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**TOWARDS A METAPHORICAL
FRAMEWORK OF TEAM COACHING:
AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY**

J. JAMES

DBA

2017

**TOWARDS A METAPHORICAL
FRAMEWORK OF TEAM COACHING:
AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY**

J. JAMES

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the
University of Northumbria at
Newcastle for the degree of
Professional Doctorate

Research undertaken at
Newcastle Business School

July 2017

Abstract

This thesis integrates theory and practice of team coaching into a holistic framework relevant to professional coaches and professional coach educators.

I adopt an autoethnographic approach, exploring team coaching via three fieldwork sites; two sites where I am the team coach and thirdly a discussion group of professional coaches. Fieldwork data is collated chronologically and implicit knowledge is surfaced through story telling as a mechanism of sense making to answer the question: *What is going on when I am coaching a team?* In analysing and interpreting my stories, I take a postmodernist theoretical perspective, adopting a deconstructive approach which seeks to elucidate multiple ways of knowing and seeing.

The resulting framework draws on four metaphors. Team as machine that follows a functionalist model of effectiveness that can be managed through behaviours and process. Team as family, which illuminates the interwoven nature of individual relationships and suggests strategies to create safe, mutually respectful collaborative behaviours. Team as living system represents the experience of teams thriving within a dynamic interrelated environment. Finally, the team and coach in Wonderland depicts a coaching assignment as analogous to following the White Rabbit into Wonderland. In a strange environment we may feel uncertain and vulnerable, however, curiosity enables us to remain open to possibilities. Each metaphorical perspective offers a 'mode of awareness' from which to operate as a coach.

The framework develops our understanding of team coaching by bringing together diverse theoretical streams to inform what is going on in a new and accessible way as the metaphorical devices encapsulate complex ideas with simplicity. I contribute to team coaching practice as professional coaches can use the metaphorical language allied with theory to plan and reflect upon coaching assignments, consider relevant coaching approaches and engage in supervision. A shared language of metaphors provides researchers and practitioners with a new way to describe team coaching, creating a foundation on which to progress development in the future. In addition, the framework provides the basis for a coach development curriculum. I distinguish between team coaching and other team-based interventions and highlight how dyadic coaching practices may be applied within the team context to enable professionals from a variety of backgrounds to engage with the framework. Finally, I offer a transparent insight into a different way of investigating professional coaching practice describing how autoethnography allows us to tell practice stories in ways that are both evocative, insightful and open to analysis.

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Finally, I want to thank Gareth, Thomas and Katy. You have greeted my permanent residence at my desk in the corner with acceptance and patience and endless cups of tea. You have carried on living your lives around me and given me space. Thank you.

Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by the Faculty Ethics Committee in Dec 2013

I declare that the Word Count of this Thesis is 60,638 words excluding tables and fictionalised vignettes.

Name: Joanne James

Signature:

Date: July 9th 2017

Towards a Metaphorical Framework of Team Coaching: An Autoethnography

Autoethnographies begin with the thoughts, feelings, identities, and experiences that make us uncertain. (Adams, Holman-Jones & Ellis, 2015: 47)

Chapter 1: Foundations

The Executive Education Centre May 2009

The group were restless, huddled in twos and threes sharing private intimacies. We were approaching the close of the fifth day of a senior leader's coach development programme and had turned our attention to team coaching. The team challenge activity had failed to resonate with more than a handful of the group. The energy levels were visibly dropping. Kate, typically a more vocal member of the group, articulated her frustration.

Kate: I don't see anything new here, we are supposed to be talking about team coaching but everything we have done today just looks like team building to me.

Me: (Inwardly) I agree, you are right. The truth is I'm not sure I know the difference myself, I was hoping to get away with it, and people are asking for coaching activities for teams so we included it in the session. Some of the group don't know much about teams so they learnt something.

Me: (Asserting a perspective I hoped would hold up under scrutiny) Well I think we are talking about applying our coaching skills in a team context, and I agree today has been about the context.

Me: (Brightly) Now, let's just review the assignment brief before we finish for today...

I still feel the knot of embarrassment and shame of being found inadequate, elicited by the memory of that day. Later, I worked with Kate on the dissertation phase of her programme and we built a good relationship founded on mutual respect. We never talked of the weakness in my team coaching provision again

and I suspect, with so many priorities of her own, it faded from significance and her memory. For me, the moment resurfaces regularly over the intervening years. This research project is a personal response to find greater understanding about team coaching for myself, and all of the clients and students that follow.

1.0. Introduction

In this chapter, I set out the foundations for my research project. I outline the structure of the overall thesis and the motivations for carrying out the study, leading to a presentation of the research questions. I introduce autoethnography and indicate the relevance of this approach within my research context and, as an initial act of autoethnographic writing, I complete a retrospective exploration of my team coaching practice. I critique the extant research base pertaining to team coaching, outlining some core concepts and key themes, culminating in my understanding of team coaching and a conceptual framework of my team coaching practice, as I understand it at the commencement of the research project. I conclude the chapter by summarising how the existing knowledge base fails to support my practice, hence demonstrating a research opportunity.

1.1. The structure of the thesis

This foundational chapter and the structure of the thesis that follows adopts 'the opening out model' (Dunleavy, 2003: 59) inspired by the doctoral thesis of Jones (2012) who explores employee engagement using autoethnography. In this style of thesis, the initial literature review is tightly focussed and the initial chapter provides the essential information to allow the reader to progress quickly to exploring the methodology, core findings and analysis of the research. I consider this approach appropriate for my project as team coaching research is in its infancy and therefore requires contributions from more established disciplines such as team effectiveness, team learning and group behaviour, in order to construct a robust conceptual framework in which to position my own research. By drawing together these theoretical streams at the analysis stage, I reflect on the data with a fresh set of eyes, allowing the interpretation of findings to emerge without pre-empting them with a broad literature review upfront. The thesis is an authentic reflection of the research process where I explore my practice based

on my knowledge at the start of the process and build my understanding through practice, reflection, analysis and theoretical integration.

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 1: Foundations

Chapter 2: Research Design: Fieldwork, Data Collection and Analysis

Chapter 3: Team as Machine Metaphor

Chapter 4: Team as Family Metaphor

Chapter 5: Team as Living System Metaphor

Chapter 6: Team and Coach in Wonderland

Chapter 7: A Framework of Team Coaching

1.2. The motivations for carrying out the study: Why team coaching?

I lead Executive Education Programmes at the Newcastle Business School, Northumbria University, providing a range of interventions to professional managers seeking to develop themselves, their teams and the overall performance of their organisations. