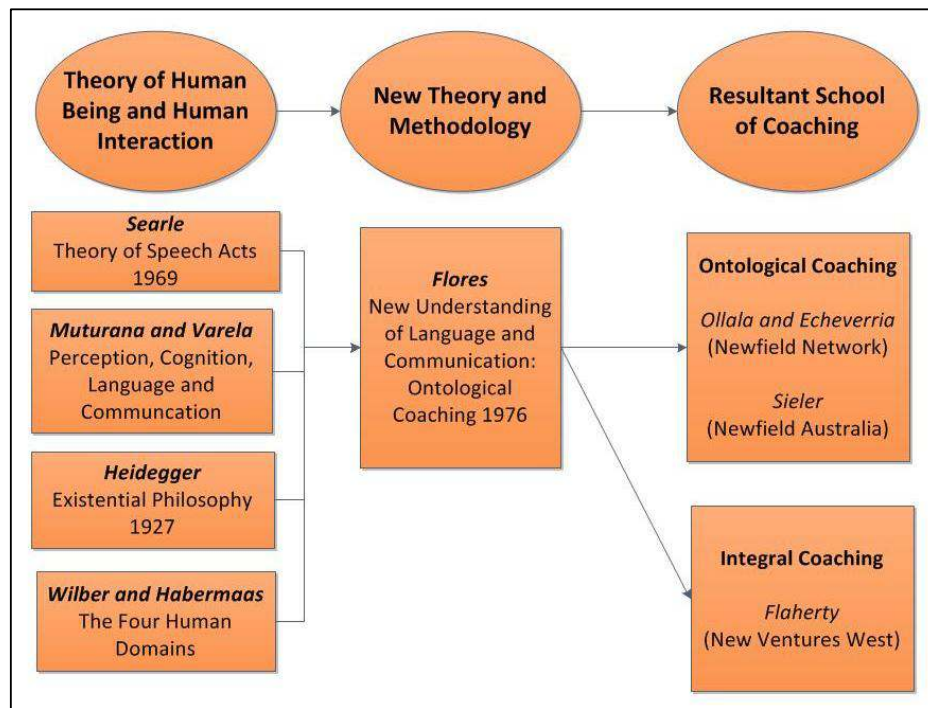


Figure 6: The Evolution of Integral/Ontological Coaching

Source: Own Diagram based on Howard and Loos (2005, p. 7)

Integral coaching is also rooted within a theoretical foundation which is influenced by Charles Sanders Pierce (Pierce, 1877 & Pierce 1878) and William James (James, 1963) (as cited by Yodaiken 2009). Furthermore there are five philosophical roots (Figure 7) of Integral Coaching as explained by Everson and O’Flaherty (2011) namely, *Phenomenology* based on literature by Merleau-Ponty, *Hermeneutics* based on based on literature by Heidegger and Gadamar, *Biology* based on literature by Maturana, *Pragmatism* developed by Dewey and finally *Linguistics* based on based on literature by Wittgenstein, Searle, Maturana, Varela and Heidegger.

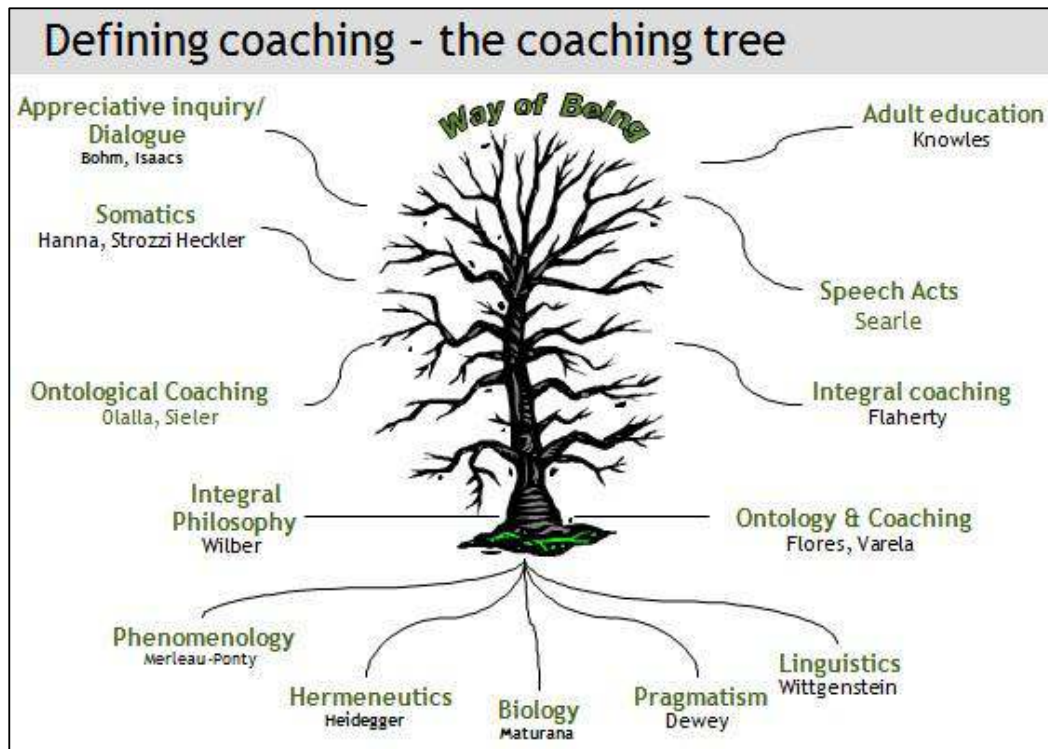


Figure 7: Defining Coaching-The Coaching Tree

Source: Everson and O'Flaherty (2011)

These different branches of philosophy, as discussed by Everson and O'Flaherty (2011), contributed to a new way of comprehending language, where thinking, understanding, and acting are in fact understood as acts of interpretation (Phenomenology and Hermeneutics) thereby making cognition the focal point of interpretation.

Flaherty has developed ideas from Maturana further in the past ten years to create a stream of Integral Coaching, which is a combination of phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty (2002) and the concepts of the modern philosopher Wilber (2000) [(Everson et al, 2006)].

Phenomenology can be defined as the study of essences according to Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 1) who states "all problems amount to finding definitions of essences: the essence of perception or the essence of consciousness." Flaherty (1999) therefore defines Integral Coaching as "a skillful method for developing the self and other towards increasing effectiveness and fulfilment through building the ability to observe, reflect, and select appropriate action." Everson et al (2006) explains that the philosophy and methodology of Integral Coaching is directed towards enhancing self understanding which would

consequently lead to an improved alternative perspective on one's personal and professional life.

Integral Coaching has defined a clear sense of purpose and direction: (Flaherty and Handelsman, 2004, p. 2)

- Manage Difficult conversations more skillfully
- Speak in a way that moves people to action
- Develop a sense of calm amid life's turbulence

The combination of the various philosophies have resulted in a methodology developed by Flaherty, called Integral Coaching which according to Sieler, (as cited by O'Flaherty and Everson, 2005, p. 9) "Observes and works with key aspects of how the coachee has structured their reality and the nature of their existence i.e. their perceptions and ways of participating in life."

2.2.2 Integral Coaching Models

"The Integral Coaching model's greatest contribution to powerful coaching is the strong focus on understanding the underlying assumptions prevailing in the persons way of seeing the world and being able to trace how these might be driving the person to a particular action or precluding them from others –because they might not be aware of them" (O'Flaherty and Everson as cited by Passmore, 2009, p. 81). Integral Coaching has become a tool to shift awareness of how one responds to the world, and through this awareness develop a deeper understanding of oneself.

Flaherty and Handelsman (2004, p. 6) explain the core models of Integral Coaching which essentially include 'everything and everyone' and are listed as:

- Four Quadrants or Four Human Domains (updated in 2009)- include all dimension of a person life
- Ten Ways-coaching at the appropriate depth
- Six Streams-appreciating all forms of competence

The Four Quadrants were developed from Ken Wilber (1996) and Habermas who was influenced by Wilber. It is intended to "help people integrate the major dimensions of their lives" Flaherty and Handelsman (2004, p. 6), defined as *individual experiences and consciousness, body and behaviour, culture and relationships and environment.*

Integral Coaching has developed “The Ten Ways Model” (Figure 8) as stated by Flaherty and Handelsman (2004) which entails coaching scaling the coaching work according to the individual. Most clients according to Flaherty and Handelsman (2004) are focussed on the First Five Ways; hence the model (Figure 8) reflects these areas. They begin with broad concerns (First way) and work their way past primary concerns towards more in depth questions (The Fifth way) which focus on our relationship with life.

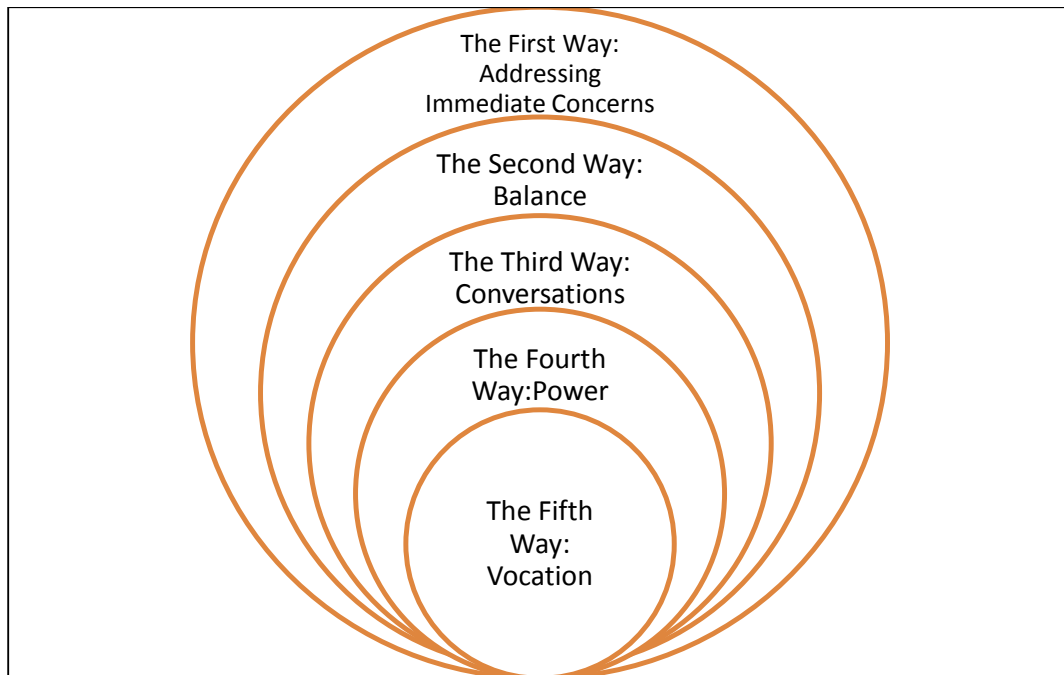


Figure 8: The Ten Ways of Coaching
 Source: Flaherty and Handelsman (2004, p. 8)

Domains of Competence Model

Flaherty (2005, p. 84) explains the skill of *Self Management (I)* is “based upon our ability to observe ourselves and the effects of our actions on the outcomes we intend and on the people with whom we relate.” The *Relationship with others (We)* is concerned with the ability to develop relationships that are long-term and mutually satisfying, while the *Facts and Events (It)* refers to the ability to understand mechanisms, systems and models.

Flaherty’s view is based on Wilber (2000) who discusses integral psychology’s attempts to honour the entire spectrum of consciousness, which refers to the mind, body, spirit, and elaborates on the “*I, We, It*” dimensions of the self. Wilber (2000) defines these as the 1-2-3 approaches, where the first person, second person and third person accounts of consciousness are considered. The first person (I) relates to direct experiences, while the second person (We) is how these experiences are linguistically communicated, and the third person (It) refers to

the material networks and social systems. Flaherty (2005) has developed this further in Figure 9, which he has based on the work of Habermas and states that each individual must have a minimal level of competence in each of the three domains in the pyramid.

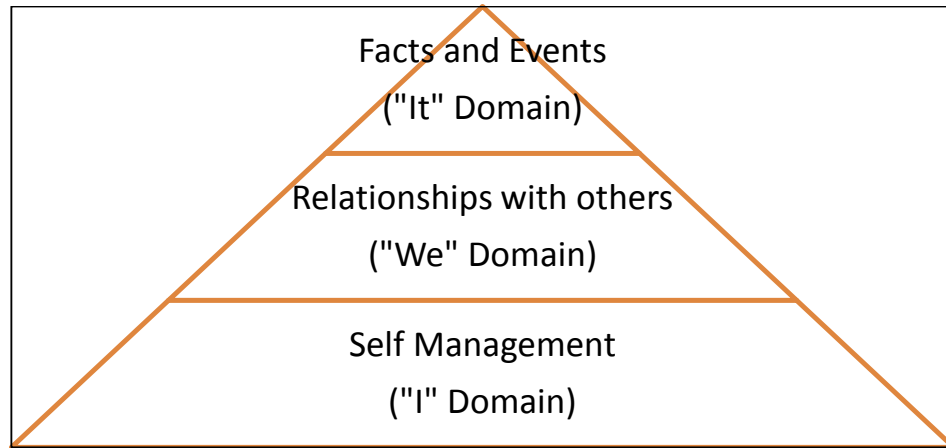


Figure 9: Domains of Competence

Source: Flaherty (2005, p. 84)

On this basis Flaherty has therefore defined his view of coaching as “ a professional relationship grounded in mutual trust and respect and directed towards a set of clear outcomes, guided by presence and informed by broad models of what it means to be a human being” (Flaherty & Handelsman, 2004, p. 2)

Phase 1-Competency Based Coaching Models

The ICP programme designed by the CfC uses a specific set of models which they introduce in two phases of the Coaching Circle Programme. The first phase is explained by Everson and O’Flaherty (2011) and is focussed on developing three aspects of Coaching to develop competency namely:

- Premise of Coaching: Structure of Interpretation (SOI)
- Correct Flow of Coaching: Three Conversations

The *Premise of Coaching* is explained by Everson and O’Flaherty (2011) where the task of a coach is to introduce language and practices in order to expand the coachee’s SOI.

Furthermore Everson and O’Flaherty (2011, p. 31) defines the SOI as how we make sense of our lives, in addition it is the areas in life that we pay attention to and those that we do not, which influences our behaviour.

The *Correct Flow of Coaching* according to Everson and O’Flaherty (2011) allows for new observation and new insights to be opened up through the Three Conversations in Relationships (Figure 10), which are the known as the:

- Conversation for Relationships (approx 50-60% of the time): Understand the person and their context while building trust and respect
- Conversation for Possibility (approx 20-30% of the time): Enabling Coachee to develop new perspectives on a situation
- Conversation for Action (approx 10% of the time): Turning possibility into action

These conversations as described by Everson and O’Flaherty (2011), is a cyclical process where the conversations overlap in order to meet the objectives; however they have each been allocated a percentage amount of time that should be spent discussing the issue.

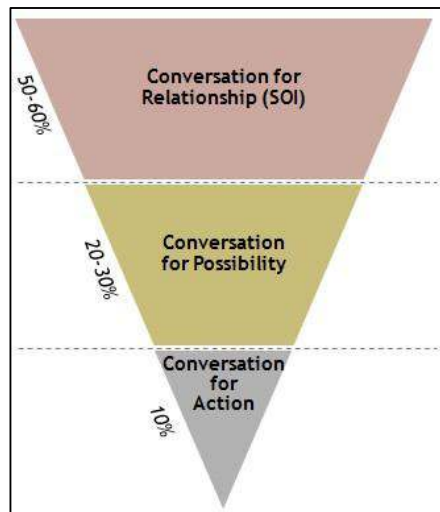


Figure 10: Three Conversations Model

Source: Everson and O’Flaherty (2011, p. 33)

Phase 2-Deepening Coaching Skills

According to Everson and O’Flaherty (2011) this phase uses the same model of Three Conversations in Coaching (Figure 10) and deepens the skills by introducing models which allow the coach to delve deeper into each of the Conversation for Relationship, Possibility and Action.

These models are (Figure 11):

- Domains of Competence
- Time Lens
- Three Streams Model

The *Domains of Competence* explores the “I, We, It” Domain as described by the Everson and O’Flaherty (2011, p. 21) is concerned with Self Management (‘I’ Domain), Relationships with Others (‘We’ Domain), and the Facts and Events in the external world (‘It’ Domain) (Everson and O’Flaherty, 2011).

The *Time Lens* generates a deeper understanding for the coachee’s SOI and considers *Past*, *Present* and *Future* and through these lenses explores *Past Commitments* which highlights personal history and promises or relationships to which they are bound. *Present Current Concerns* which explores what is on the persons mind at the present moment and finally *Future Landscapes* which assesses how one perceives opportunities moving forward. (Everson and O’Flaherty, 2011)

The Three Streams focusses on Integral Coaching looking at the Cognitive, Emotional and Somatic areas in the coachee’s life. Everson and O’Flaherty (2011, p.23) explains that the Cognitive aspect relates to the capacity to be able to “take in and hold multiple perspectives” simultaneously, while the Emotional assesses the language of emotions and whether the coachee is able to manage what they are feeling while the Somatic explores the ability “to tune into one’s body” and become aware of what we are sensing.

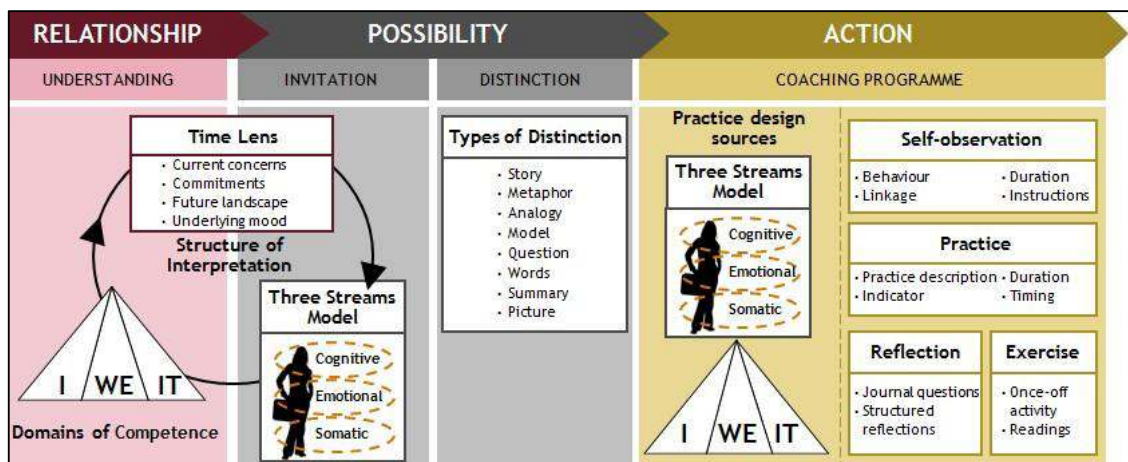


Figure 11: Correct Flow of Coaching: Three Conversations

Source: Everson and O’Flaherty (2011, p. 18)

2.3 Coaching Circles

“Coaching Circles combine the power of Action Learning and Integral Coaching to support leaders in creatively tackling the challenges they face while practicing the coaching skills they need on the job” Brassard (2008b, p. 1).

CC in South Africa began in 2003 when Craig O’Flaherty and Charles Brassard designed a programme for Executives to learn Coaching, according to Everson (2011). Furthermore Everson (2011) explains that the primary purpose of the programme was to teach and embed the coaching skills for spontaneous coaching and create an environment where the Executives could be corrected in the moment while practicing these skills under the supervision of a coach. Therefore AL was incorporated into the programme as a way of enabling this process.

Due to the fact that the Coaching Circle has just recently been incorporated into corporate programmes, there is limited literature available. Therefore the bulk of the information was gathered from the following:

- New Venture West Website
- Brochures
- Interview with Everson (2011)
- Articles written by Brassard
- Lecture notes from the CfC (which implements CC)
- Academic Publications written by Everson and O’Flaherty
 1. O’Flaherty & Everson, Coaching in Leadership Development, 2005
 2. Everson, O’Flaherty, & Loos, Inspired Moments-Possibilities Beyond Management Through Integral Coaching, 2006

AL is an important component of the coaching circle learning dynamic. This is supported by Brassard (2008b, p. 1) who states that CC “powerfully marry the principles and practices of AL and those of Integral Coaching to create learning environment rich in compassion and self discovery”.

CC are an innovative way for managers to learn to be more effective, according to O’Flaherty and Everson (2008), who argue that it creates a platform for rhythm of action, reflection and learning which supports development in real time and allows the individual to assess their long term performance and develop competency in required areas of their lives.

2.3.1 Dynamics of Coaching Circles

CC have been developed according to O’ Flaherty and Everson (2008) because adults learn better under certain conditions, namely:

- When the cycle of action, reflection, and learning becomes an embedded process that focusses their reality
- When adults are observed in action and receive feedback
- When adults develop the capacity to ask in depth questions to gain a better understanding about their circumstances
- When adults feel safe, they tend to explore issues and allow themselves to be vulnerable.

The coaching circle as described by O’Flaherty and Everson (2005) has between six to eight people that meet for one day, every six weeks. The common factor being that they share a project or activity with an experienced coach present who enables the group to build coaching competence. One of the participants will raise a topic, and give an outline of the issues or challenges pertaining to that topic. In response the other coaches will ask questions to “shed new light on the issues and to explore new possibilities for action” O’Flaherty and Everson (2005, p. 16). The coaches will make a point of not giving advice and solving the problem, rather they use the Integral Coaching methodology to coach the coachee which allows them to find their own solution. Furthermore O’Flaherty and Everson (2005) explain how the coachee is given an opportunity to reflect at the end and offer intended actions, while the group is then allowed to reflect on their learning throughout the exchange.

The Coaching Circle (according to Brassard, 2008a, p. 2) is structured as follows:

1. Presentation of challenge
2. A period of collaborative inquiry/coaching
3. A period of reflection
4. A period to voice their own insights and observations

The first step of introducing the *challenge* according to Brassard (2008a) should be something which allows the person to delve into ‘new territory’ and an issue they have been struggling with. The period of *collaborative inquiry* is the key to this process according to O’Flaherty and Everson (2008) and allows for insightful questions, through a process of reflection on the possibilities they create, while Brassard (2008a, p. 2) argues that “a period of collaborative inquiry is designed to help the client apprehend their challenge in new ways and appropriate and practical future actions.” Brassard (2008a) states that this method produces the greatest breakthroughs because circle members ask insightful questions which disturb and confront others with a new possible reality, thereby shedding light on a hidden assumption or limiting belief.

The period of *reflection* enables the person to make sense of what happened during the process of inquiry, according to Brassard (2008a) and gives an opportunity to learn from the experience that has been encountered.

The *voicing* allows circle member to share outcomes of reflections, reveals the learnings from their own experience, while the client shares feedback about their contribution and makes public their commitments to future actions which can be followed up when the circle meet again. (Brassard, 2008a)

In conclusion, according to Everson (2008, p. 2) the learning acquired through CC is powerful because of the way the participants work together over time, which “provides a wide range of opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and performance.”

Objectives of Coaching Circles

Integral Coaching according to Flaherty (2005, p. 4) is focussed on several objectives, namely *Self Correction*, *Self Generation* and developing *Long Term Performance Excellence*.

Self-correction involves the coachee being able to observe him or herself, understanding the difference between when they have performed well and when they have not, and having the insight to make necessary adjustments independent of the coach, as stated by Flaherty and Handelsman (2004, p. 2) it is the “capacity to observe discrepancies between what we intend and actual outcomes”

Self-Generation is defined by Flaherty and Handelsman (2004, p. 2) as the “ability to continuously renew ourselves by drawing upon resources from without and within” and is established as a continuous process aimed at self-improvement allowing the coachee to constantly explore these opportunities through practice, observation or activities that make them more competent.

The ultimate aim is to ensure that these are practiced over the long term, so that coachee’s become “*long term performers*.” (O’Flaherty and Everson, 2005)

O’Flaherty and Everson (2005, p. 2) explain that a pivotal feature to Integral Coaching is defined by the SOI, where “Coaching works to enable people to transform who they are and reinvent themselves by helping them to see how their SOI thinking and actions produce unintended consequences.” Furthermore, he explains that the coach can alter the SOI for the coachee as practices and new distinctions are introduced that can become permanent parts of the coachees SOI.

Flaherty (2005) explains that providing *language* that enables new observations, linked to practices that are products of the coaching process, enable the coachee to become self-generating and self-correcting which ensures that the coachee will be able to perform over the long term.

O’Flaherty and Everson (2005) argue that coaching contrasts from other learning modalities as the coachee is their own architect that navigates the changes focussing on either a task or a situation in their life overall.

Process of Coaching Circles

According to O’Flaherty and Everson (2005) the process that the coachee undergoes before coaching is shown in Figure 12, where the coachee has a certain SOI, which leads to particular outcomes and therefore reinforces their SOI. This pattern will continue repeating itself thereby anchoring the behaviour and closing off opportunities for other possible ways of responding.

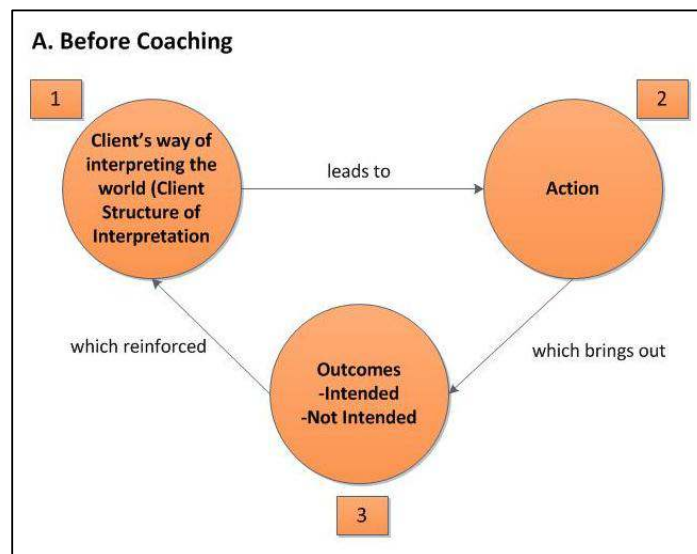


Figure 12: The Cycle of Behaviour-Before Coaching

Source: O’Flaherty and Everson (2005)

O’Flaherty and Everson (2005) have explained further in Figure 13, how the coaching process works in shifting the perception of the coachee’s SOI, by understanding how it is hindering their ability to respond to a particular challenge differently. The development of new language capability is expanded which is supported by actions and practices of self-observations that build the coachee’s competence.

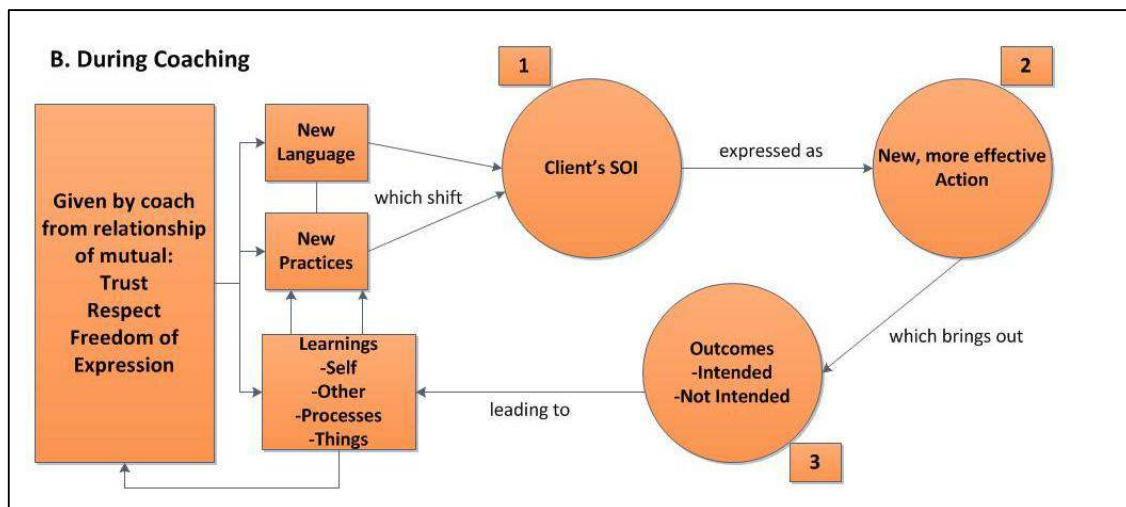


Figure 13: The Coaching Process

Source: O’Flaherty and Everson (2005)

2.3.2 Outcomes of Coaching

Coaching, as described in this report, is a relatively new modality in South Africa where it has become known for the past ten years; however it has been present in the United States since the 1980’s. According to O’Flaherty and Everson (2005) it has been misconstrued and misunderstood to mean an accountability partner, teacher or sounding board that gives advice in a constructive manner. It is therefore important to recognise what coaching does not represent as stated by Flaherty (2005, p. 3) “We present coaching as more than being an accountability partner that supports someone in reaching their goals or as a disciplinarian who changes someone’s unwanted actions. Instead we claim that coaching occurs in a bigger frame that sometimes includes these two modalities but goes well beyond that.”

Coaching is defined by O’Flaherty and Everson (2005, p. 1) who state “Coaching is a modality to support human learning and development. It’s a way of working with individuals and teams that allows for focussed and directed learning where the responsibility for the outcomes of the learning process and the decisions taken rest strongly with the individual or collective being coached.” According to Flaherty (1999) it is therefore a skilful methodology which has the capacity to develop the coach and coachees to become more effective and therefore fulfilled.

The outcomes of Integral Coaching according to Flaherty and Handelsman (2004) are directed towards developing feeling of competency and fulfilment, where competency is regarded as a capacity that endures while fulfilment is an understanding that we are living with meaning and purpose in our lives.

Divine and Flaherty (as cited by O’Flaherty and Everson, 2005) have developed the aforementioned “I, We, It” approaches to enable leadership competencies, therefore the “I” represents personal mastery in managing the self, the “We” represents the mastering of conversation and relationships with key individuals, while the “It” represents the tools which need to be mastered in an area within which tasks and processes occur.

CC are a powerful medium that facilitate the following outcomes according to O’Flaherty and Everson (2008):

- Managers learn how to listen, reflect, and think about themselves
- Managers learn how to learn, give, and receive feedback
- Managers learn to uphold their commitments
- Managers learn to stand in other peoples shoes
- Managers gain a deeper understanding into how their organisation works
- Managers learn to think outside the box

Brassard (2008b, p. 2) stated that outcomes of CC “help build a greater capacity for listening, questioning, dialogue, and feedback in the work place and create a momentum for action and learning well beyond the formal boundaries of the development initiatives that brings people together.

The benefits of CC are defined by Brassard (2008a) as strengthening teams to reveal their humanity, to generate understanding, compassion and capacity to enable greater participation within the team.

A model (Figure 14) was developed from the investigation into CC and reveals the theory, dynamics, and process which lead to the outcomes of CC.

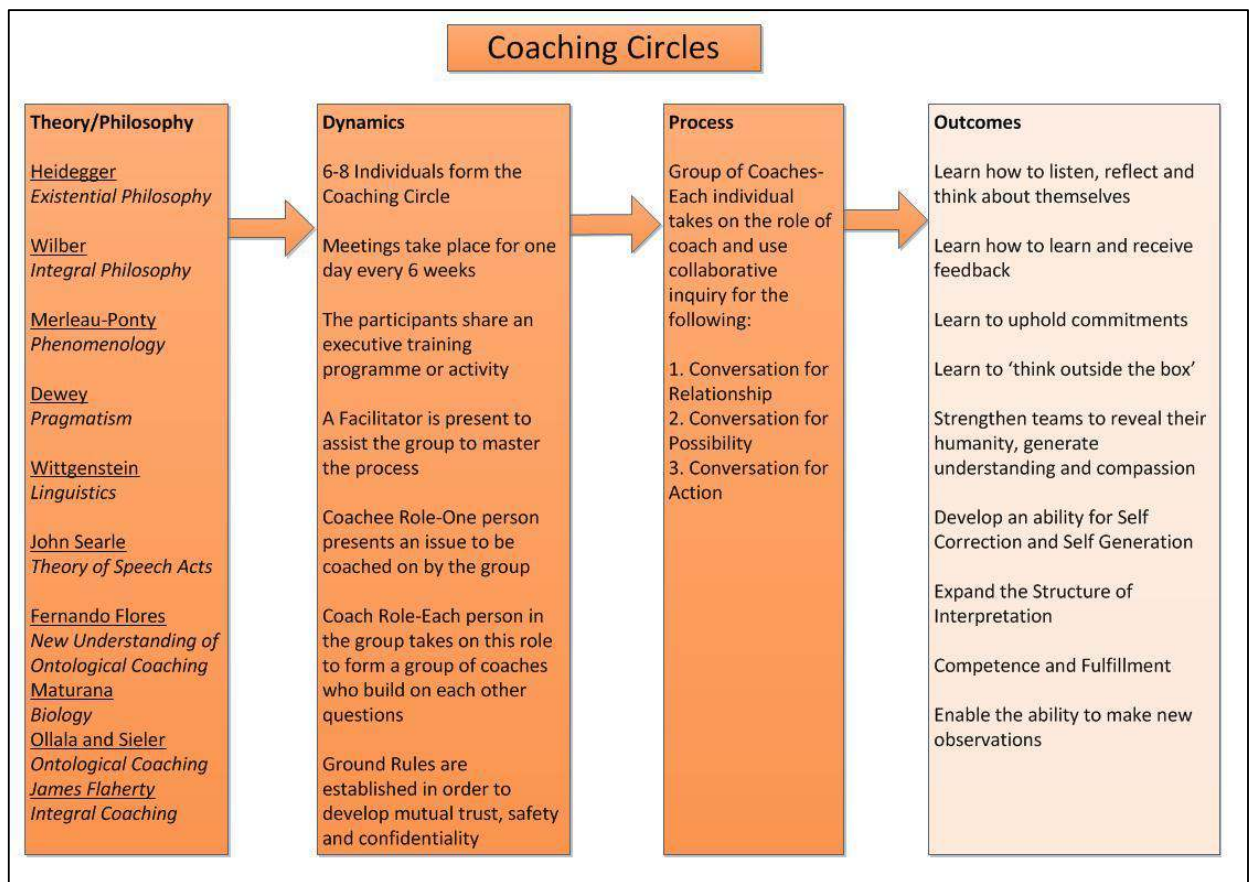


Figure 14: Coaching Circle Model

Source: Own Diagram

2.4 Adult Learning

“Adult Learning is defined as the process of adults gaining knowledge and expertise”

Knowles (1998, p. 124)

Pivotal to both AL and CC is Adult Learning, as Lindeman (as cited by Knowles, 1998, p. 40) explains the key factors for adult learning are that adult learning should be life-centered so that life situations rather than subjects are used. Furthermore Lindeman (as cited by Knowles, 1998, p. 40) argues that “experience is the richest resource for adult’s learning; therefore, the core methodology of adult education is the analysis of experience.” This is a common element for AL and CC is described further by Dewey (as cited by Knowles, 1998, p.94) who explains that “the central concept in education is experience”, which is considered the starting point rather than the result of an educational experience.

This process of Adult Learning is further explained by Boyd, Apps, et al (as cited by Knowles, 1998, p. 11) who state that “Learning is the act or process by which behavioural change, knowledge, skills, and attitudes are acquired.” Furthermore inducing the transfer of knowledge can be achieved through discussion where the interaction between learner and environment is stimulated and “the process is usually initiated, however, by verbally stated questions of the ‘problem solving’ variety [Gagne (as cited by Knowles, 1998 p. 82)].

Bruner (as cited by Knowles, 1998, p. 99) states that the basic mode with learners is done through questioning and “sees questions as instruments to open engaged minds to unsuspected possibilities”. Furthermore Bruner (as cited by Knowles, 1998, p. 99) describes student-student interaction and limits his role as arbiter in order to encourage development of the student as an independent thinker who evaluates the “quality, precision and relevance of ideas.”

Finally, the success of Adult Learning according to Postman and Weingartner (as cited by Knowles, 1998, p. 101) is measured through various behavioural changes in students some of which are the frequency with which they ask questions as well as the increase and relevance of those questions. Furthermore it is the “willingness to suspend judgments when they have insufficient data; their willingness to modify or otherwise change their position when data warrant such change; the increase in their tolerance for diverse answers; their ability to apply generalisations, attitudes, and information to novel situations.” Postman and Weingartner (as cited by Knowles, 1998, p. 101) claim that lessons need to pose a problem to the student, and

the questions posed for teaching aim to “clarify a problem, make observations relevant to the solutions of the problem, and make generalisations based on their observations.” This process will engage the student in producing knowledge through “defining, questioning, observing, classifying, generalising, verifying, and applying” and they claim that all knowledge results from these activities.

2.5 Conclusion

This literature review explored academic literature which is relevant to the field of CC and AL and assessing them through the lens of an Adult Learning Environment

AL was defined and analysed to clarify the pivotal role it plays in creating learning organisations whose benefits are discussed by Marquardt (1999) in creating a learning organisation. He defines this learning organisation as developing self awareness and self confidence in their employees who are reflective and effective in their questioning techniques as well as better at communication and teamwork. The review outlines AL and the role that it plays in the group learning process which has strategic benefits as the organisation develops the capacity to adapt to change through the individuals developing problem solving skills. Furthermore a brief analysis of the history of AL is assessed pioneered by Revans in terms of theories and practices that guided AL to evolve into the methodology it is today.

The common principles that characterise AL are reviewed followed by the actual process of AL which are examined and a description of the various components that determine the activity. This process develops skills that Pedler (2008) outlines to allow the person to understand the issues within a group context while developing a cycle of learning, reflecting, reframing and taking action. The application and benefits were evaluated and the review clarifies how self awareness and self confidence are developed through the reflection process. The review then assesses the process of developing leaders through AL, and how AL facilitates the necessary skill development of the managers. The leadership aspect of AL requires asking the right questions at a fundamental level.

Furthermore the review then looks at Coaching and how it has been developed based on the combination of ontological and integral philosophy, which is rooted in the work by Maturana

in Ontology. Ontology is a study of the ‘way of being’, and Coaching creates the space to question the underlying assumptions and explore the SOI of the coachee.

The outcomes of coaching are reviewed next, to ascertain the role that it plays in enabling self correcting and self generating behaviour for long term performance excellence practices and how the use of language is the key to altering the coachee’s SOI. It was concluded that the ability for the coachee to develop competence and fulfilment in finding purpose and meaning is one of the primary objectives of coaching.

With respect to CC, the literature review looks at how they have come into being at a time when organisations need to incorporate AL and coaching into their mode of operating to build internal capacity and make certain they can withstand the changing landscape of the business challenges they face. The process of CC is explained by stating the reasons why they are effective in enabling change from an adult learning perspective; and by creating a safe environment that encourages inquiry and reflection through feedback from other participants.

In conclusion, the review expounded on the use of AL in CC and the factors which need to be in place to allow the learning process to be effective and that the willingness to change is integral to a shift on an organisational level.

3. Research Methodology

The Researcher developed the following model (Figure 15) in order to visually represent the structure and chronological order of the Research Methodology. The researcher will use it as a guideline to explain the process of her data analysis and to structure the research process, applying the aforementioned Mixed Methods approach to analysing the question “Do Coaching Circles use the same Methodology and lead to similar Outcomes as Action Learning?”

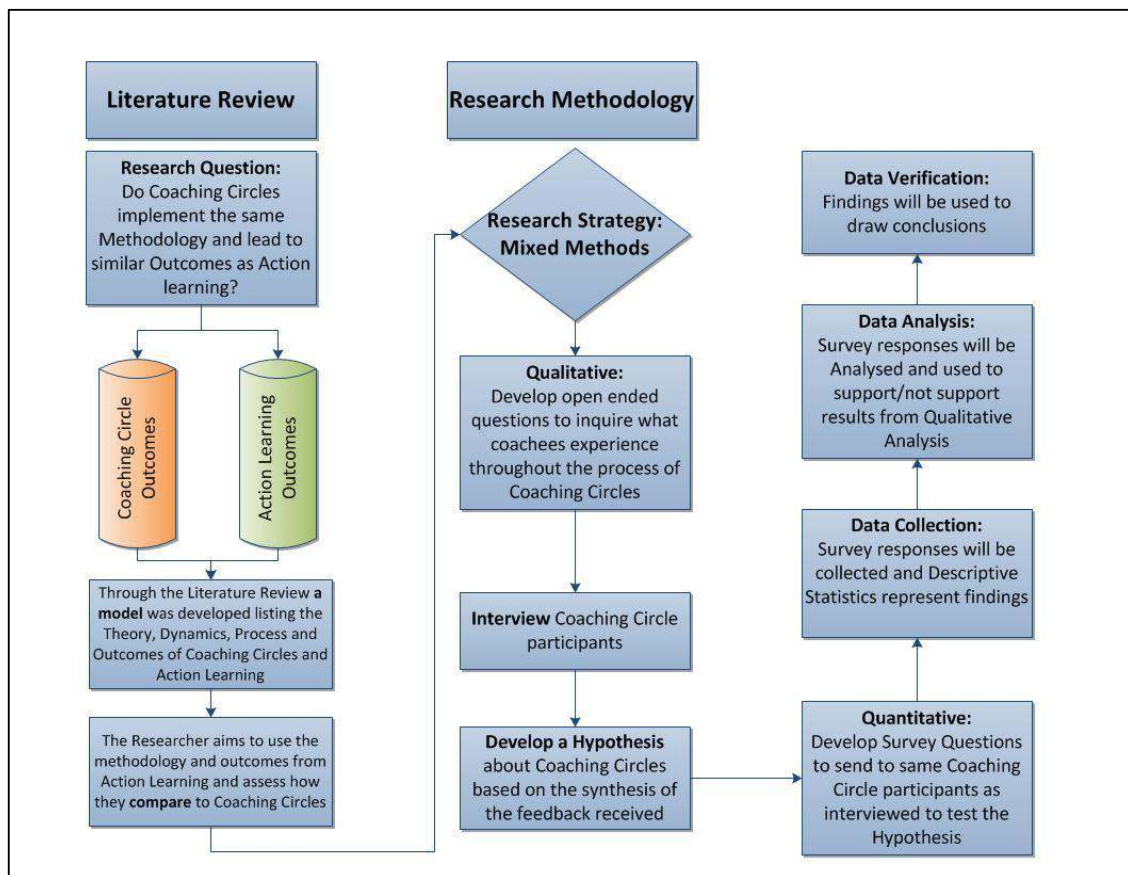


Figure 15: Research Methodology

Source: Own Diagram

3.1 Research Approach and Strategy

There are three distinct components to the Research Design; according to Creswell (2009, p. 5) they are defined as the *Strategy of Inquiry*, *Philosophical Worldview* and the *Research Methods*. The researcher plans to use a Mixed Method Strategy of Inquiry, a Pragmatic

Philosophical worldview and Research methods based on Questions, Data Collection, Data Analysis, Interpretation, Write-Up and Validation (Figure 16).

Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009) explain how a Sequential Mixed Design using Qualitative and Quantitative methods in chronological order uses the first phase to develop a theoretical perspective which will inform the generation of research questions or hypotheses (or both) in the second phase.

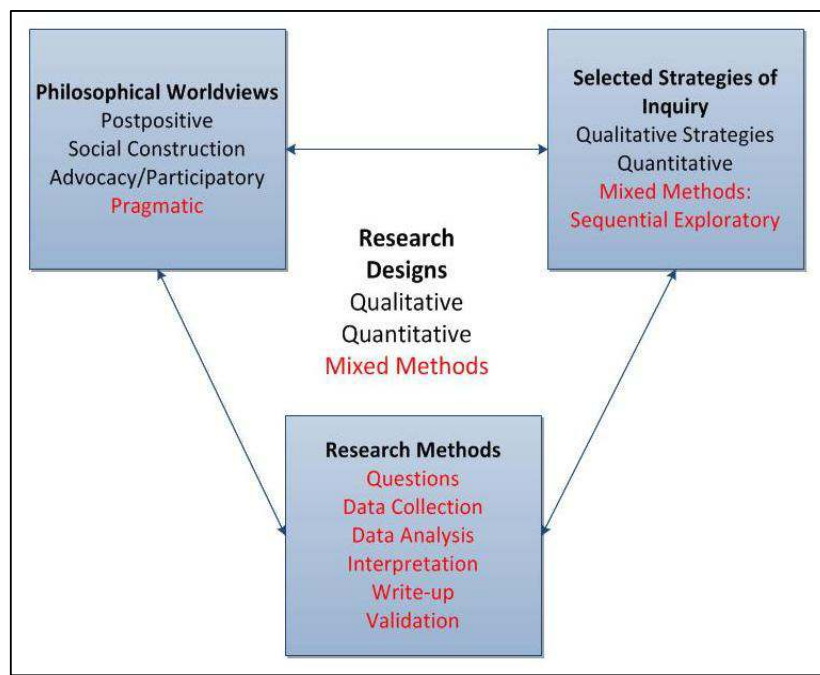


Figure 16: Framework for Design

Source: Creswell (2009, p. 5)

3.1.1 Pragmatism

Pragmatism is explained by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) as being an important philosophical partner to Mixed Methods as it “rejects the either-or choices from the constructivism-positivism debate.”

There are three questions which are important in relation to which paradigm is chosen as described by Guba (1990: 18), namely:

Ontological: What is the nature of the “knowable”? Or, what is the nature of “reality”?

Epistemological: What is the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable)?

Methodological: How should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge?

The questions are described in Table 2 (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 88) which reveals the various dimension of pragmatism and describes how the *Ontology* (nature of reality) of pragmatism accepts diverse viewpoints and therefore is based on the personal value system of the researcher. The *Epistemology* (researcher or participant relationship) shows both objective and subjective perspectives depending on the stage of the research cycle, and the methodology will be both qualitative and quantitative.

Dimensions of Pragmatism	Pragmatism
Methods	Both QUAL and QUAN; researchers answer questions using best methods
Logic	Both inductive and hypothetico-deductive
Epistemology (researcher/participant relationship)	Both objective and subjective points of view, depending on stage of research cycle
Axiology (role of values)	Values important in interpreting results
Ontology (the nature of reality)	Diverse viewpoints regarding social realities; best explanations within personal value systems
Possibility of causal linkages	Causal Relations, but they are transitory and hard to identify; both internal validity and credibility important
Possibility of generalisations	Ideographic statements emphasized; both external validity and transferability issues important

Table 2: Pragmatism Contrast Table

Source: Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p. 88)

According to Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009, p. 90) pragmatists “decide what they want to study based on what is important within their personal value systems. They then study that topic in a way that is congruent with their value system, including units of analysis and variables that they feel are most likely to yield interesting responses.”

3.1.2 Mixed Methods

Mixed methods originated in 1959, when Campbell and Fiske used multiple methods in a study of psychological traits. This “multimethod matrix” was soon employed by others by combining qualitative observations and interviews with quantitative data (Sieber as cited by Creswell, 2003: 14). It was noted that the biases of one method (qualitative), could be neutralized by another method (quantitative), according to Creswell (2003). Researchers were encouraged to start using the multi method matrix, according to Creswell (2003) and investigate multiple data collection methods, which developed into qualitative data (observations and interviews) being incorporated with quantitative data (surveys). “Recognising that all methods have limitations, researchers felt that biases inherent in any single method could neutralize or cancel the biases of other methods” Creswell (2003: 15). This led to the birth of triangulating data sources, as a means to converge the qualitative and quantitative methods, as Green, Caracelli and Graham (as cited by Creswell, 2003) explain triangulation allows for the results of one method to develop or inform the other method.

There has been fierce debate in the construct of research, and the philosophical underpinnings of how one engages with the research process, as discussed by O’Leary (2010). This is because there has been a shift from the previously dominant scientific ‘positivist approach’ to an inductive ‘post positivist approach’ which is more participative, exploratory and collaborative. The basis of this shift lies in how the researcher views ontology and epistemology in approaching the research processes. Ontology is defined by O’Leary (2010: 5) as “The study of what exists, and how the things that exist are understood and categorised” while Epistemology is defined as “How we come to have legitimate knowledge of the world; rules for knowing.”

Mixed methods have therefore been defined by Creswell (2006: 5) as “Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focusses on collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone.”

The benefits of using mixed methods are described by Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009, p. 33) who state that “A major advantage of mixed methods research is that it enables the researcher to simultaneously ask confirmatory and exploratory questions and therefore verify and generate theory in the same study”

The researcher felt that mixed methods would be appropriate due to the subject matter which required an exploratory approach and the opportunity to verify conclusion with descriptive statistics. This is supported by Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009, p. 129) who assert that “Mixed methods research questions are concerned with unknown aspects of a phenomenon and are answered with information that is presented in both narrative and numerical forms.”

According to Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009) mixed methods designs are required when Qualitative (QUAL) or Quantitative (QUAN) are not sufficient in answering the research question. Furthermore Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009) explain that MM designs can do the following:

- Address Confirmatory and Exploratory questions with QUAL and QUAN approaches
- Provide the researcher with stronger inferences
- Provide the researcher with a greater selection of divergent views

According to Creswell et al (2005) there are certain basic steps to performing a mixed methods study which are similar to traditional research methods namely identifying the purpose of the study; the research question and the type of data to collect. Mixed methods however include three additional steps which inform each other and are not necessarily sequential. They are listed as “whether to use an explicit theoretical lense, identifying the data collection procedures, and identifying the data analysis and integration procedures” Creswell, 1999; Greene and Caracelli, 1997; Morgan, 1998; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998 (as cited by Creswell et al, 2005)

3.2 Research Design: Data Collection Methods and Research Instruments

The *Data Collection* methods will entail the collection of survey responses to determine the outcome experiences of CC for participants, and statistical methods will be used to create inferences about the information that is generated from the statistical analysis.

The researcher also performed a literature review through desktop research using the library, on-line library and the internet to source a wide range of publications in the form of books, e-books and journals. The researcher also participated in a Coaching Circle to gain a deeper understanding of what the process entails. The researcher used the lecture notes, feedback forms and verbal information from participants to inform her understanding of CC.

The research methods that are used in mixed methods approach are explained by Creswell (2009: 15) and refer to “the forms of data collection, analysis, and interpretation that researchers propose for their studies.” According to Creswell (2009: 17) the philosophical assumptions are based on pragmatic knowledge claims. The researcher will be using sequential exploratory mixed methods approach as a strategy for inquiry.

Furthermore the information that will be gathered through these interviews and surveys will remain confidential and the identity of the individuals will not be revealed. Even though the research will combine Qualitative and Quantitative research methods, it will be Qualitative orientated which implies that the Qualitative aspect will be dominant (Figure 17). The quantitative aspect will be used to substantiate the findings from the qualitative research.

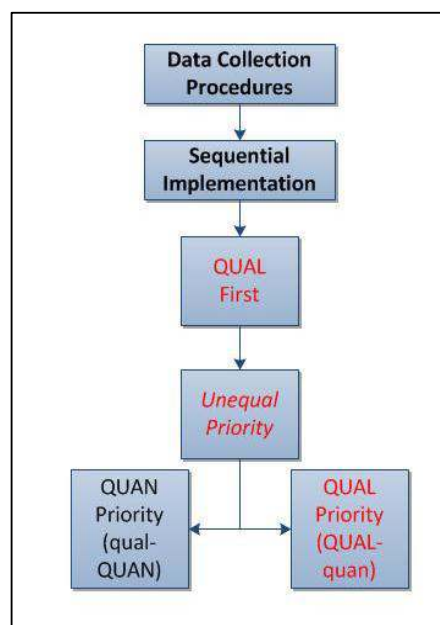


Figure 17: Data Collection Procedures

Source: Hanson et al (2005, p. 227)

The use of Mixed Methods means the research will be inductive for qualitative and deductive for the quantitative approach. Inductive reasoning is defined by Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 33) as beginning with an observation and then using “specific instances or occurrences to draw conclusions about entire classes of objects or events.” Deductive Logic will then draw on the premise that has been developed through induction and “reasoning proceeds logically towards conclusion.” Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 32)

The *Sequential Exploratory Mixed Methods* approach will be used, as explained by Creswell (2009, p. 14) as it allows the researcher to use procedures that expand on findings of one method using another method.

The Sequential Exploratory (Figure 18) approach according to Creswell (2009, p. 211) means that the first phase of qualitative analysis is followed by the second phase of quantitative data collection and analysis “that builds on the results of the first qualitative phase.” Creswell (2009) explains that “the weight is generally placed on the first phase, and the data are mixed through being connected between qualitative data analysis and the quantitative data collection” (Figure 17). Furthermore Creswell (2009) explains that the quantitative data results assist the researcher to interpret the qualitative findings. According to Hanson et al (2005) there is no explicit use of an advocacy lense using this method. Quantitative data are used primarily to augment qualitative data. Creswell (2009) states that a key decision for a researcher will be which findings from the initial qualitative phase to include. Furthermore Hanson et al (2005) explains that these designs explore relationships when the study variables are unknown and therefore are very useful for this purpose.

Hanson, Creswell, Plano, Clark, Petska and Creswell (2005, p. 229) explains that “Data analysis is usually connected, and integration usually occurs at the data interpretation stage and in the discussion.”

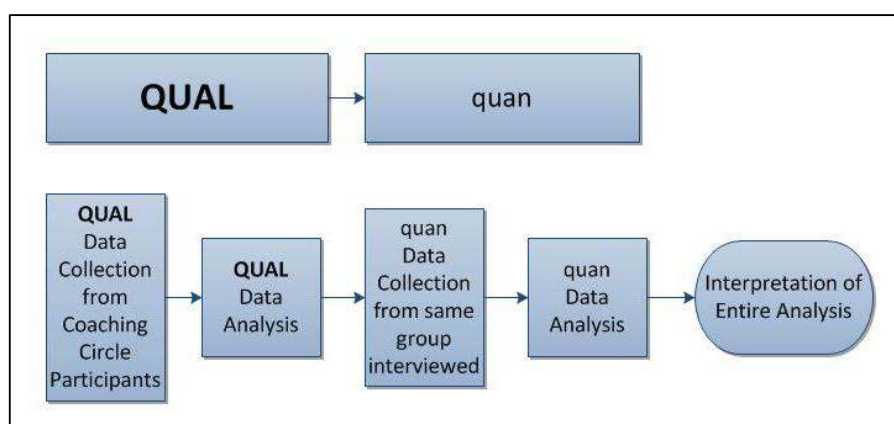


Figure 18: Sequential Designs

Source: Adapted from Creswell (2009, p. 209)

The sequential steps are displayed in Figure 18 which shows the Qualitative data collection takes place first as interviews with a group of Coaching Circle participants. This is followed by the quantitative data collection as surveys are sent to the same sample of Coaching Circle participants which is followed by data collection and analysis. At this point all the information that has been gathered will be analysed and conclusions will be drawn from this process.

Qualitative Process

The researcher plans to use the AL Model (Figure 5) and Coaching Circle Model (Figure 14) as a starting point, as they were developed to clarify the process of each programme in terms of Theory, Dynamics, Process and Outcomes. The Outcomes from the AL Model will be used to *develop semi structured interview questions* which the researcher plans to ask a minimum of six individuals (who took part in CC) during an interview process. They will be performed in person or on the telephone. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010) the semi structured interview follows standard questions and allows the researcher to ask probing questions for clarification.

Confidentiality of Interviews

According to O’Leary (2010) the conditions to insuring confidentiality and anonymity mean that the identity of the individuals providing the research data is protected and that identifying data remains exclusively with the researcher. Therefore the information that interviewees provide is not identifiable to any particular respondent. The researcher therefore ensured that

all identifying information provided by interviewees was kept confidential and anonymous in keeping with the agreement during the interview process.

Hypothesis

The Interview process will help the researcher *develop a Hypothesis* about what the participants in CC experience as outcomes from the Coaching Circle process. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 4) “a hypothesis is a logical supposition, a reasonable guess, an educated conjecture. It provides a tentative explanation for phenomenon under investigation. It may direct your thinking to possible subproblems and, in the process, the principal research problem.”

Quantitative Process

A *survey questionnaire* using close ended questions will be developed using a Likert Scale in order to produce Descriptive Statistics. This online survey will be sent to the same sample of coachee participants that were approached for interviews to ascertain their experience of CC in light of the Hypothesis which was developed. The questionnaire will allow the researcher to produce descriptive statistics which can be used for the analysis process. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 187) the survey is simple in design, and “the researcher poses a series of questions to willing participants; summarises their responses with percentages, frequency counts or more sophisticated statistical indexes; and then draws inferences about a particular population from the responses of the sample.”

3.3 Sampling

The researcher needs to be strategic in choice of sampling methods as explained by O Leary (2010, p. 171) the interviewees that the researcher uses as a sample are instrumental in:

- The preliminary phases of the investigation and assist in building the researchers contextual understanding
- *Triangulating* the accuracy of gathered data and confirm the credibility of the researchers findings
- Generating *primary data* for the qualitative process

The researcher took a *purposeful* approach to sampling, defined by Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 147) as a nonrandom approach to selecting data sources (interviewees) for qualitative

studies. The researcher therefore “selects those individuals or objects that will yield the most information about the topic under investigation.” Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p. 170) affirm that *purposive sampling techniques* “are primarily used in QUAL studies and may be defined as selecting units based on specific purposes associated with answering a research study’s questions.”

The researcher chose a purposive sampling strategy described by Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 147) as ‘theoretical sampling’. This means that the interviewees are chosen according to those that would assist the researcher to “develop a theory of the process in question.” This would fall within the Qualitative stage of the data collection process. Theoretical sampling according to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p. 177) is used to develop emerging categories in order to make them definitive and useful, “thus the aim of sampling is to refine ideas, not to increase the size of the original sample. Theoretical sampling helps us to identify conceptual boundaries and pinpoint the fit and relevance of our categories”

The sample size for qualitative sampling is relative to a small sampling frame, according to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009). As explained by Quinn (as cited by Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 182) “there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry” as the sample size is dependent on what the researcher wants to know and “what will have credibility” Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p. 182). Hence it is recommended by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) to assess the sample size according to the saturation of information. Saturation is described by Kruger and Casey (as cited by Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 183) as “the point when you have heard the range of ideas and aren’t getting any new information.” Therefore the “saturation in purposive sampling occurs when addition of more units does not result in new information that can be used in theme development.” (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 183)

The Quantitative data collection stage will use a sampling method defined as ‘discriminant sampling’ which Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 147) describe as “returning to those data sources that are most apt to help them validate that theory”

3.3.1 Research Sample at ABSA

The researcher used this sampling method on a group of Coaching Circling participants who had taken part in the ABSA in-house Integral Coaching Programme (ICP) which was implemented by the CfC (Figure 19). The seven month programme was aimed at developing

employees (not necessarily Management) within ABSA to become Certified Coaches and formed part of a larger training programme designed by the CfC. This sample was chosen because they had the necessary experience of at least four CC to contribute the relevant information needed for the research study.

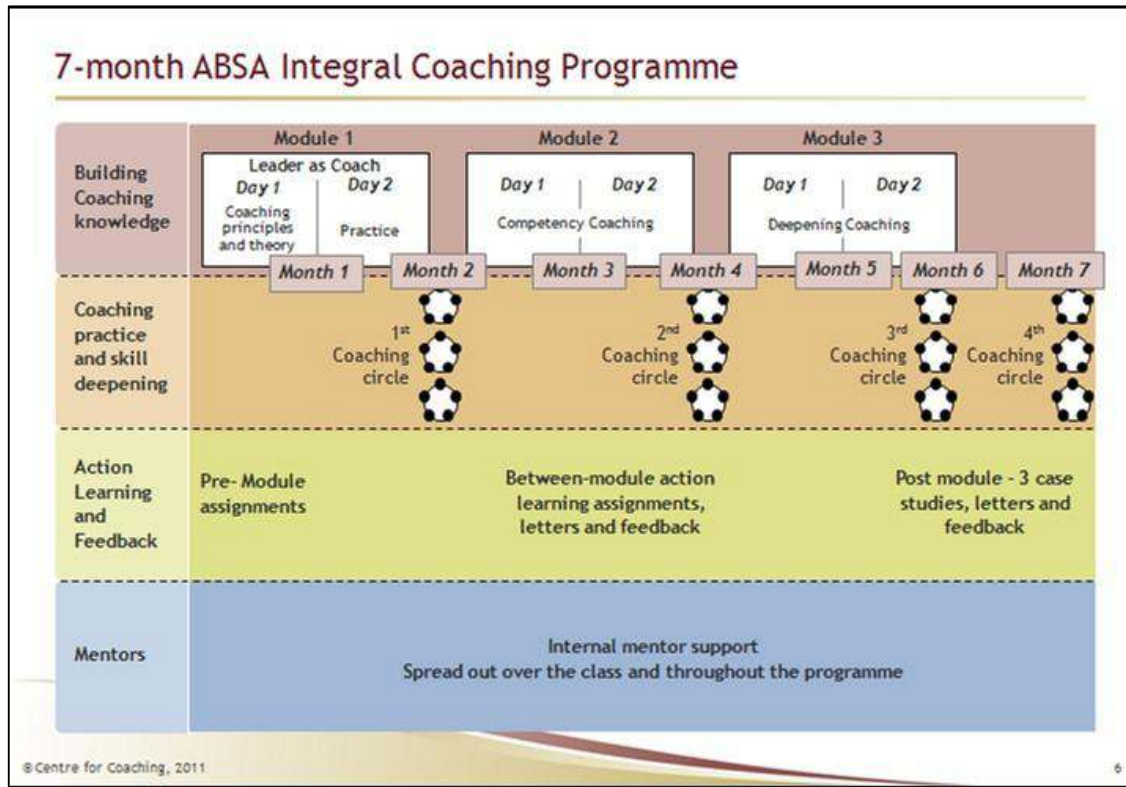


Figure 19: ABSA Integral Coaching Programme

Source: Center for Coaching (2011)

No	Name	Position	Level	Coaching Participant
1	Respondent 1	Head of Learning and Development	Senior Manager	Yes
2	Respondent 2	HR Manager	Senior Manager	Yes
3	Respondent 3	AFS organizational Development consultant	Senior Manager	Yes
4	Respondent 4	HR Organisation and Design Consultant	Manager	Yes
5	Respondent 5	Legal Advisor	Manager	Yes
6	Respondent 6	HR Organisational Development	Manager	Yes
7	Respondent 7	Head of HR for Corporate functions.	Senior Manager	Yes
8	Respondent 8	HR Business Partner	Senior Manager	Yes
9	Respondent 9	Coaching Circle Facilitator	Consultant	No (Facilitator)
10	Respondent 10	Specialist Coaching Mentoring and Talent Development.	Manager	No (Facilitator)

Figure 20: Interview participants at ABSA

There were a total of sixty-six CC participants that had taken part in the ICP programme and ten agreed to be interviewed which is a 15% response rate (Figure 20).

The sampling was limited to those participants that were available and willing to be interviewed during the period in which the researcher was in Gauteng at the ABSA Head Office. There were two interviews which took place over the phone as one interviewee was based in Bloemfontein and the other was not available during the time that the researcher was in Gauteng. The rest of the interviews happened in person and interviewees were asked questions from the questionnaire (Appendix 2) if they had participated in CC. The Facilitators had a questionnaire (Appendix 1) which was an amended version of the questionnaire for coachee's in order to gauge the facilitator's perspective on the Coaching Circle experience. All the interviewees were encouraged to elaborate on the open ended questions if they felt they had anything further to share.

The quantitative phase of the research requires the hypothesis to be tested, and the same sample of sixty-six ABSA employees individuals were contacted via email and requested to complete the online survey questionnaire (Appendix 6). The questions were specifically worded to be close ended questions which allow the researcher to ascertain a specific viewpoint on the questions raised. A total of nine Coaching Circle participants responded to the survey questionnaire which is a 14% response rate.

3.4 Research Criteria: Reliability, Validity, Limitations

Creswell(2009) explains the difference between reliability and validity, where “ *Qualitative Validity* means that the researcher checks for accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while *Qualitative Reliability* indicates that the researchers approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects” Gibbs (as cited by Creswell, 2009, p. 190).

3.4.1 Reliability

Reliability according to Bryman & Bell (2007, p. 40) focusses on “the question of whether the results of the study are repeatable.” This can only be done when certain measures have been put in place to establish reliability. Therefore Gibbs (as cites by Crewell 2009, p.190)

recommends the following reliability procedures in order to confirm the approach is consistent and reliable:

- Check transcripts for obvious mistakes during transcription
- Insure that the codes do not drift from their definitions, or that the meaning of the codes changes.

3.4.2 Validity

Validity is described by Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 97) as the “accuracy, meaningfulness and credibility of the research as a whole.” In order to establish the accuracy of findings according to Creswell (2009, p.191) the researcher should incorporate “Validity Strategies” in the proposal. This is to maintain “trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility” (Creswell and Miller (as cited by Creswell, 2009, p. 191) within Qualitative research. They assert that ‘Validity’ is one of the strengths of Qualitative Research and determine the accuracy of findings from the “researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account” (Creswell and Miller (as cited by Creswell, 2009, p. 191).

Internal validity is described by Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 97) as the extent to which the design and data produced enable the researcher to “draw accurate conclusions about cause and effect relationships within the data.” This is supported by Shadish, Cook and Campbell (as cited by Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 25) who explain it is “the validity of inferences about whether the relationship between two variables is causal”. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p. 25) explain it as the “internal validity of a hypothesized cause in an experiment is enhanced to the degree that plausible alternative explanations for the obtained results can be eliminated.”

External Validity is explained by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009, p. 24) as “the generalisability of the QUAN results to other person, settings, or times.” Leedy and Ormrod (2010) discuss external validity as “the extent to which its results apply to situations beyond the study itself.”

The importance of considering both internal and external validity when designing a research project is discussed by Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 101) who emphasize that “ones

conclusions are valid and meaningful only to the extent that they are warranted based on the data collected and have applicability beyond the specific research situation itself.”

Creswell (2009, P. 220) describes the various types of issues that can arise within research validity as relating to “sample selection, sample size, follow up on contradictory results, bias in data collection inadequate procedures, or the use of conflicting research questions.”

Therefore the following techniques will be used as described by Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 101) in order to mitigate against the threat of validity within the research:

- *Thick description*: There is enough rich thick detail for the reader to be able to draw their own conclusions
- *Feedback from others*: Seeking out the opinion of colleagues in the field in order to gauge whether the researcher’s interpretation and conclusions are valid.
- *Respondent validation*: The researcher takes the conclusions back to the interview participants in order to assess whether they are accurate or not.

Furthermore Creswell (2009) expresses the benefits in presenting the negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes while Miles and Huberman (1994) describe how checking for outliers is also a technique to test the conclusions drawn on certain patterns.

Research Bias

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010) the “researcher cannot avoid having data contaminated by bias of one sort or another” and the researcher should therefore acknowledge that this has influenced the formulation of conclusions. The researcher has been part of a Coaching Circle which has had a direct influence on how the researcher views the Coaching Circle experience and may have influenced her findings.

Triangulation

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) explain how triangulation techniques use sources such as interviews and observations, combined with Qualitative and Quantitative methods in order to determine the trustworthiness of data. They elaborate further that triangulation strategies strengthen the *Credibility (Internal Validity)* in Qualitative research which describes the “degree of fit between the participants realities and the investigators constructions and representation of those realities” Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p. 297).

Triangulation is also advantageous as it allows for various collection methods namely semi-structured interviews to be triangulated with a questionnaire. Furthermore Leedy and Ormrod (2010) argue that Mixed Methods provide a more complete picture for studies in human behaviour when combining the best elements of qualitative and quantitative elements. Creswell (2009: 14) explains that researchers understood that each approach has limitations and by combining both qualitative and quantitative the “biases inherent in any single method would neutralize or cancel the biases of other methods.”

Furthermore Bryman and Bell (2007) explain how qualitative research can facilitate quantitative research as it can provide a source for a hypothesis which can be tested using the quantitative strategy as well as aid the design of survey questions for structured interviewing and self completion questionnaires due to the in-depth knowledge gained from the qualitative research of social contexts.

These techniques will therefore be incorporated into the data analysis to make certain that the conclusions drawn are accurate and trustworthy.

3.4.3 Limitations

The limitations in the mixed methods approach are the demands for extensive data collection, “the time intensive nature of analysing both text and numeric data and the requirement for the researcher to be familiar with both quantitative and qualitative forms of research” (Creswell, 2003: 210)

Despite the interest in coaching, there has been very little empirical research performed; therefore a limitation of the study is the limited research material on CC. Furthermore the specific type of CC are focussed on the CfC model on Integral Coaching which is also limited to the books, brochures, and articles Flaherty, O’Flaherty and Everson (Center for Coaching) have written on the subject. A further limitation is that the researcher will not be able to be present to witness a coaching circle for the company that will be used and therefore the information will be gathered in interviews, surveys and not through direct observation. However the researcher did take part in a CC in order to understand what the process and experience entails.

The CC are being studied within the context of the ABSA ICP programme, however CC also take place in other contexts such as leadership development work. Therefore another study would need to be performed in order to assess if the results are the same. A recommendation for future research is the expansion of the information gathered and analysed in this research report with the aim to perform further in depth study on CC.

4. Data Analysis, Discussion and Findings

The Data Analysis was done in phases (Figure 21), with weighting given to the Qualitative analysis while the Quantitative analysis was used to support or not support the hypothesis developed from the Qualitative process. The researcher relied on various tools within the Qualitative process, namely *coding*, *conceptual frameworks*, and *matrices*. Each tool offered benefits and aided the researcher in organising the theoretical frameworks and interrogating the data during the analysis. The Quantitative analysis used the information which was generated from the interview process for statistical analysis. Using the lens of AL the interviews and descriptive statistics were assessed to ascertain whether CC used AL methodology and had similar outcomes from the perspective of the Coaching Circle participants.

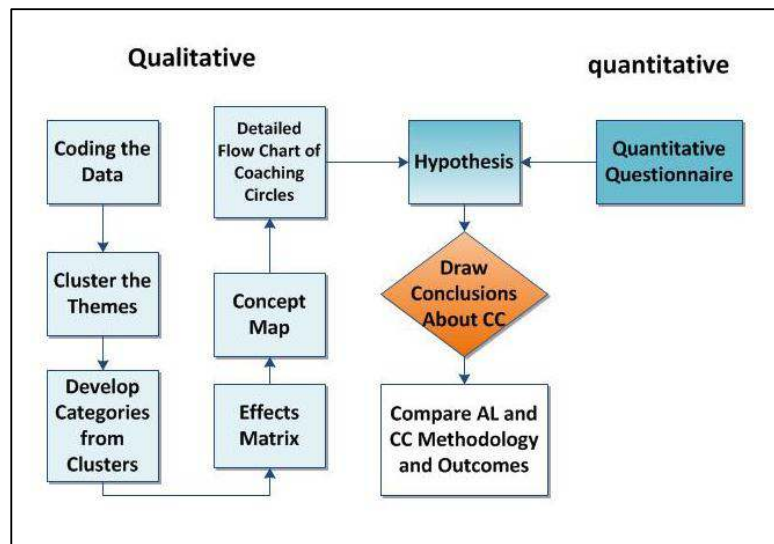


Figure 21: Research Method Flow Chart

Source: Own Diagram

The researcher used the qualitative process to develop four categories namely Self Awareness, Teamwork and Comradery, Personal Development Skills and Adult Learning Environment. These were used to develop three hypotheses and the quantitative survey was used to support or not support the three hypotheses. A model was used to show how these categories developed and built on each other. An analysis could then be performed comparing the methodology and outcomes of AL and CC (Figure 21).

4.1 Qualitative Analysis

According to Creswell (2009, p. 218) the data analysis refers to the “type of research strategy chosen for the procedures.” Creswell (2009) asserts that when using the sequential approach developing an instrument to obtain themes and specific statements is part of the first phase of qualitative data collection. This is followed by the next phase where the statements are used as themes to develop a survey instrument which is based on views of those interviewed.

Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 91) explain that a display is “a visual format that presents information systematically, so the user can draw valid conclusions and take needed action.” Furthermore Miles and Huberman (as cited by Bazeley, 2009, p. 9) argue that “you know what you display” and that researchers should use displays in order to move from description and explanation into the “ladder of abstraction.”

Organising the Data

The data was combined from the interviews performed with coaching circle participants and facilitator as both questionnaires overlapped in terms of providing insights about CC and were separated according to themes when they were coded.

The researcher used the Phases of Analysis in Table 3 which sets out a guideline for the qualitative analysis and recommends three separate phases which can be followed in order to process the data from the interviews.

Phases of the Analysis			
Type of Analysis	Phase 1: Orientation to the data	Phase 2: On the way-working with the data	Phase 3: Final composition of the analysed data text (verbal and visual)
Content Analysis	Reading or studying data sets to form overview and to apprehend the context (within data text)	Coding Segments of meaning. Categorising related codes into groups. Seeking relationships between categories to form thematic patterns.	Writing the final themes of the set of final data. Presenting pattern of related themes.

Table 3: Summary of Phases and Types Of Quantitative Analysis

Source : Henning et al (2004: p. 138)

Interviews

In order to gain an understanding of the participants experience of CC, 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher which lasted approximately one hour on average. Due to the exploratory nature of the research, the researcher prepared semi structured interview questions for Facilitators (Appendix 1) and Coaches (Appendix 2) to explore the Coaching Circle participant's experience of CC, what they saw as the purpose, process and value of CC as well as the personal benefits and impacts they experienced on their organisation.

The ABSA interviews took place between Monday the 3rd of October 2011 and Thursday the 6th of October 2011 on the premises at ABSA in Gauteng. An additional interview took place at the ABSA offices in Cape Town. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed however transcriptions were not included within the Appendices to insure confidentiality. The CC participants all worked at ABSA in various levels of the organisation (Appendix 3) and had been to four CC in the last year. Furthermore according to (Appendix 3) 60% of the interviewees had completed the course while 40% were still in the process of completing the Coaching Course. The interviewees were 70% Male and 30% Female, and 70% were White, while 10% were Indian, 10% were Black and 10% were Coloured.

To avoid contamination of the results the Coaching Circle participants were not informed about the reason for study hence AL was not mentioned throughout all the interviews by the researcher. However due to the nature of semi structured interviews if AL was brought up by the interview the researcher did ask probing questions. The CC participants were told that the

research was aimed at exploring their experience of CC, and were encouraged to elaborate freely on any areas they felt were pertinent to them.

The interviews were then transcribed, and the raw data was analysed using the three phases of analyses as stated by Henning et al (2004)

- Study data sets to form an overview
- Code segments of meaning
- Categorise related codes into groups
- Seek relationships between categories to form thematic patterns
- Write final themes
- Present pattern of related themes

4.1.1 Coding

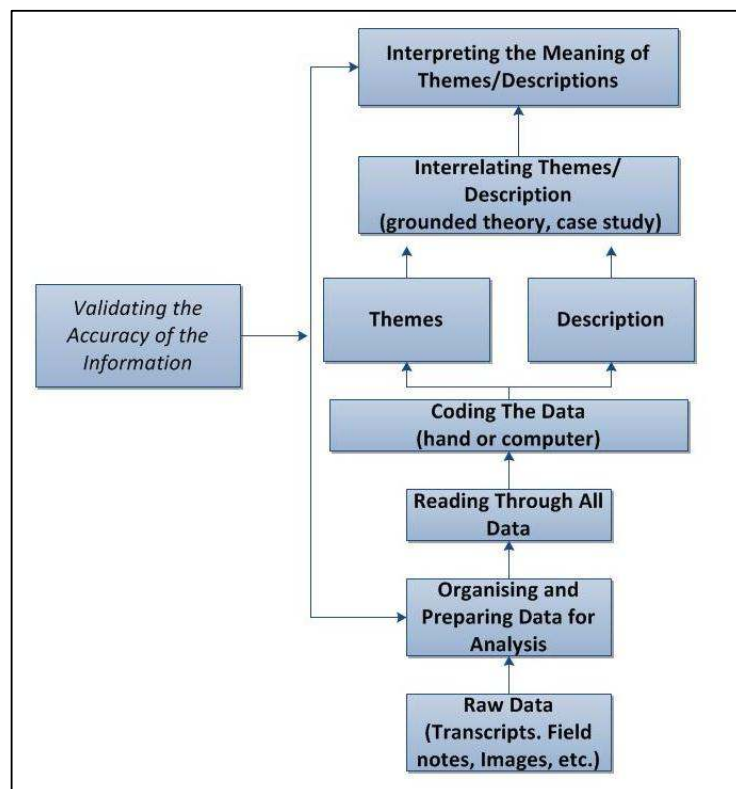


Figure 22: Data Analysis in Qualitative Research

Source: Creswell (2009, p. 185)

The researcher had all the interviews transcribed, and went through the steps in Figure 22, of organising and reading through the data to get a general sense of the tone of ideas as described by Creswell (2009). According to Rossman and Rallis (as cited by Creswell, 2009,

p. 186) “Coding is the process of organising material into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to information.”

The coding process in Figure 21 begins with an exploration and analysis of coded excerpts from the qualitative data, according to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) so that that coding involves reading through the data and “deriving themes that can be employed to form the basis for codes” Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 259). The researcher found comments made in the interviews and extracted them using coding software in order to generate ‘*Broad Themes*’ (Figure 23).

The next stage involved these concepts being named ‘*Core Ideas*’ which are clusters of data comprised of the common patterns in meaning found during coding. Explained by Henning et al (2004, p. 102) where “the data are divided into small units of meaning which are then systematically “named” per unit (coded according to what unit of meaning signifies for the researcher) and then grouped together” to form core ideas which contain the codes that are related. Therefore each core idea will contain codes that are “semantically related” Henning et al (2004, p. 102). Miles and Huberman (1994) explain this stage in the coding process as *clustering*, once the codes have been assigned to the chunks of data they are then assigned to clusters in order to “cluster the segments relating to a particular research question” Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 57).

The third stage generates ‘*Categories*’ from the clusters as per the language used in the interviews. This entails finding “the most descriptive wording for your topics and turning them into categories”, these categories are formed by reducing the entire list and grouping topics that relate to each other (Creswell, 2009, p. 186). Furthermore Glaser and Strauss (2008) explain that categories are generated when one is comparing differences and similarities in groups and also suggests generalised relations to form.

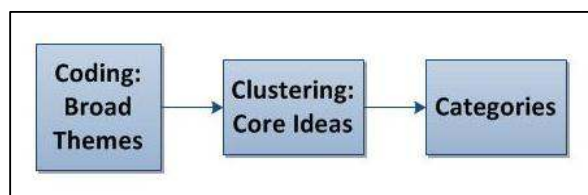


Figure 23: Coding Process

Source: Own Diagram

4.1.3 Broad Themes

The researcher found that through the coding process the data polarized into the impacts on the organisation (Table 5) and the impacts on the individual (Table 4). There was a pattern that started developing in describing their personal experience of CC and how it had allowed them to develop new skills and perspectives. The organisational impact was described in the ways that it affected interaction with their team and how they related to their organisation as a whole. This coding process was continued until the researcher had exhausted themes from the data.

Broad Themes-Impact on Individual	Core Ideas	Categories
Coaching Circles allows one to practice Coaching Methodologies	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Adult Learning Environment
One learns from different Coaching Styles	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Adult Learning Environment
Coaching Circles are a Supportive Environment	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Adult Learning Environment
One develops deep Listening Skills	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Adult Learning Environment
There is a diverse mix of people at the Coaching Circle	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Adult Learning Environment
Brings the theory to life through practice	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Adult Learning Environment
Allows one to expand your SOI	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Self Awareness
One develops greater Emotional Awareness	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Self Awareness
Through curious questioning it allow the one to unlock the issue themselves	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Self Awareness
Develop Competency to Identify Areas for Personal Development	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Personal Development Skills
Focus on how to ask the Right Questions	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Personal Development Skills

Table 4: Example of Impacts on the *Individual*: Themes, Core Ideas and Categories

Broad Themes-Impact on organisation	Core Ideas	Categories
Used Coaching Model in Company Strategy Document	Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory	Adult Learning Environment
Incorporated coaching methodology-open ended questions in meetings	Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory	Adult Learning Environment
ABSA has built an internal capacity of managers with deep listening skills	Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory	Adult Learning Environment
Employees have incorporated Coaching Methodology in organisation	Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory	Personal Development Skills
Coaching Circles allow one to discuss where we are in our careers	Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory	Personal Development Skills

Table 5: Example of Impacts on the *Organisation*: Themes, Core Ideas and Categories

4.1.3 Core Ideas

The aim behind the next phase of coding was to cluster and link the patterns which started to emerge within the themes and these *Core Ideas* were listed as the following:

- Ability to observe, reflect, and apply coaching theory
- Coaching methodology enables the learning process
- Areas for improvement in CC
- Building a safe environment where coachees form trust
- Building the capacity to relate to other perspectives

The patterns were found to be around how CC allowed them to learn and apply the theory by practicing CC and being corrected in the moment. The majority of interviewees had feedback on the ways that CC could be improved, with a strong emphasis on continuing with the same group as close bonds had been formed. The interviewees also considered CC to be a safe space and an environment where they had the opportunity to hear different perspectives.

4.1.4 Categories

The *Categories* were formed by using the language of the interviewees in order to find terms that encapsulates the core ideas. These were defined as the following:

- Adult Learning Environment
- Self Awareness
- Teamwork and Comradery
- Personal Development Skills

4.1.5 Data Saturation

Glaser and Strauss (2008) explain that saturation is the point at which no additional data is being found for the researcher to develop any further categories and becomes “empirically confident that a category is saturated” Glaser and Strauss (2008, p. 61). The researcher used the data from the interviews to generate themes, clusters and categories until there were no new categories that could be developed. This was the point where the data had been saturated.

4.1.6 Data Reduction

The Researcher followed the steps of data reduction which forms part of the analysis as explained by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 10) which entails a” process of selecting,

focussing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written up field notes or transcriptions.” Secondly Miles and Huberman (1994) explain how the data is then displayed in an organised compressed manner which allows the researcher to draw conclusions and action. They explain further that displays also form part of the analysis and include matrices, charts and networks in order to “assemble organised information into an immediately accessible, compact form so that the analyst can see what is happening and either draw justified conclusions or move on to the next step of analysis the display suggests may be useful” Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 11).

Effects Matrix

The researcher used a matrix to find patterns within the data and to distil the information to aid in the analysis process. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010, p. 446) “Matrix data shows the pattern of relationship between two sets of items. In qualitative work, matrix displays can reduce information from complex field notes and interviews into a visual display that helps to make evident any patterns or regularities in the data.” Bazeley (2009) argues that matrix displays are a very effective means by which to detect ‘patterns in data’, as these will allow the researcher to ascertain “nature of the associations (in what ways something might vary under particular or different circumstances)” Bazeley (2009, p. 8). Hence the researcher developed an *Effects Matrix* (Appendix 5) using the feedback from the coding process. The researcher used the lens of Coach, Coachee, and Facilitator to arrange the matrix in order to ascertain positive, negative effects, and results of CC. The *Effects Matrix* reflected whether claims were strongly held by one or more than one interviewee. This technique was used as a way to order the information and find patterns through the experience of the key roles within CC. This technique gave weighting to the various comments as explained by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 263) “weighting the evidence is a technique used to assess data quality and decide which data is trustworthy.”

According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 243) matrix explanations are useful when the researcher wants the feedback from informants to be confirmed. Furthermore they explain that any early conclusions drawn need to be confirmed, checked and verified. Therefore they recommended “triangulating, making if-then tests; and checking out rival explanations.”

There were some views which were not held by the majority of the interviewees which the researcher used from the *Effects Matrix* (Appendix 5) to develop the Concept Map as they

introduced a different line of thought, as explained by Miles and Huberman (as cited by Bazeley, 2009, p. 8) “Divergent views, negative cases our outliers-however you choose to label them-provide a rich source for further analytic thinking, as you learn more from them and grow your understanding to incorporate them in your theorising.”

These views are listed as follows:

- Resignations at ABSA were as result of CC
- CC helped participants with Career Management, Conflict Management and Diversity Management

Concept Map

The researcher used concept maps at various stages of the analysis in order to create models which show the layout of the components and processes that enable CC as well as the outcomes. These frameworks formed a construct which helped to formulate the hypothesis from the Qualitative process. Furthermore according to Bazeley (2009, p. 14) “flow charts and models are valuable early in the project to assist in initial conceptualisation and planning but their particular strength is a means to present conclusions from an analysis.” Bazeley (2009) explains that the flow chart allows for clarification on key concepts which help to build a ‘road map’ for the conclusion. Tashakkori and Teddlie (as cited by Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 39) define a conceptual framework as a “consistent and comprehensive theoretical framework emerging from an inductive integration of previous literature, theories, and other pertinent information. A conceptual framework is usually the basis for reframing the research questions and for formulating hypotheses or making informal tentative predictions.”

A *Coaching Circle Concept Map* (Figure 24) was developed from the Matrix in order to show how the various *components, enablers, process* and *impacts* create the CC. The researcher had to choose which areas to concentrate on and selective information from the matrix was used to populate the various parts of the concept map and allowed the researcher to expand her understanding and generate more detail within each section of the Concept Map (Figure 26, Figure 27, Figure 28). The researcher was interrogating the data in order to expand further on the *Coaching Circle Concept Map* using the data obtained from the interviews to inform the process. This process allowed the researcher to expand on her understanding of CC to develop findings which would be explored using the quantitative survey questionnaire (Appendix 1 and 2).

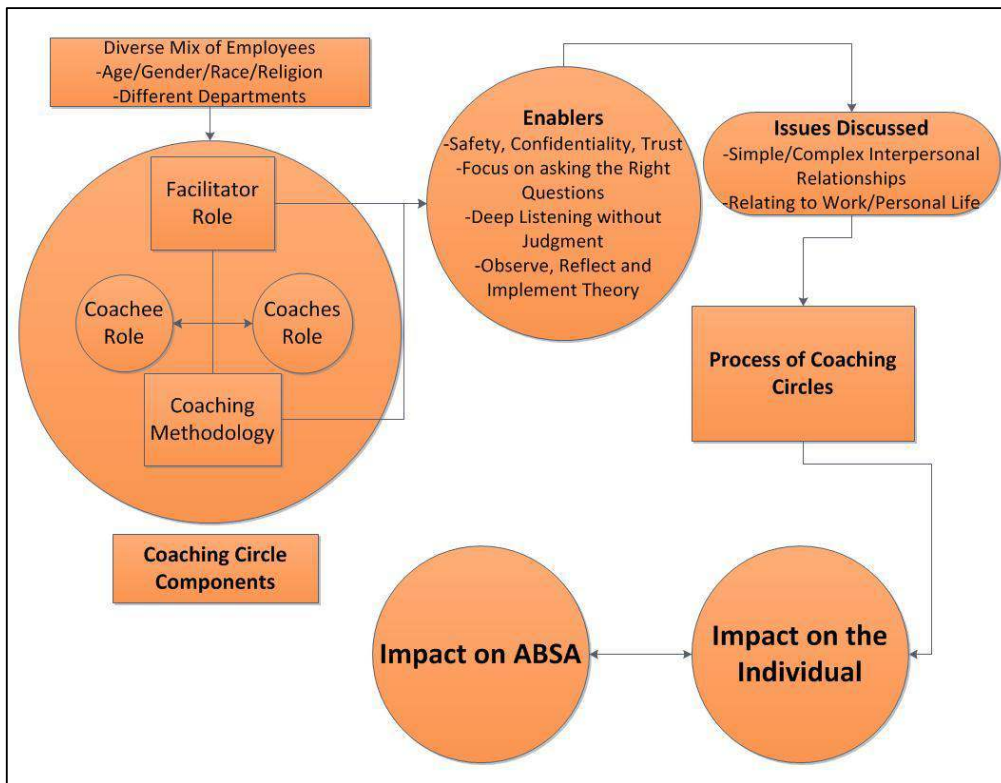


Figure 24: Coaching Circle Concept Map

Source: Own Diagram

4.2 Findings

The matrix allowed the researcher to use the coding process and see the data from a different perspective, as certain comments were weighted; it therefore guided the researcher towards the areas which were commonly held beliefs and those that were strongly held views by individuals. The researcher then used all the information from the Effects Matrix to populate and expand on the Concept map and it is these findings that will be discussed further.

Purpose of Coaching Circles

The primary aim of CC was to teach coaches how to coach, therefore every part of the process and structure of the CC was geared towards this purpose. It enabled the coach to learn what it was like ‘to coach and be coached’, be corrected in the moment and thereby gain the necessary skills to become a coach. The managers were chosen from diverse backgrounds in terms of race, gender and age and they were all managers or senior managers from various departments such as Human Resources, Legal Department and Financial Services. However it

should be noted that the sample consisted predominantly of employees from the HR department as per the graph in Figure 25.

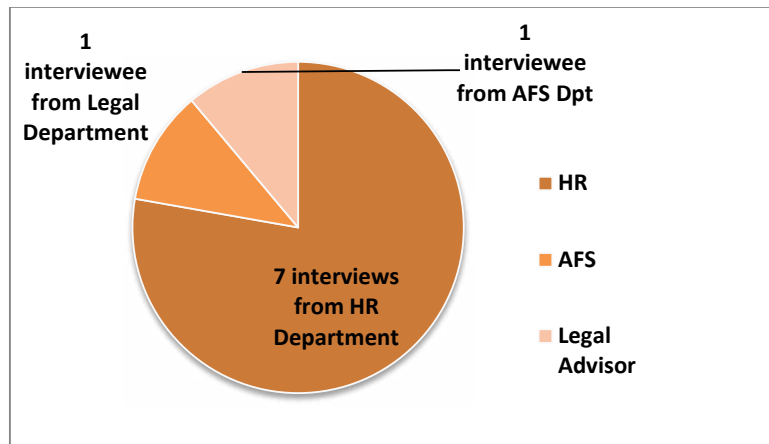


Figure 25: Departments of Various Interviewees

Source: Own Figure

Components of Coaching Circles

There was interplay between the various components of CC (Figure 26) and there were clear roles that were established from the outset:

- Facilitator Role
- Coachee Role
- Coaches Role

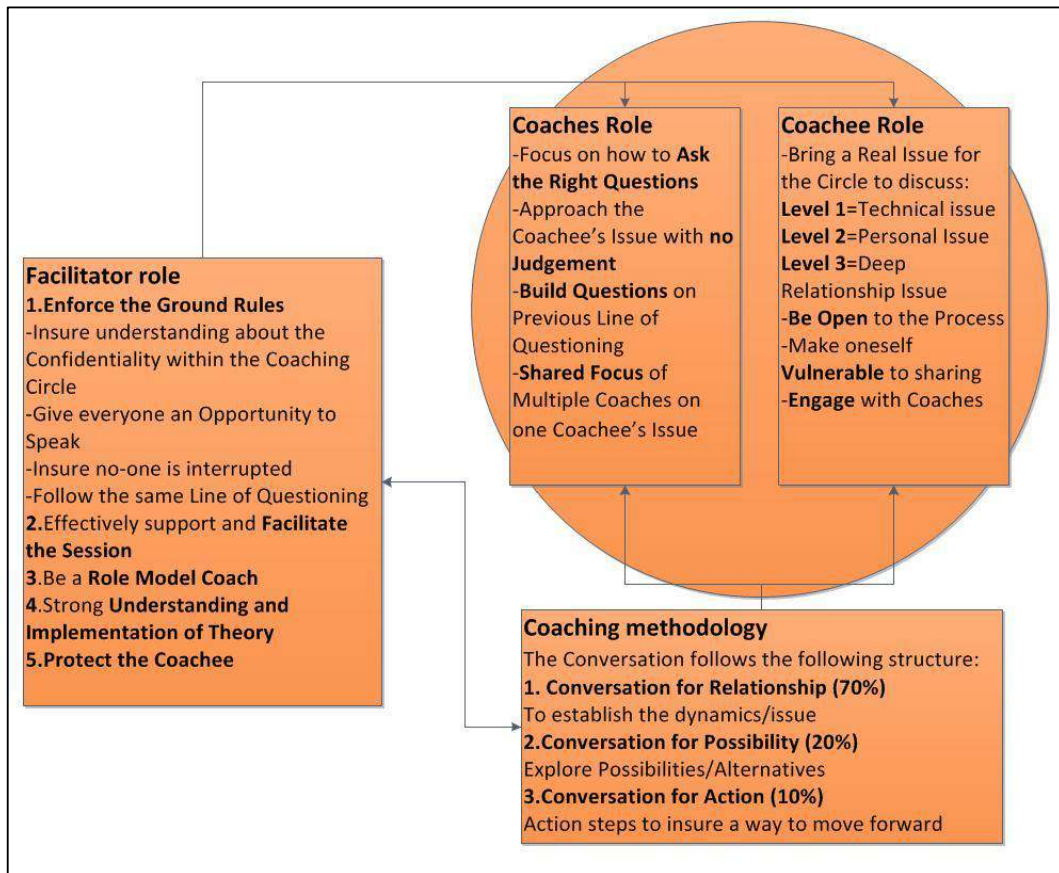


Figure 26: Coaching Circle Flow Diagram: *Components*

Source: Own Diagram

The facilitators' role varied according to the stage of the CC. At the first CC the facilitators' role was crucial in clarifying the ground rules which created a safe space by insuring confidentiality about the discussions that took place. The facilitator ensured that no one was interrupted and that coaches followed the same line of questions so that questions were built on each other. The facilitator protected the individual being coached, and performed as a 'role model coach' as part of teaching the other coaches how to coach. Therefore the Facilitator needed to have a strong understanding of the theory and how to implement it in practice. The facilitators' role however changed as the coaches became more skilled and began to 'self correct' and 'self generate'. They had internalised the ground rules in the way that they communicated within the CC. The CC therefore began to operate independently of the facilitator who stepped in only if needed.

The coachee's role was to bring forward a real issue, an area that they were challenged with at that time. These issues would fall into three categories depending on the level at which the coachee chose to share. *Level 1* represented a basic technical issue (e.g. "How to manage a work project"), *Level 2* represented a more personal issue (e.g. "How do I manage a conflict with my team member"), while *Level 3* was an in depth personal issue (e.g. "I am getting a divorce"). The depth to which the coachee chose to share was their choice and it was found that those coachees that chose to share Level 3 issues developed a deep sense of comradery and trust and continued meeting for informal CC once the official programme through ABSA had been concluded. It was also found that these CC functioned without a facilitator.

The role of coach was shared by all the members of the CC, excluding the facilitator and coachee. Their aim was to focus on asking the right questions and practice inquisitiveness with no judgement in order for the coachee to feel safe to explore the line of questioning that the coaches present. The coaches' task was to take the coachee through the 'Three Conversations for Relationships' which meant that they spent the majority of the time allocated to discussing the 'Conversation for Relationships' in order to gain an understanding of the coachees SOI. They would then guide the questions into the 'Conversation for Possibility' in order to open up alternatives by using Integral Coaching Models. The final phase of the session was dedicated to discussing the 'Conversation for Action' which allowed the coachee to commit to action steps. It was found that CC were a supportive environment for insuring action steps as coaches would agree to call the coachee after the CC to check if they had followed through on their action steps.

Enablers

The CC was found to have certain factors that enabled the success of the process (Figure 27). These were all strongly communicated throughout the interviews as having a large impact on allowing the CC to successfully fulfil its purpose. The sense of safety, support, and understanding of confidentiality allowed coachees to openly share, build mutual trust and respect within the group. The commitment to learning was also seen as an important factor which enabled the progress of individuals and CC as a whole. The process meant that the CC moved through various stages which allowed the group to work through the issue presented by the coachee, by using the coaching methodology it embedded the theory into practice. The interviewees felt that committing to action steps was essential in creating accountability for

the coachee. This became one of the contributing factors towards creating an adult learning environment.

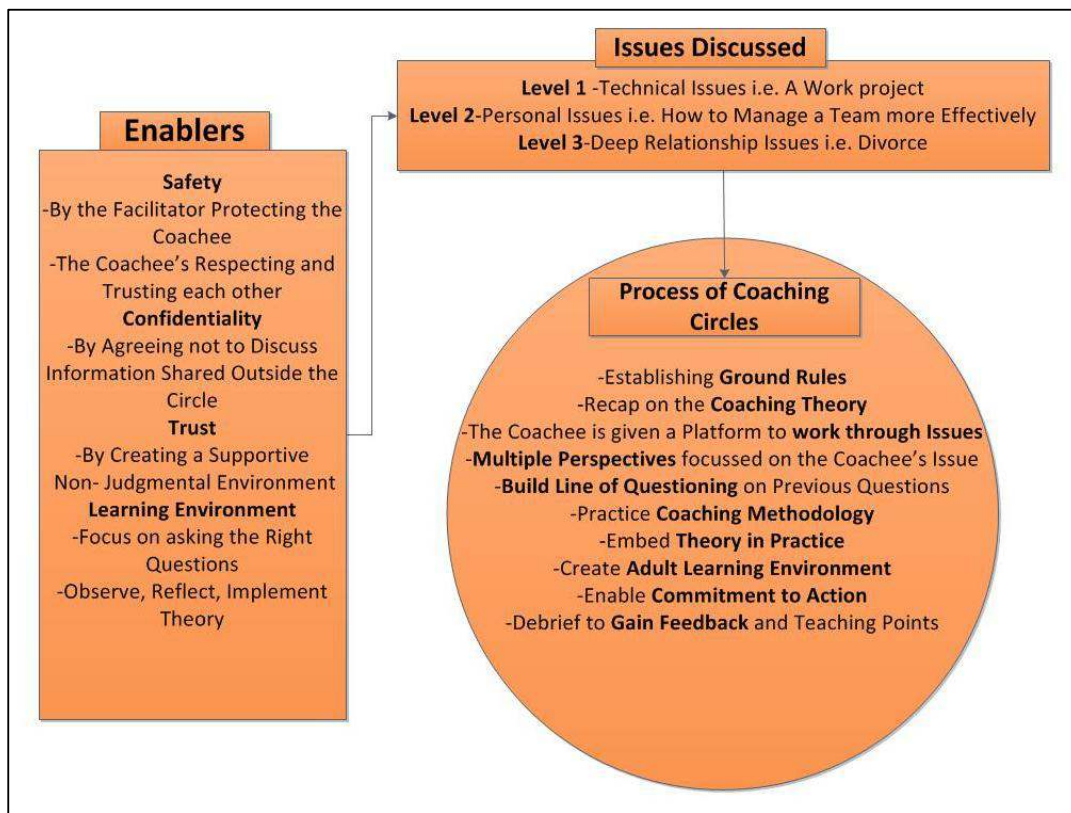


Figure 27: Coaching Circle Flow Diagram: *Enablers and Processes*

Source: Own Diagram

Outcomes

The outcomes of CC (Figure 28) had two impacts, one was on the individual, and the other was on the organisation. With respect to the impact on the individual, one of the most strongly communicated impacts was that interviewees felt they had each developed deep listening skills, and gained an understanding about how to listen without judgment. This was because of the focus on asking the right questions, which forced the Coach to listen in order to understand rather than advise according to their own SOI. There was also a greater awareness of the body (Somatics) and a deeper emotional awareness within oneself by learning to understand triggers through the questions that are fielded by the coaches and the depths to which the coachee was willing to share. The findings also revealed that CC allowed the participants to observe, reflect, and apply the coaching theory which was another factor in creating the adult learning environment. Once the coachee had identified the areas for personal development the commitment to action steps were found to reinforce the learning

process and in some cases allowed the coachee to bring about positive changes in their lives. The participants discussed how they acquired skills to deal with conflict if it was an issue that they had brought up and likewise to define their career goals thereby personally developing skills for career management.

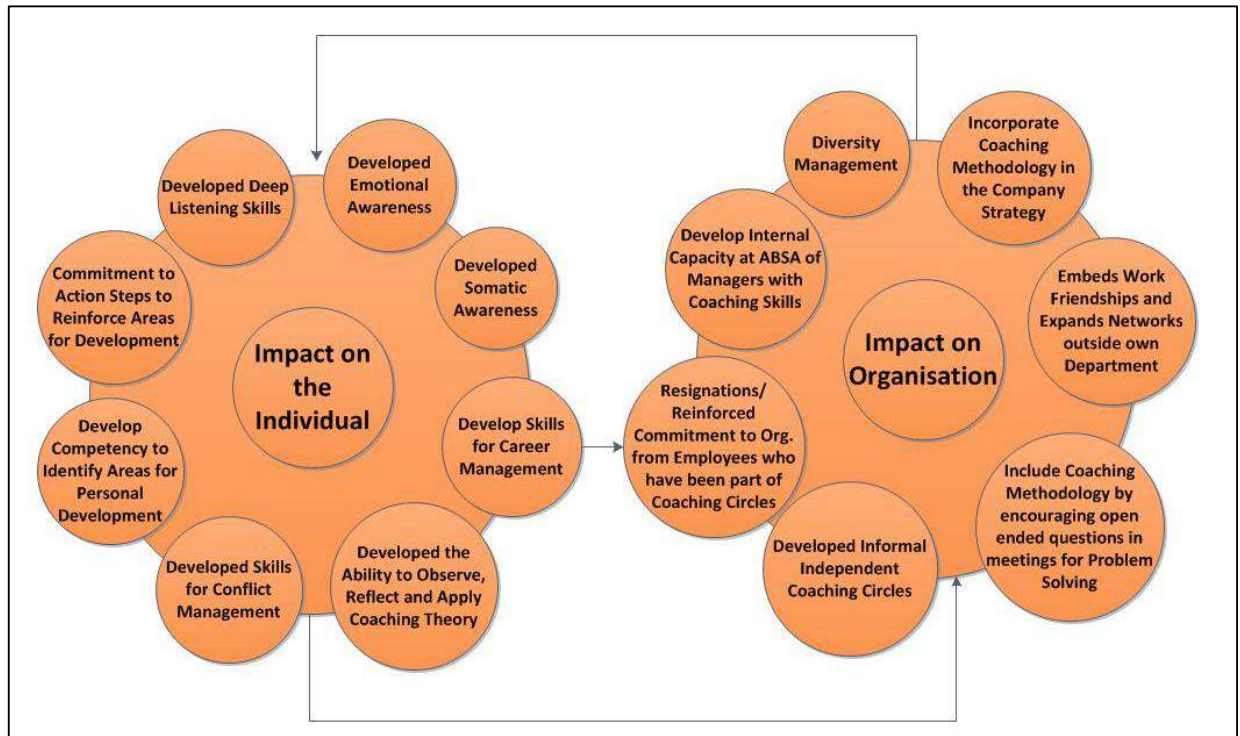


Figure 28: Coaching Circle Flow Diagram: *Impacts*

Source: Own Diagram

The Organisational impacts were seen where interviewees described how they were able to develop empathy for a coachee due to the CC process. In some cases this allowed them to develop greater tolerance for people of different race as respondent 4 states “I could see for this person as a coach it was an amazing learning emotional experience, to feel and understand someone who they had had a specific stereotype about.” As an organisation this dynamic gave people a voice to be heard and developed a much deeper tolerance within individuals which facilitated diversity management within the organisation. The CC also allowed the participants to develop friendships with people from different departments. Therefore, it was an opportunity to expand their networks beyond their own department. The participants saw CC as an opportunity for the organisation to build a strong internal capacity of managers with coaching skills, thereby including the coaching methodology within the organisation. This was seen where managers were encouraging open ended questions in meetings for problem solving. This included the ‘Three Conversation for Relationships’

model within a strategy document to make the point that the organisation spent too much time in action and not enough on exploring possibilities. It was also found that certain members of staff either resigned, or reinforced their commitment to stay at the organisation after the CC. These individuals were not interviewed to explore this impact further. However, according to CC participants who had discussions with these individuals the CC allowed participants to reassess their career choices. Certain participants felt that the ICP programme ended abruptly, and chose to continue informally as a CC outside the ABSA programme. They felt that they had developed a bond with CC participants and could still gain value from the CC.

4.3 Hypothesis

The researcher developed a hypothesis based on the definition by O'Leary (2010, p. 55) as “Logical conjecture (hunch or educated guess) about the nature of relationships between two or more variables expressed in the form of a testable statement.”

The type of hypothesis the researcher used according to Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 278) is referred to as a *research hypothesis* which “exists because the research problem or the subproblems issuing from it arouse curiosity in the researchers mind; this arousal, in turn, leads to a tentative guess about how to resolve the problem situation.” Furthermore Leedy and Ormrod (2010) explain how this gives the researcher a logical framework to guide them in their collection and analysis of the data.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010) a hypothesis in a research project can only support or not support the data, even if it has the best data the hypothesis is rarely able to *prove* or *disprove* the data.

The hypothesis which was developed was a consolidation of data that was gathered and analysed through the coding process where certain overriding themes emerged. These themes were distilled down to core ideas which generated the following categories:

- Adult Learning Environment
- Self Awareness
- Teamwork and Comradery
- Personal Development Skills

The Concept Maps generated certain outcomes for the organisation and the individual as discussed in section 4.1.7 *Findings* and these were used to develop the following Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1

An Adult Learning Environment and the adoption of personal development skills were facilitated through Coaching Circles

Hypothesis 2

Self awareness was a result of the process experienced in Coaching Circles

Hypothesis 3

Effective Teamwork and Comradery developed amongst coachees as a result of Coaching Circles

Glaser and Strauss (2008) emphasize that these hypotheses have not been tested even though they are verified through the course of the research. Therefore the researcher developed a survey (

Appendix 6) in order to support or not support the hypotheses that had been developed through the research process. The researcher contacted the same pool of employees she had interviewed for the qualitative analysis to complete the survey and there were six respondents in total. The researcher also included questions that could be used for triangulation, in order to verify certain themes that emerged from the coding process. There were also question included to test certain strong views and negative comments that interviewees had, in order to assess whether these viewpoints were shared.

4.4 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis was performed using the results of a Likert Rating Scale Questionnaire (Appendix 1) as it is a useful way to evaluate behaviour and attitudes on a continuum which assesses the degree of approval, as stated by Leedy and Ormrod (2010). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p. 234) describe Likert Scales as a way to measure a respondents “level of agreement or disagreement to multiple items related to a topic interest.”

This questionnaire was used because “behaviours and attitudes are often quite complex, and so not, at least on the surface, easily evaluated or quantified” Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 189). The data generated from the questionnaire produced descriptive statistics which are explained by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p. 258) as techniques which summarize the numeric data into “tables, graphs or single representations of group scores” which can be easily interpreted. They explain further that “these goals are achieved through images, graphs, and summaries that can help the reader understand the nature of the variables and their relationships” Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p. 258).

There were a total of ten respondents (Figure 29) to the survey questionnaire (Appendix 7) and majority were from the HR department.

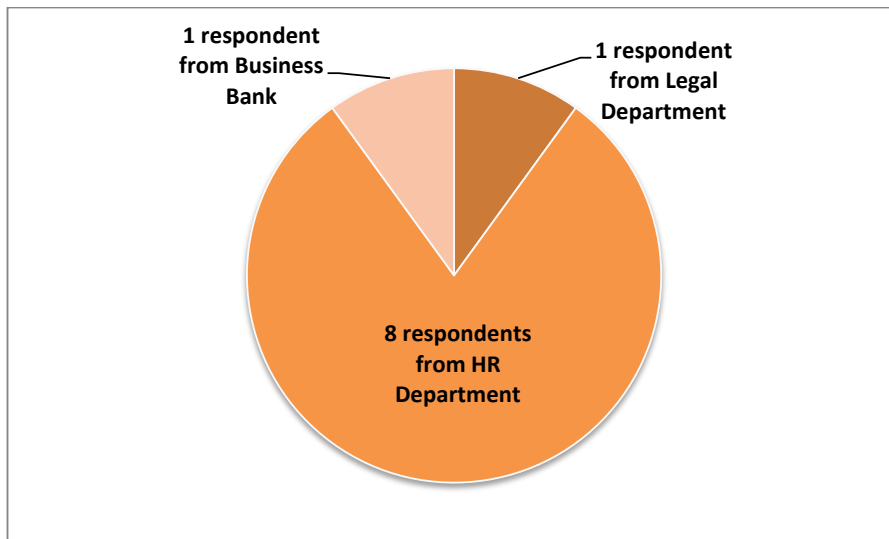


Figure 29-Survey Respondents

4.3.1 Creation of an Adult Learning environment through Coaching Circles

“Significant personal learning entails fundamental change in learners and leads them to redefine and reinterpret their personal, social and occupational worlds” Brookfield (as cited by Knowles, 1998, p. 106)

The survey sought to support or not support the hypothesis that ‘An Adult Learning Environment and the adoption of personal development skills were facilitated through CC.’ The feedback from the surveys (Appendix 7) revealed that 90% of the respondents *strongly agree* and 10% agree *slightly* with the view that CC gave them the ability to ‘Observe, Reflect and Implement Theory’, while 60% *agree strongly* and 40% *agree slightly* about the emphasis to ‘Commit to Action Steps.’ These were viewed by the researcher as Personal

Development Skills, as the findings have shown that CC respondents are using the Coaching Models and taking action to create change in their lives. As stated by Crow and Crow (as cited by Knowles, 1998, p.12) “Learning involves change. It is concerned with the acquisition of habit, knowledge, and attitudes. It enables the individual to make both personal and social adjustments. Since the concept of learning, any change in behaviour implies learning taking place or has taken place. Learning that occurs during the process of change can be referred to as the *learning process*.”

CC do create an adult learning environment as the majority of respondents *strongly agreed* that CC allowed them to:

- Make mistakes and be corrected in a safe environment (90% *agree strongly*)
- Embed theory and models through practice (100% *agree strongly*)
- Understand what it feels like to coach and be coached (90% *agree strongly*)
- Learn from other Coaching Styles (80% *agree strongly*)
- Keep Coaching Skills current (90% *agree strongly*)
- Create a platform for shared focus to figure of an issue (90% *agree strongly*)

These factors create a dynamic which is interactive and allows for the participants in CC to be actively involved, learning from their environment. This view is supported by Hilgard (as cited by Knowles, 1998, p. 74) who explains that “the learner should be an active, rather than a passive listener or viewer.”

The majority of respondents *strongly agree* that they had incorporated coaching methodology in the form of their learnings, models and theory into their organisations, and adopted a coaching style in their interactions with people in their organisations. However 40% of respondents *agree strongly* while 40% of the respondents *agree slightly* and 20% were *neutral* that they had incorporated a coaching style with their family and friends, therefore the researcher concludes that the main impact is seen from an organisational perspective.

The Facilitator role also contributes to the Adult Learning Environment, and 100% of respondents *agree strongly* that a facilitator should:

- Be a role model coach
- Have strong understanding about theory
- Skillfully facilitate the session (90% *agree strongly*)

The survey asked whether the facilitator should provide somatic exercises and 70% *agree strongly* while 20% *agree slightly* and 10% *slightly disagree*. The same divergence in viewpoints was found when asked whether the facilitator should protect the individuals where 80% *agree strongly*, 10% *agree slightly* and 10% *strongly disagree*. The researcher saw this as indicative of the subjectivity of the CC experience as each participant had different expectations of their facilitator.

Furthermore the interviewees were asked whether the CC became self correcting and self generating so that the facilitator was no longer necessary and 10% *agree strongly*, 50% *agree slightly*, and 40% *disagree slightly*. When asked whether informal coaching could be formed without a facilitator 22% *agree strongly*, 44% *agree slightly* and 33% *disagree slightly*. The researcher therefore concludes that the respondents still feel that there is value in maintaining the facilitators' role within the CC.

In relation to personal development skills and CC assisting with Career, Conflict and Diversity management the responses varied and were indicative that even though the majority were in *agreement* there was divergent views. Career Management had 30% *agree strongly*, 50% *agree slightly* and 20% *neutral*. Conflict Management had 40% *agree strongly*, 40% *agree slightly*, 10% *neutral* and 10% *disagree slightly*. Diversity Management had 44% *agree strongly*, 44% *agree slightly* and 11% *neutral*. These were outlier comments in order to test the validity of the viewpoint, and therefore the researcher deduced that even though there was a general sense of agreement, the degrees of agreement varied significantly and indicated that these were possibly outcomes in some cases but not for all CC. However Diversity Management was the most prevalent as an outcome within CC.

The negative comment that the researcher included in the survey was not supported by interviewees as respondents were 60% *neutral*, 20% *disagree strongly* and only 10% *agree strongly* and 10% *agree slightly* when asked whether the resignations at ABSA were as a result of Career Management at CC. The researcher can therefore conclude that the majority saw no link between CC and resignations and would be an avenue of future research.

4.3.2 Develop Teamwork and Comradery

“We define team as any group of people who need each other to accomplish a result”

Senge (1994, p. 354)

The survey aimed to address various aspects which led to Teamwork and Comradery, while also getting direct feedback (Appendix 7) about whether ‘CC allow individuals to develop a sense of Comradery and Teamwork.’ The majority of respondents *strongly agree* in unison that they developed teamwork and comradery through CC. The survey then asked whether facilitators created a safe supportive environment which engenders confidentiality and trust. There were 90% who *strongly agree* and 10% *agree slightly* that these were factors which enabled the success of CC. When interviewees were asked whether CC allowed them to develop trust within the CC 70% *agree strongly* and 30% *agree slightly*. The response to whether CC allowed participants to expand their work friendships outside their departments had 70% of respondents *agree strongly* while 30% *agree slightly*. The researcher therefore saw a link between the trust that is established within the CC and the work friendships that are developed.

The majority of respondents *strongly agree* that a facilitator creates a safe space which engenders trust and confidentiality, and the researcher infers that these factors are the building blocks to generating this sense of teamwork and comradery within the CC.

The respondents were asked whether outside dynamics influence the integrity and trust of the CC, and 70% *disagree slightly* while 30% *agree slightly*. Therefore it was inferred that the majority of participants value the trust that is developed within the CC dynamic and do not allow the ground rules of confidentiality and trust to be undermined.

The researcher inferred that there was a strong sense of comradery and teamwork which develops from CC. This is supported by the development of trust through the confidentiality which was established amongst the participants.

4.3.3 Development of Self Awareness through Coaching Circles

According to the survey (Appendix 7) when interviewees were asked whether CC allowed one to incorporate a ‘Coaching Style of Conversation’ which was defined as ‘open ended questions, active listening and curiosity’, they *agree strongly* in unison. This response was also the case for the following in allowing them to develop:

- Deep listening skills
- Skills to ask the right questions

- Understanding for different SOI's
- Competency to identify areas for personal development

Furthermore interviewees *strongly agree* in unison when asked whether the success of CC was enabled by the ability for deep listening without judgement. However 70% of respondents *strongly agree* to developing emotional awareness, while 30% *agree slightly*. The response to CC creating Somatic Awareness received 60% who *agree slightly* while 40% *agree strongly*. The survey asked whether CC developed empathy for the coachee and 90% *agreed strongly* while 10% *agree slightly*. Therefore the researcher concluded that the degrees to which interviewees agreed differed marginally for these areas and overall the respondents had supported these tools for developing self awareness.

Therefore the researcher has inferred that the skills that were developed through CC all relate to developing greater self awareness, which is defined by Covey (1999, p. 67) who stated that self awareness gives us the ability to think about our thought process and “enables us to stand apart and examine even the way we ‘see’ ourselves” and therefore impacts the way we see ourselves and those around us. Furthermore Covey (1999) explains that unless we gain a level of self awareness we project our intentions onto others behaviour. Argyris (1964, p. 25) explains that “the basic requirement for interpersonal competence is self awareness” and in order to become more aware of the self one needs to receive feedback in order to see how they see him, “in this sense, self awareness requires the help of others.”

The researcher therefore infers that the skills that the interviewees feel that they have developed are keys to greater self awareness, as they create the opportunity for understanding ourselves and others.

4.3.4 Outcomes of the Analysis

The researcher developed a model (Figure 30) which can be seen as the areas which developed from the Qualitative analysis, and were then supported through the Quantitative Analysis. The Adult Learning Environment forms the foundation for CC and enables the process through the development of skills and platform which was created in order to learn. Teamwork and Comradery develop as outcomes from this Adult Learning Environment where participants feel a sense of trust and safety which is encouraged by the ground rules of confidentiality and respect for others. Through this process CC participants are able to

develop self awareness as they practice deep listening skills, learn to understand different SOI's, and develop empathy for the coachee. This ability to listen while suspending judgement means that the participants have to suspend their own views while trying to understand the coachee's SOI. It is this process that allows the participant to develop self awareness of their own views and thought processes.

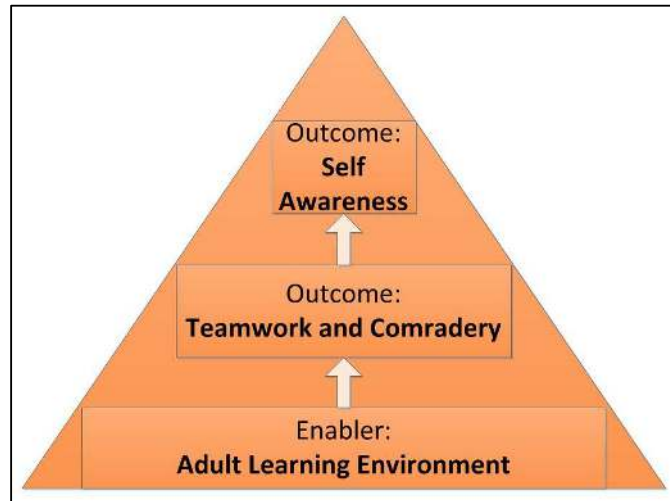


Figure 30: The Outcomes of Coaching Circles

Source: Own Diagram

This process is described by Schon (as cited by Knowles, 1998, p. 140) who explains that “reflection in action is the process of reflecting while performing to discover when existing schema are no longer appropriate. The most effective practioners, and learners, are those who are good at reflection in action and double loop learning.”

4.5 Comparison between Action Learning and Coaching Circles

The researcher used the concept map that was developed for the CC and applied it to AL (Figure 31). This was in order to ascertain the similarities and differences of AL and CC in light of the analysis which had been completed on CC. The various aspects of AL were easily incorporated into the CC Concept Map, which indicates that there were certain similarities between AL and CC. The researcher developed a table for AL (Figure 34) and CC (Figure 33) in order to define and expand on similarties and differences.

There were some very clear links between AL and CC, which relate to the components, enablers, process and some of the outcomes, however the major difference is the primary purpose as well as certain outcomes.

Purpose of Coaching Circles versus Action Learning

The purpose of AL gave the group the tools to solve complex problems to develop teamwork, leaders and organisational capabilities (Marquardt 2011). This differed from the purpose of CC which provided a platform to practice coaching while developing skills and implementing the theory through understanding the experience of coaching and being coached. This difference was found to impact certain outcomes of AL and CC.

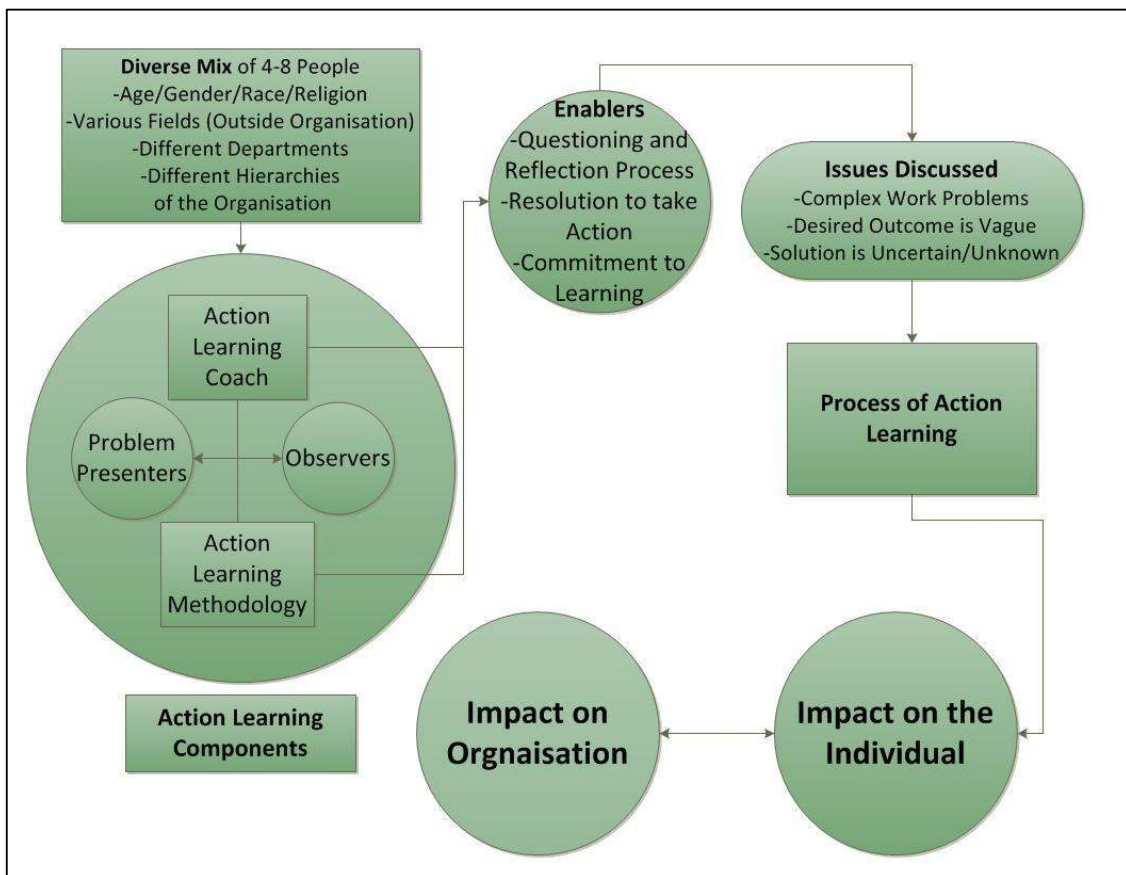


Figure 31: Action Learning Concept Map

Source: Own Diagram

Diversity of Teams

The diversity within the AL group was greater compared to CC as AL included individuals who may not be employed by the organisation as well as employees from different hierarchies of the organisation. This brought diverse views that facilitated creative innovative solutions. As a result the learning could be shared throughout various levels of the organisation which was not the case with CC. According to respondent 10 the general principle in coordinating

the individuals who had volunteered to be part of the ICP programme was to separate people that had a reporting line from attending the same CC to insure that people were with their peers. This dynamic could have undermined the trust within the CC as certain information should not be shared by a Senior Manager in front of their subordinates if their issue pertained to the work. ABSA therefore avoided mixing employees of different hierarchies within the organisation and in most cases focussed on Management for volunteers. The survey responses tried to assess the level of diversity and found that the majority *agree strongly* on diversity in race, gender and age. Representation of different hierarchies had 56% *agree strongly* and 33% *disagree slightly*. Representation of different departments in the organisation had 67% *agree strongly*, 11% *agree slightly*, 11% *neutral* and 11% *disagree strongly*. The researcher concluded that there was greater divergence in viewpoints for these categories and was therefore an area which was not as closely aligned to AL in terms of hierarchical and departmental diversity in groups.

Dynamics

The ALT had a problem presenter and observers, in order to discuss a work issue that was complex while focussing on asking questions to “reframe the problem, frame and formulate a solution, develop and test strategies, take action and reflect on action” (Marquardt, 2011, p. 97). The CC had a coachee who presented an issue which could be personal or work related for the group of coaches to collectively focus on the issue by asking open ended questions to allow the coachee to find a solution and commit to action steps. Therefore the types of problems differed as CC had the potential to become more personal in nature while AL remained focussed on technical problems and did not have the potential to delve into an individual's deep relationship issues. However the steps taken in AL were similar in CC, as the group endeavoured to follow the same route of asking the right questions rather than advising which led to generating action steps, and reflection after the action steps had been taken.

Methodology

According to Marquardt (1999) AL focussed on asking the right questions rather than the right answers, which was why it complemented the Integral Coaching process. Flaherty (2005) explained that coaching is not about telling people what to do; rather it is about giving them a chance to examine what they are doing in light of their intentions. Therefore he states the job of the coach is to speak or show what can happen in order to free people to take action.

An area where they differed was that CC methodology had been developed through Integral Coaching and used specific models in order to facilitate conversations that resulted in commitment to action. AL however had certain steps to follow which resulted in commitment to action, but did not include any models for *how* these conversations should take place.

Action Learning Coach versus Facilitator

The AL Coach was defined as someone who created awareness of improvements that could be made in being more effective as a team and ensured that the group became responsible rather than dependent on the AL Coach (Marquardt, 2011). Even though the name differed the role was the same for the Facilitator in the CC who also served as a role model coach. Once the coaches had acquired the skills to become self correcting and self generating the role of facilitator was only necessary when needed. Therefore the CC did not encourage dependency on the facilitator.

Outcomes

Both CC and AL had impacted the individual and the organisation in building teamwork, creating self awareness and creating a platform for Adult Learning (Figure 32). However the purpose in AL focussed on the individual, team, and organisational learning process while CC was focussed on the individual learning process. The primary focus of the ICP programme was to train employees in becoming coaches therefore the impacts on the individual were the main objectives. However there were further unintended impacts seen in the organisation such as the continuation of informal CC through a sense of ‘teamwork and comradery’ amongst participants. This revealed a further link to AL groups who had the option to continue for weeks, months, or years if they choose to do so. Another link was the incorporation of learning into the organisation which was seen as an outcome for both AL and CC.

The individual impacts in AL focussed on qualities which would make that individual a more effective team member through personal development skills. The CC individual impacts made the person a better coach and team player, while emphasis was on areas for personal development. The researcher saw some very clear links between AL and CC for the individual where questioning and listening skills were the key contributing factors to the process in developing the commitment to action steps which were common in both dynamics. Deep listening also developed empathy for the individual and self awareness which was

common for both AL and CC. In terms of organisational impacts teamwork was common to both AL and CC while the fact that the learnings were incorporated into the organisation was another commonality.

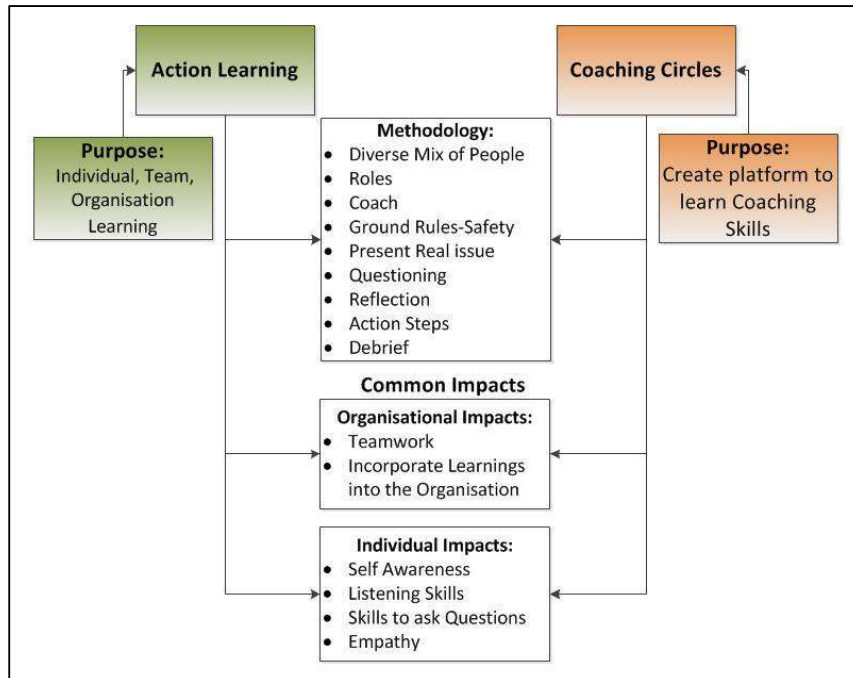


Figure 32: Common Impacts of Action Learning and Coaching Circles

Source: Own Diagram

The methodology showed the greatest commonality where both AL and CC had a diverse mix of people in terms of age, gender and race to form the group. Furthermore a coach was used to establish ground rules that created a sense of safety. The system of roles was similar as an individual presented a real issue to the group which was followed by questioning from the group, reflection and commitment to action steps by the individual with a debriefing as the final step.

The main differentiating factor was the purpose for AL and CC where organisational learning and teambuilding was the main focus of AL compared to developing coaching skills for each CC participant. The researcher therefore concluded that certain methodologies of AL were used in CC while the outcomes showed certain links (Figure 32), but were less aligned due to their difference in purpose.

Coaching Circles

Primary Purpose

Create a platform for the group to practice, learn and implement coaching skills by understanding how to coach and be coached

Components:

Diverse Mix of 4-8 people from different Age, Gender, Race, Departments

= *Coaching Circle with people from diverse backgrounds who are able to contribute different perspectives*

Roles:

Facilitator, Coachee, Coaches

= *Focus on How to ask Right Question/Listening without Judgment/Build on same line of Questioning so the Coachee can solve the Problem*

Methodology:

Integral Coaching Methodology

= *Understand Dynamics/Explore Possibilities and Alternatives/Resolution for Action steps*

Enablers:

Safety, Confidentiality, Trust, Adult Learning Environment, Focus on asking the Right Questions, Observe, Reflect and Implement Theory

= *Create Platform of shared focus to figure out issue/Embed Theory and Models through practice/Deep Listening without Judgement*

Issues Discussed:

Technical Issue/Work Issue/Deep Relationship Issue depending on the level at which the coachee is willing to share

Process of Coaching Circles:

Establish Ground Rules to create safety, confidentiality, trust

Conversation for Relationship/Conversation for Possibility/Conversation for Action/Debrief

Impact on Individual

Deep Listening Skills, Developed Self Awareness, Expand SOI, Empathy, Identify areas for Personal Development, Empathy for Coachee, Skills to ask Questions,

Impact on Organisation

Teamwork and Comradery, Diversity Management, Develop Managers with Coaching Skills, Expand network of work friendships into different Departments

Figure 33: Methodology and Outcomes of Coaching Circles

Source: Own Diagram



Figure 34: Methodology and Outcomes of Action Learning

Source: Own Diagram

5. Conclusion

The researcher began with the question whether ‘CC use the same methodology and lead to similar outcomes as AL?’ This led to assessing the similarities and differences within each group process and the factors that facilitated the adult learning environment for AL and CC. The researcher relied on the literature review to generate the findings for AL and found that the purpose was to develop individual, team, and organisational learning through the questioning and reflection process, resolution to action, and commitment to learning.

CC have not been researched to the same degree as AL. Therefore, the researcher undertook a Mixed Methods research strategy in order to interview CC participants, develop a hypothesis from these findings, and verify them through a survey questionnaire. The researcher found evidence that CC creates an *adult learning environment* which leads to *teamwork and comradery* as well *self awareness*. These findings were supported by the quantitative analysis.

A comparison was performed using AL and CC models in light of the findings from the analysis. Self awareness, listening skills, skills to ask questions and empathy were found to be common areas that impacted individuals in AL and CC programmes. With respect to impacts on the organisation; teamwork and the incorporation of learning into the organisation were defined as common areas. The methodology of AL and CC were found to be very closely linked in relation to the roles; and the inclusion of a coach and general steps taken to reach the commitment to action steps. The lack of commonality between AL and CC was due to the difference in the purpose in AL which focusses on individual, team, and organisational learning while CC focus mainly on the individual learning process.

CC have successfully developed coaches with a sense of self awareness and teamwork by creating an adult learning environment. This outcome was facilitated through the use of AL methodology which established an understanding of respect and safety, emphasis on questioning, deep listening and the need for a commitment to action steps. CC have given the coachee a platform amongst a diverse group to be heard which allowed coaches to expand their SOI by hearing different perspectives and to see beyond the stereotypes.

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7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Coaching Circle Facilitators

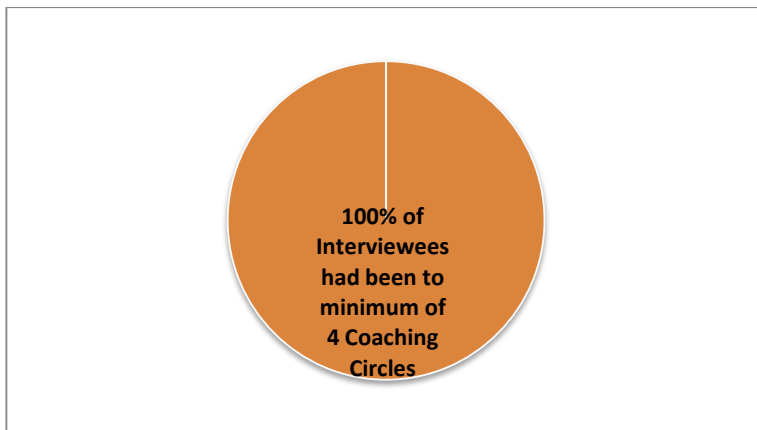
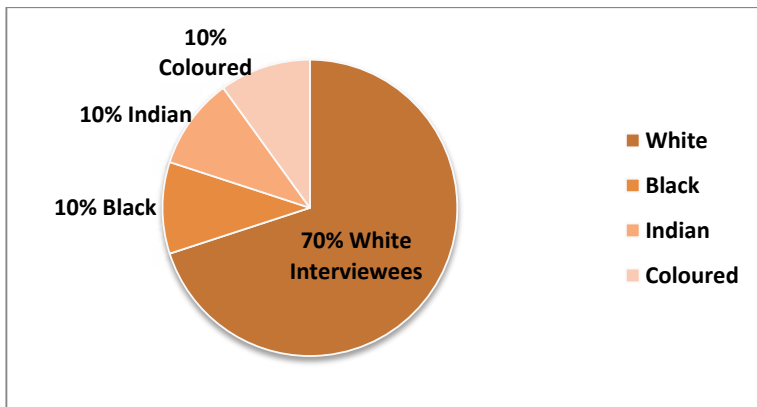
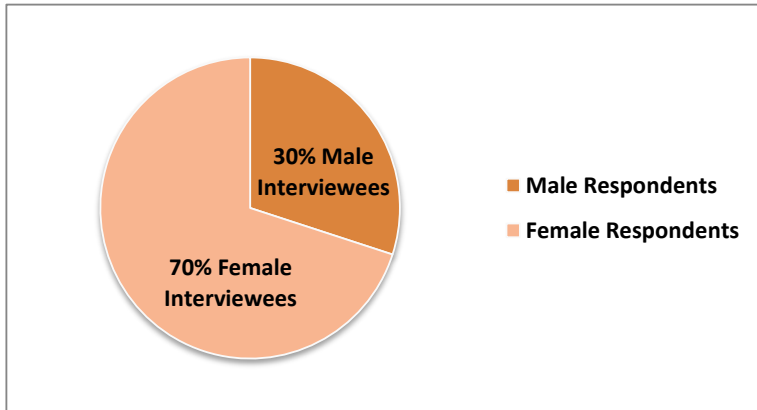
1. Please elaborate on your understanding of the purpose of coaching circles?
2. Approximately how many coaching circles have you facilitated?
3. How long have you been a facilitator for coaching circles?
4. Please elaborate on the role you play as facilitator of a coaching circle?
5. Please describe the process you facilitate with fellow coachees' during a Coaching Circle?
6. Please describe the type's problems/issues that are brought up at coaching circles?
7. Explain how you facilitate coaching circles to work through problems/issues?
8. What capabilities have you developed through facilitating Coaching Circles?
9. Please describe the value you have gained from facilitating coaching circles?
10. As the facilitator how have you observed the Coaching Circles impact on coachees?
11. How have you have personally benefitted from coaching circles?
12. Describe whether you see areas for improvement in the process of Coaching Circles?
13. Is there anything further you would like to share about your experience of facilitating Coaching Circles?
Additional Questions (time permitting)
14. What importance do you place on structuring and asking the right questions to the coachees in the Coaching Circle?
15. How much emphasis do you place on how coaching theory is applied in practice during a Coaching Circle?

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Coaching Circle Participants

Name:	Date of Interview:
Gender:	Time slot:
Race:	Length of time worked:
Department:	Job Title:

16. Please elaborate on your understanding of the purpose of coaching circles?
17. When did you attend your last coaching circle?
18. How many Coaching Circles have you attended in total?
19. How would you describe the value you have gained from coaching circles?
20. Please describe the process you undergo with fellow coachees' during a Coaching Circle?
21. Please describe the types problems/issues that are brought up at coaching circles?
22. Explain how coaching circles allow you to work through problems/issues?
23. What capabilities do you feel Coaching Circles helped you to develop?
24. How do you feel Coaching Circles have impacted your organisation?
25. How have you personally benefitted from coaching circles?
26. Describe whether you see areas for improvement in the process of Coaching Circles?
27. Is there anything further you would like to share about your experience of Coaching Circles?
Additional Questions (time permitting)
28. Please describe how Coaching Circles impact you as an individual and your team?
29. What importance is placed on structuring and asking the right questions, for everyone partaking in the Coaching Circle?
30. How did you find the coaching theory was applied in practice?

Appendix 3: Information about Interviewed Coaching Circle Participants



Appendix 4: Coding

Broad Themes-Impact on Individual	Core Ideas	Categories
Coaching Circles allows one to practice Coaching Methodologies	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Adult Learning Environment
One learns from different Coaching Styles	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Adult Learning Environment
Coaching Circles are a Supportive Environment	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Adult Learning Environment
One develops deep Listening Skills	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Adult Learning Environment
There is a diverse mix of people at the Coaching Circle	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Adult Learning Environment
Brings the theory to life through practice	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Adult Learning Environment
Allows one to expand your SOI	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Self Awareness
One develops greater Emotional Awareness	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Self Awareness
Through curious questioning it allow the one to unlock the issue themselves	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Self Awareness
Develop Competency to Identify Areas for Personal Development	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Personal Development Skills
Focus on how to ask the Right Questions	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Personal Development Skills

Broad Themes-Impact on Organisation	Core Ideas	Categories
Some employees resigned after completing Coaching Circles	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Personal Development Skills
There were some employees that were considering resigning but admitted that they Coaching Methodology enables the learning process	Coaching methodology enables the learning process	Personal Development Skills

Broad Themes- Impact on Individual	Core Ideas	Categories
Facilitator role is to show coachee's how to coach	Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory	Adult Learning Environment
Facilitator needs to be Role Model Coach	Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory	Adult Learning Environment
Facilitator needs to insure that coachees have strong understanding of theory and practical	Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory	Adult Learning Environment
Coaching Circles become self correcting and self generating so that Facilitator is no longer needed	Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory	Adult Learning Environment
Importance of Action Steps for personal development	Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory	Personal Development Skills
Enable Action Learning environment	Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory	Personal Development Skills
Somatic Exercises help create greater awareness	Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory	Self Awareness

Broad Themes-Impact on organisation	Core Ideas	Categories
Used Coaching Model in Company Strategy Document	Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory	Adult Learning Environment
Incorporated coaching methodology-open ended questions in meetings	Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory	Adult Learning Environment
ABSA has built an internal capacity of managers with deep listening skills	Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory	Adult Learning Environment
Employees have incorporated Coaching Methodology in organisation	Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory	Personal Development Skills
Coaching Circles allow one to discuss where we are in our careers	Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory	Personal Development Skills

Ability to Observe, Reflect and Apply Coaching Theory

Broad Themes- Impact on Individual	Core Ideas	Categories
Abrupt end of the Coaching Circle Group	Areas for improvement in Coaching Circles	Teamwork and Comradery
When the coachee brings and issue that is not real it breaks the trust of the group	Areas for improvement in Coaching Circles	Teamwork and Comradery
Outside dynamics impact integrity of the circle	Areas for improvement in Coaching Circles	Teamwork and Comradery
I would like to have continued with the same Coaching Circle, it just came to an abrupt end	Areas for improvement in Coaching Circles	Teamwork and Comradery
People need to have commitment if they join the Coaching Circle or they are wasting my time	Areas for improvement in Coaching Circles	Adult Learning Environment

Areas for Improvement in Coaching Circles

Broad Themes- Impact on Individual	Core Ideas	Categories
The coachees start making themselves vulnerable and can become emotional	Building a safe environment where coachees form trust	Teamwork and Comradery
It is an opportunity to openly discuss an issue and receive non-judgemental feedback	Building a safe environment where coachees form trust	Teamwork and Comradery
Importance of Ground Rules	Building a safe environment where coachees form trust	Teamwork and Comradery
Confidentiality is very important to develop trust in the Coaching Circle	Building a safe environment where coachees form trust	Teamwork and Comradery
Coachees feel it is a safe environment to share about themselves	Building a safe environment where coachees form trust	Teamwork and Comradery
The Facilitator should be flexible in how questions are answered	Building a safe environment where coachees form trust	Adult Learning Environment
Safe, non-judgemental environment helps you to Coach and be Coached	Building a safe environment where coachees form trust	Adult Learning Environment
Leaving oneself vulnerable becomes the strength of the Coaching Circle and through that you saw the real issue	Building a safe environment where coachees form trust	Self Awareness

Broad Themes- Impact on Individual	Core Ideas	Categories
Development of Informal Coaching Circles	Building a safe environment where coachees form trust	Teamwork and Comradery

Building a safe environment where coachees form trust

Broad Themes-Impact on Organisation	Core Ideas	Categories
Empathy for the coachee leads to a more forgiving organisation	Building the capacity to relate to other perspectives	Self Awareness
Coaching Circles allow one to develop greater empathy for Coaching Circle participants	Building the capacity to relate to other perspectives	Self Awareness
Coaching Circles helps one to deal with conflict	Building the capacity to relate to other perspectives	Personal Development Skills

Broad Themes-Impact on Individual	Core Ideas	Categories
Approach the Coachee's issue with no judgement	Building the capacity to relate to other perspectives	Self Awareness
Clarify and Insure Ground Rules are implemented	Building the capacity to relate to other perspectives	Self Awareness
One is able to practice Deep Listening without Judgement	Building the capacity to relate to other perspectives	Self Awareness
I have adopted a coaching style of conversation and stopped giving advice	Building the capacity to relate to other perspectives	Adult Learning Environment
Learn how to build questions on previous line of questioning	Building the capacity to relate to other perspectives	Adult Learning Environment

Building the capacity to relate to other perspectives

Appendix 5: Effects Matrix

Components	Function	Positive Effects	Negative Effects	Results
Facilitator	# Clarify and insure ground rules are implemented -Insure confidentiality -Give everyone the opportunity to speak and don't interrupt -Follow the same line of questioning	# Coachees feel that it is a safe environment to share about themselves	* When the facilitator is inflexible and too structured about how questions should be answered or that question should be asked clockwise, it creates resistance from coachees	* The facilitator role becomes obsolete once the coaching circle members have acquired the skills to become 'self generating, self correcting at a high performance level'
	Effectively Facilitate Session		# When a coachee brings an issue that is not real, the facilitator needs to manage that in order to rebuild the trust of the group	# Create Adult Learning Environment which encourages implementation of theory through practice
	Role Model Coach			# Coaching Circle becomes a safe environment to openly share
	Insure strong understanding and implementation of theory and practical			# Trust develops within the group
	Protect the person being coached and do no harm			

* *claim made strongly by 1 person*
 # *claim made by more than 1 person*

Components	Function	Positive Effects	Negative Effects	Results
Coachee	Bring a real issue forward for discussion -Level 1: Technical issue (work related) -Level 2: Personal Issue (how to manage a team) -Level 3: Deep relationship issue (Divorce)	Opportunity to openly discuss something that is a real problem in your life, and receive non judgemental feedback	Not open to the process, will remain closed and disconnected from the group -Ability to gage those individuals who are committed to the learning process	* Develop competency to identify areas for development Coachee commits to Action Steps to reinforce areas for development
	Be open to the process and "Make oneself vulnerable to sharing"	"Leaving yourself vulnerable becomes the strength of the coaching circle and through that you saw what the real issue was"	Resignations of some staff/some who chose to stay at ABSA after taking part in a Coaching Circles due to a process of self discovery	# Enables Career Management and Conflict Management
	Engage with the coaches	Gain different perspectives of viewing an issue	Work dynamics could be impacted if an individual from their departments is present, hence a resistance to share	* Resistance to sharing in the group, because some members did not trust the group
	Understand the experience of being Coached	Giving the individual a voice and a platform to work through issues		* Shift from starting as a group of individuals to a trusting in a community of coaches - Develop a sense of Comradery and Teamwork
	Observe, Reflect and implement Theory			# Embeds relationships

Components	Function	Positive Effects	Negative Effects	Results
Coach	# Introduce Conversation for Relationships (70%) -Move into Conversation for Possibility (20%) -Move into Conversation for Action (10%)	# Observing, reflecting and implementing the theory -Providing different viewpoints -Agreement on commitment to Action	# Resistance to asking questions (which can be performance driven)	* Coach develops empathy for the coachee -Empathy leads to a more forgiving organisation -Diversity Management
	# Focus on how to ask the right questions	# Develop deep listening skills	# If the issue brought forward is fictitious it breaks the trust of the coachees	# Personally adopted coaching style of conversation of 'open ended questions' and stopped giving advice
	# Learn how to build questions on the previous line of questioning	* Challenge SOI		# Expanded their SOI Somatic Awareness Develop Listening Skills Emotional Awareness
	# Shared focus of multiple individuals on one coachee	* Through curious questioning by Coaches: -allow the person to 'unlock the issue' themselves -Learn from different Coaching Styles		* Built internal capacity of Coaches for Absa who have developed deep listening skills
	# Approach the coachee's issue with no judgement	# Supportive Environment		# Developed informal coaching circles independent of a facilitator
	# Practice coaching on the coachee by incorporating theory in action	# Bringing the theory to life through practice		* Creates an Action learning environment

Appendix 6: Online Survey Questionnaire

[Exit this survey](#)

Please could you take a few minutes to complete this survey on Coaching Circles

***1. Please state your Job Title and Department**

2. Please rate your view about the following statement

	Agree Strongly	Agree Slightly	Neither Agree/Disagree	Disagree Slightly	Disagree Strongly
The Coaching Circle allows the individuals to develop a sense of comradery and teamwork	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Please rate your view about the following statements

Coaching Circles create an Adult Learning Environment through:

	1. Agree strongly	2. Agree slightly	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Disagree slightly	5. Disagree strongly
Allowing you to make mistakes, be corrected and learn from them in a safe environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allowing you to embed the theory and models by practicing on a coachee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allowing you to feel what it is like to coach and be coached	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allowing you to learn from different coaching styles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Keeping coaching skills current	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Please rate your view about the following statement

	Agree Strongly	Agree Slightly	Neither Agree/Disagree	Disagree Slightly	Disagree Strongly
Coaching Circles emphasize that the coachee must commit to action steps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Please rate your view about the following statements

Coaching Circles allow you to develop the following:

	1. Agree strongly	2. Agree slightly	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Disagree slightly	5. Disagree strongly
Deep Listening Skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skills to ask the right questions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased emotional awareness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Somatic awareness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding of different SOI's (Structure of Interpretation)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Greater empathy for the coachee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trust within the coaching circle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Competency to identify personal areas for development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adopt a coaching style of conversation (i.e. open ended questions, active listening, curiosity etc) for problem solving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop work friendships and networks outside your department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Create a platform for shared focus from the group to figure out the coachee's issue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Please rate your view about the following statements

I incorporated the following learnings after I had been to Coaching Circles:

	1. Agree strongly	2. Agree slightly	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Disagree slightly	5. Disagree strongly
The Coaching Methodology (theory/learnings/models) into my organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A 'Coaching Style' in my interactions with people in my organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A 'Coaching Style' in my interactions with my family/friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Please rate your view about the following statements

Coaching Circles assisted me with:

	1. Agree strongly	2. Agree slightly	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Disagree slightly	5. Disagree strongly
Career Management (A self monitored process of career planning and setting personal goals and formulating strategies for achieving them)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflict Management (Identifying and handling conflict in a sensible, fair, efficient manner)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity Management (A process which creates and maintains positive work environment where similarities and differences of individuals are valued)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please comment further on this question if you have anything further to share

8. Please rate your view about the following statements

	1. Agree strongly	2. Agree slightly	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Disagree slightly	5. Disagree strongly
The employees that resigned from ABSA after completing Coaching Circles indicates that Coaching Circles are able to assist employees in Career Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please comment further on this question if you have anything further to share

9. Please rate your view about the following statements

	1. Agree strongly	2. Agree slightly	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Disagree slightly	5. Disagree strongly
Outside Dynamics (i.e. Restructuring/changes in the organisation) can influence the integrity and trust of the circle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please comment further on this question if you have anything further to share

1. Please rate your view about the following statement

It is important for the facilitator to:

	Agree Strongly	Agree Slightly	Neither Agree/Disagree	Disagree Slightly	Disagree Strongly
Have a strong understanding about theory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Be a role model coach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skilfully facilitate the coaching process of the circle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Protect the individuals being coached	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide somatic exercises (self observation exercises and/or practices) to assist coachees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Please rate your view about the following statements

	1. Agree strongly	2. Agree slightly	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Disagree slightly	5. Disagree strongly
The Facilitator creates a safe supportive environment which engenders trust and confidentiality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please comment further on this question if you have anything further to share

3. Please rate your view about the following statement

Coaching Circles become self correcting and self generating so that:

	Agree Strongly	Agree Slightly	Neither Agree/Disagree	Disagree Slightly	Disagree Strongly
A Facilitator is no longer necessary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informal Independent Coaching Circles can be formed without the guidance of a facilitator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Please rate your view about the following statements

My Coaching Circle contained a diverse mix of people of different:

	1. Agree strongly	2. Agree slightly	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Disagree slightly	5. Disagree strongly
Ages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Races	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hierarchies of the organisation (Managers and Subordinates)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Departments of the organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Please rate your view about the following statements

The following factors enabled the success of the Coaching Circle

	1. Agree strongly	2. Agree slightly	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Disagree slightly	5. Disagree strongly
Safety, Confidentiality, Trust	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus on asking the right questions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deep Listening without Judgement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ability to Observe, Reflect and Implement relevant Theory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

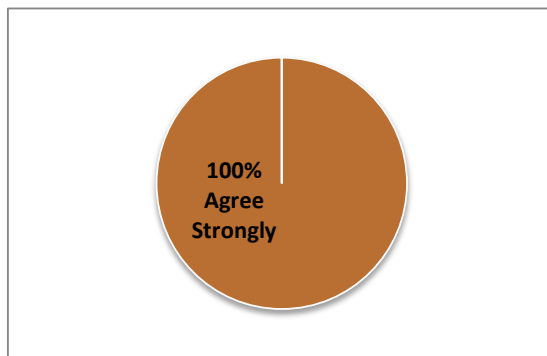
6. Please elaborate if there is anything further you would like to share about Coaching Circles?

Appendix 7: Quantitative Analysis

Please rate your view about the following statements

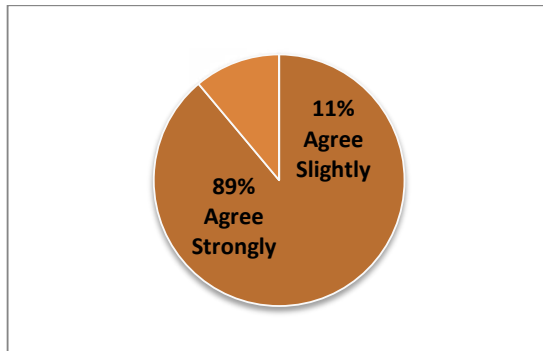
Agree Strongly
Agree slightly
Neither agree or disagree
Disagree slightly
Disagree Strongly

Q2-The Coaching Circle allows the individuals to develop a sense of comradery and teamwork

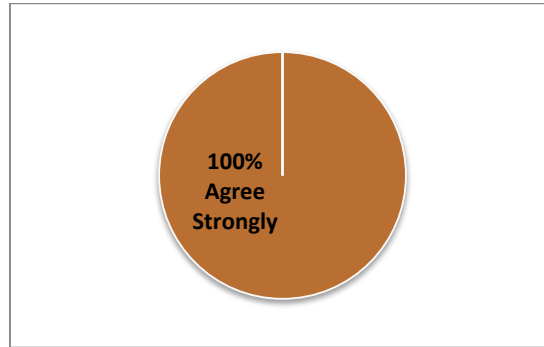


Q3-Coaching Circles create an Adult Learning Environment through:

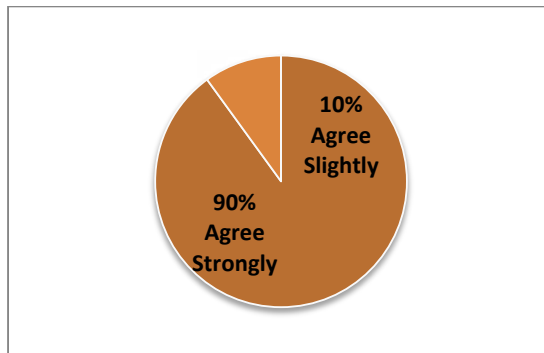
- Allowing you to make mistakes, be corrected and learn from them in a safe environment



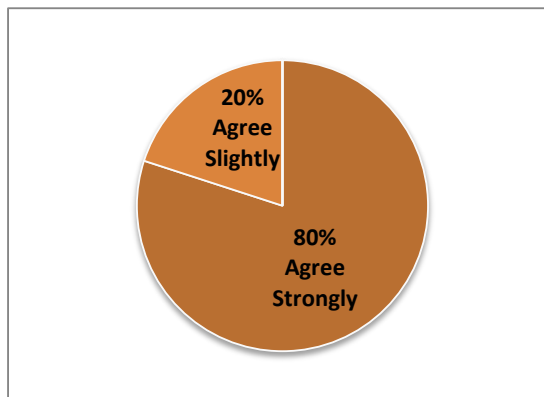
- Allowing you to embed the theory and models by practicing on a coachee



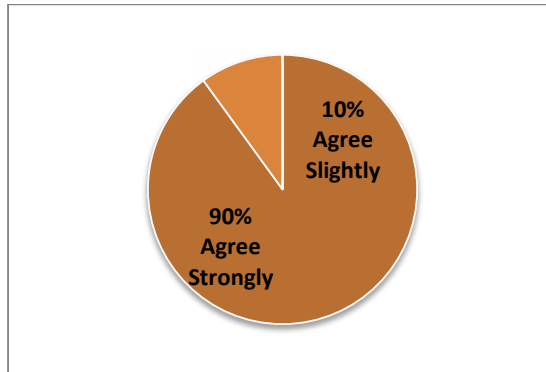
- Allowing you to feel what it is like to coach and be coached



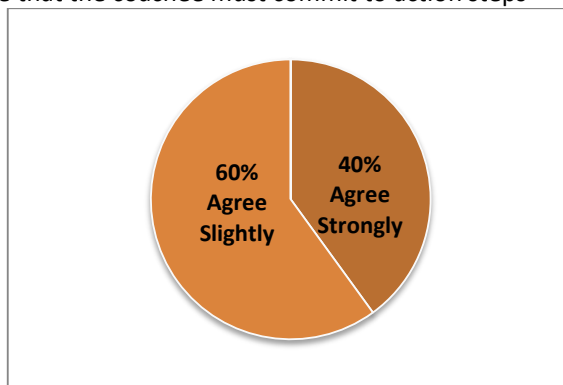
- Allowing you to learn from different coaching styles



- Keeping coaching skills current

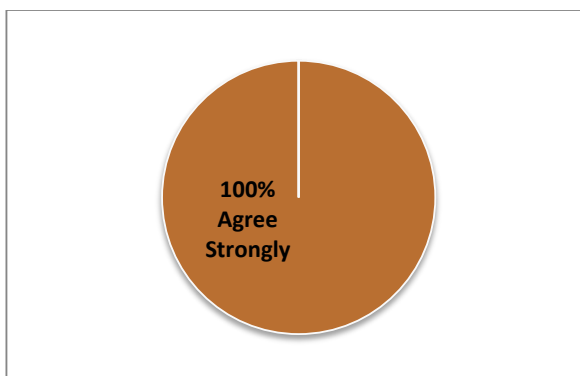


Q4-Coaching Circles emphasise that the coachee must commit to action steps

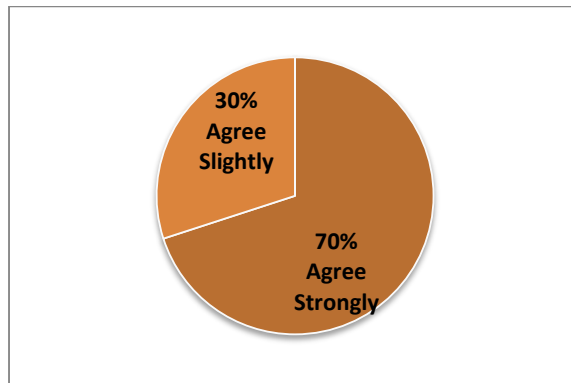


Q5-Coaching Circles allow you to develop the following:

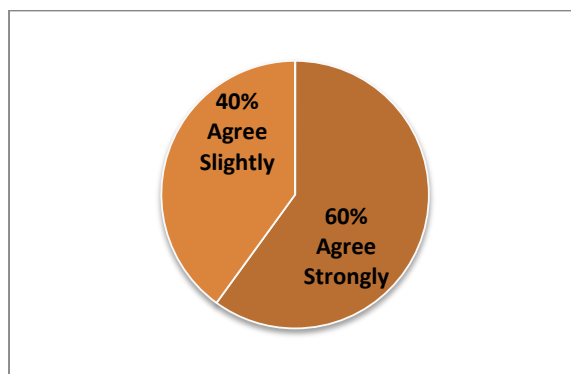
- Deep Listening Skills
- Skills to ask the right questions
- Understanding for different SOI's
- Competency to identify personal areas for development
- Adopt a coaching style of conversation (i.e. open ended questions, active listening, curiosity etc) for problem solving



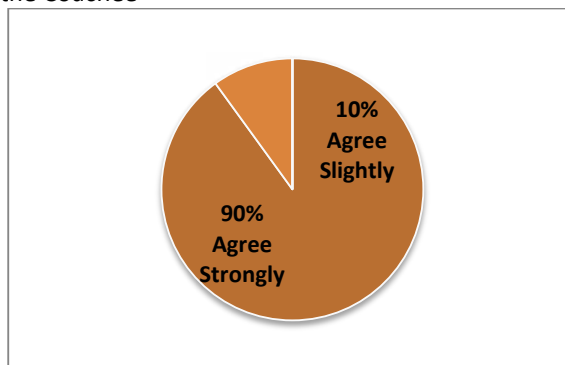
- Increased emotional awareness



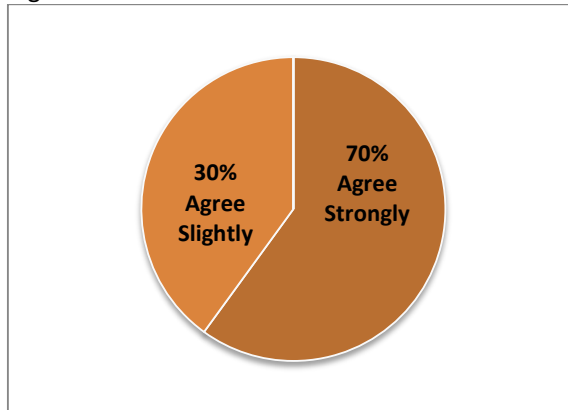
- Somatic awareness



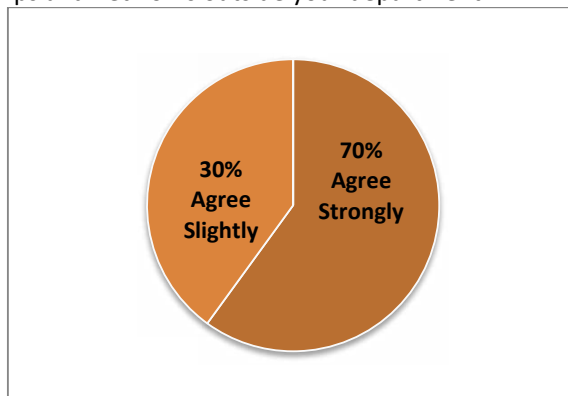
- Greater empathy for the Coachee



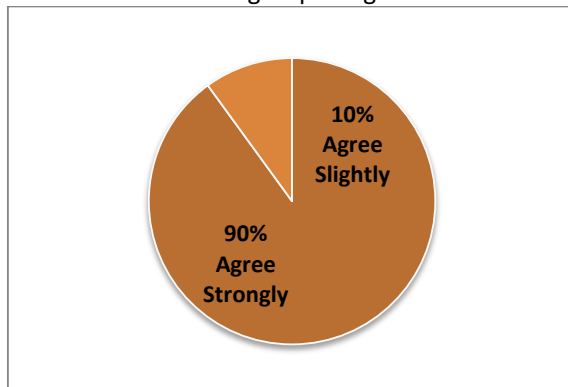
- Trust within the Coaching Circle



- Develop work friendships and networks outside your department

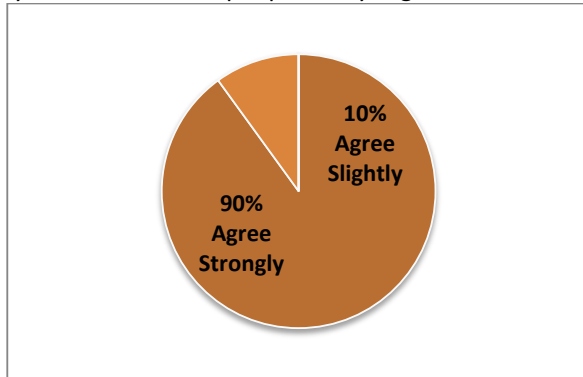


- Create a platform for shared focus from the group to figure out the coachee's issue

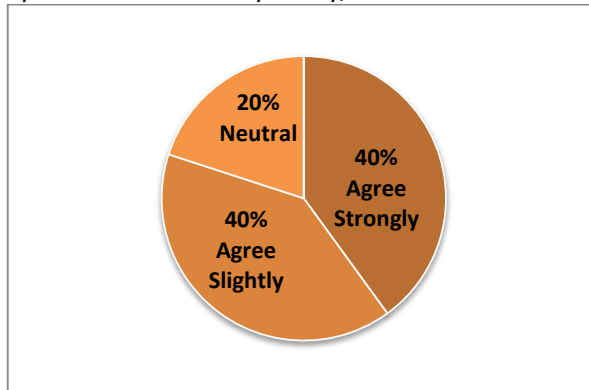


Q6-I incorporated the following learning after I had been to Coaching Circles:

- The Coaching Methodology (theory/learnings/models) into my organisation
- A 'Coaching Style' in my interactions with people in my organisation

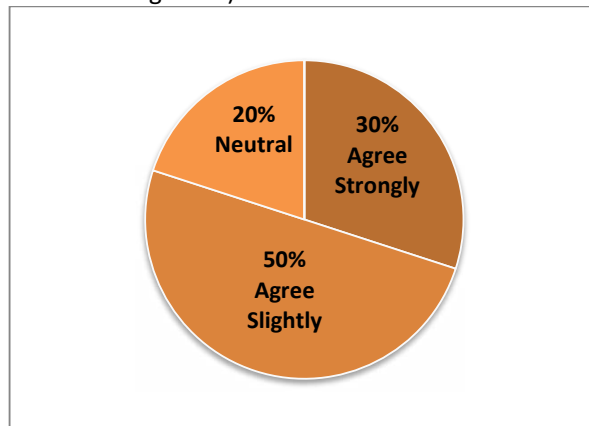


- A 'Coaching Style' in my interactions with my family/friends

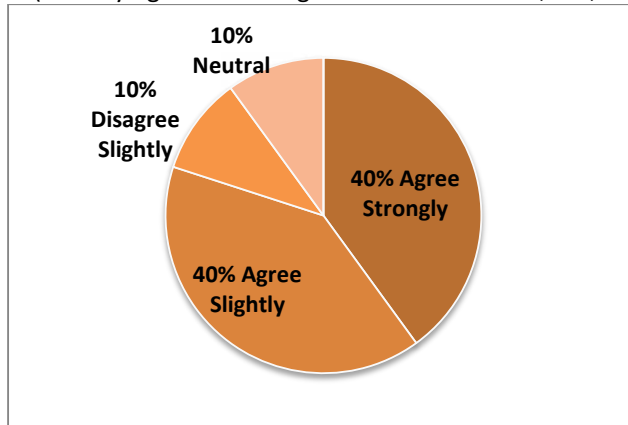


Q7- Coaching Circles assisted me with:

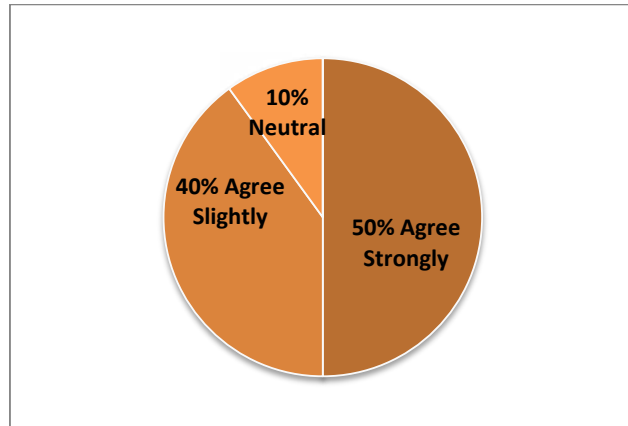
- *Career Management* (Self monitored process of career planning and setting personal goals and formulating strategies for achieving them)



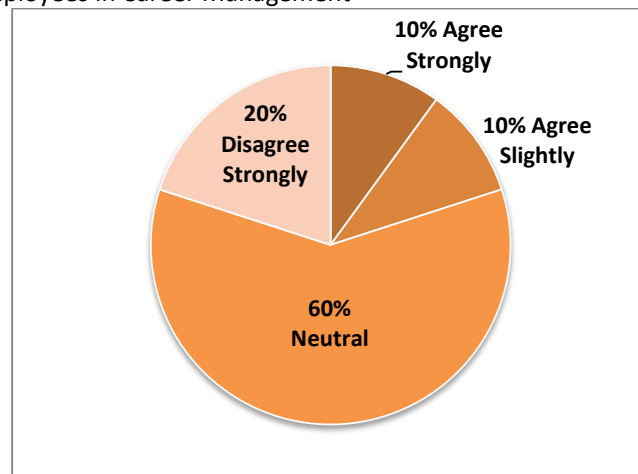
- *Conflict Management* (Identifying and handling conflict in a sensible, fair, efficient manner)



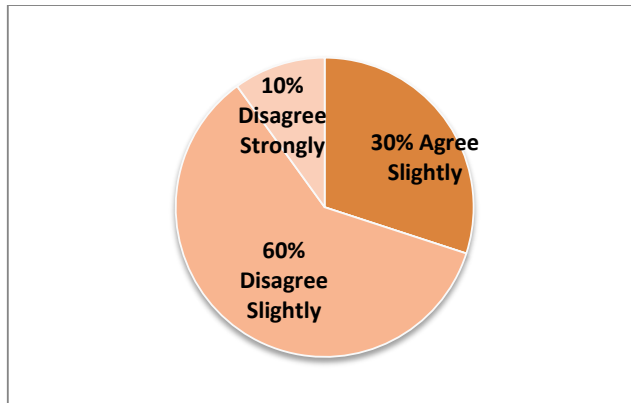
- *Diversity Management* (A process which creates and maintains positive work environment where similarities and differences of individuals are valued)



Q8-The employees that resigned from ABSA after completing Coaching Circles indicates that Coaching Circles are able to assist employees in Career Management

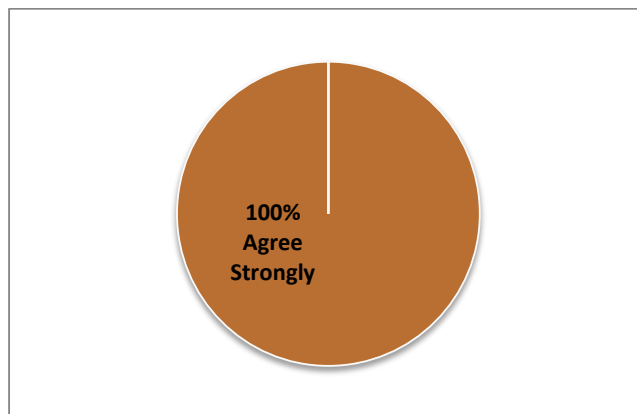


Q9-Outside Dynamics (i.e. Restructuring/changes in the organisation) can influence the integrity and trust of the circle

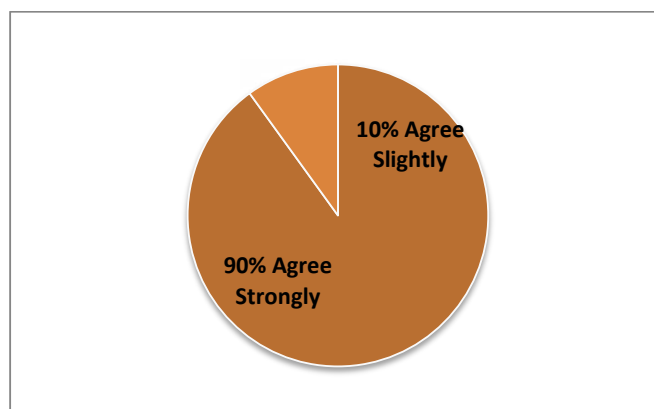


Q10-It is important for the facilitator to:

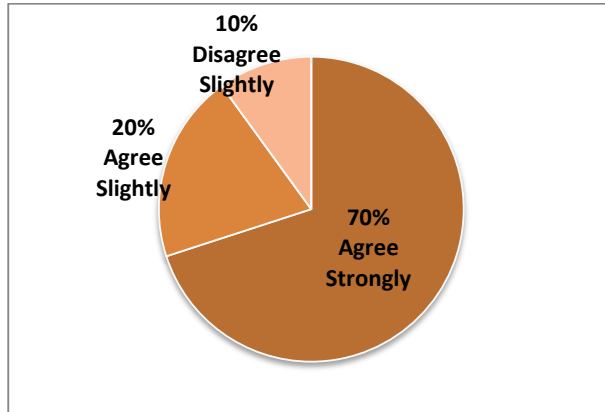
- Have a strong understanding about theory
- Be a role model coach



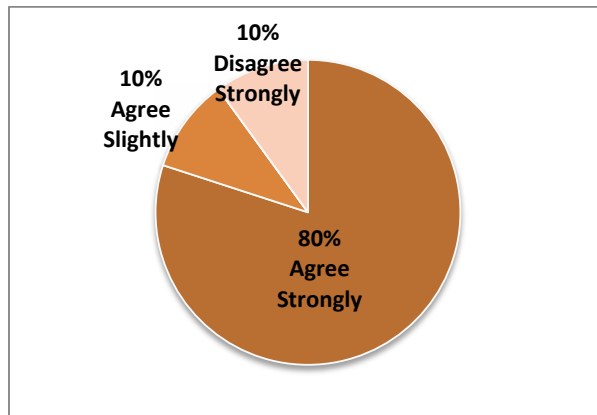
- Skillfully facilitate the coaching process of the Coaching Circle



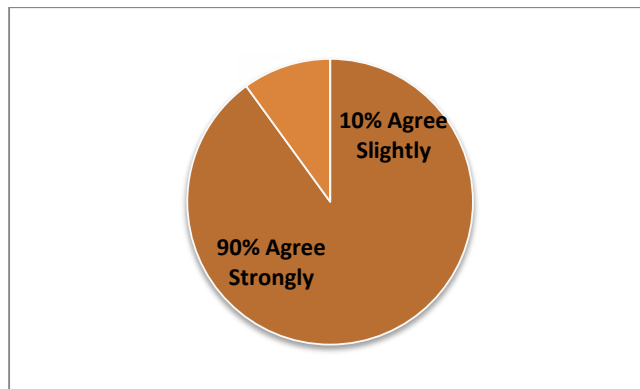
- Provide somatic exercises (self observation exercises and/or practices) to assist coachees



- Protect the individuals being coached

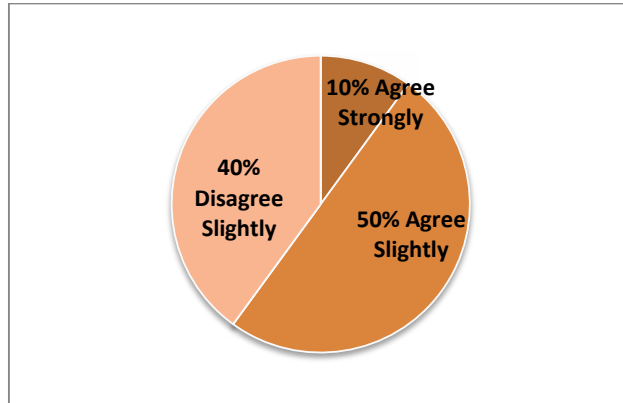


Q11-The Facilitator creates a safe supportive environment which engenders trust and confidentiality

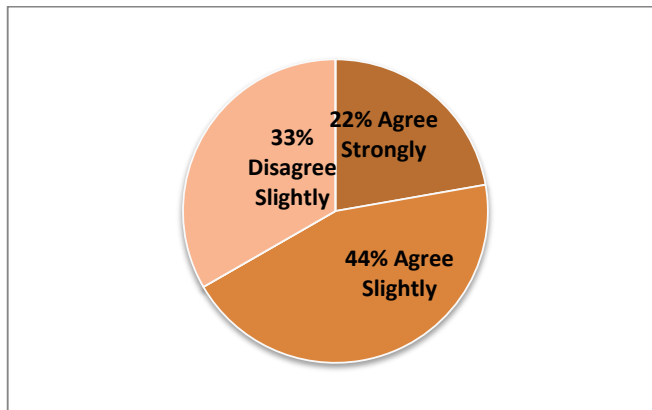


Q12-Coaching Circles becomes self correcting an self generating so that:

- A Facilitator is no longer necessary

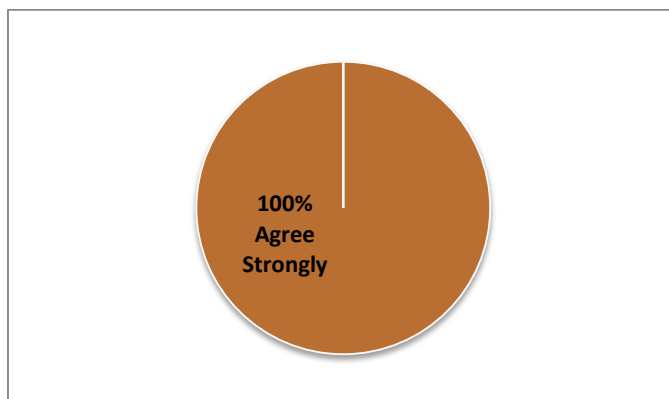


- Informal Independent Coaching Circles can be formed without the guidance of a facilitator

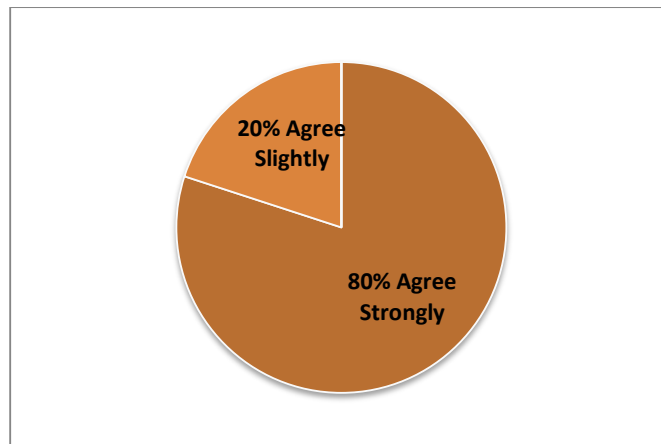


Q13-My Coaching Circle contained a diverse mix of people of different:

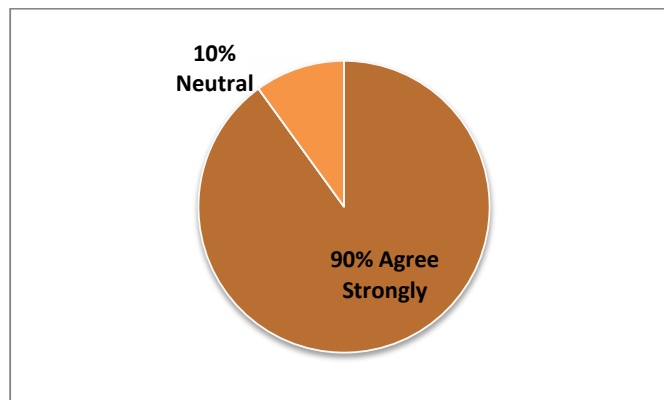
- Race



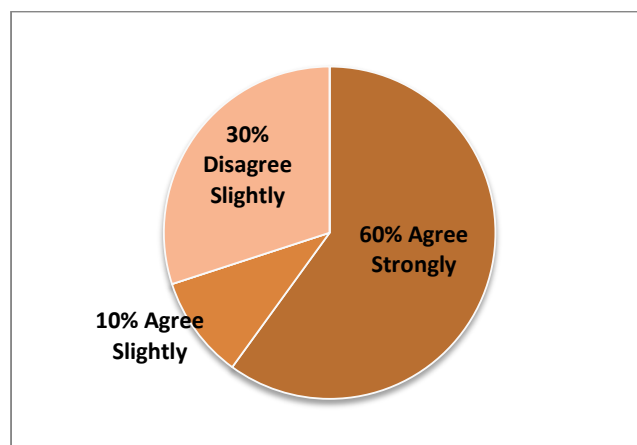
- Age



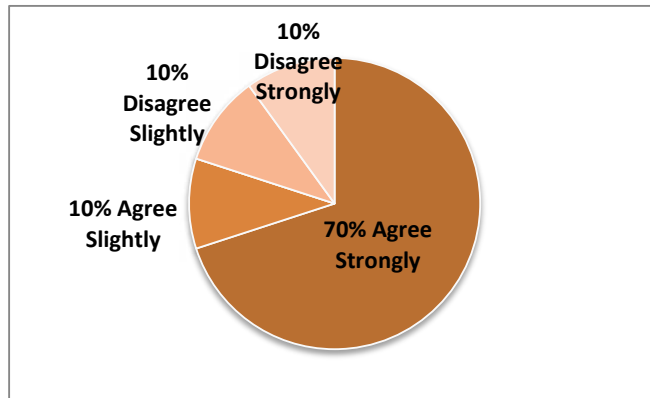
- Gender



- Hierarchies of the organisation (Managers and Subordinates)

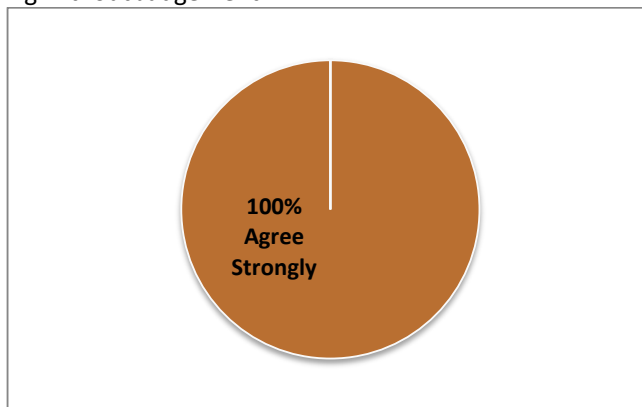


- Departments of the organisation

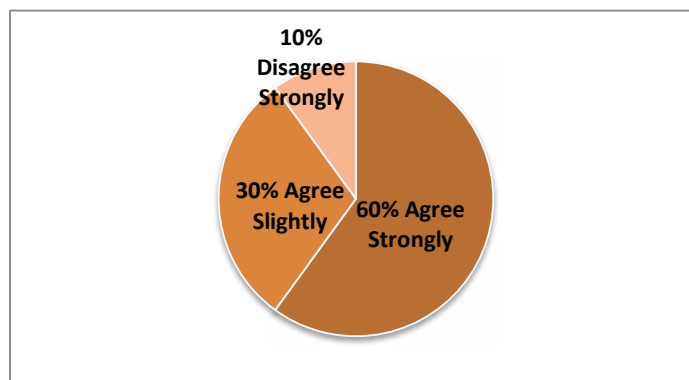


Q14-The following factors enabled the success of the Coaching Circle

- Safety, Confidentiality, Trust
- Deep Listening without Judgement



- Focus on asking the right questions



- Ability to Observe, Reflect and Implement relevant Theory

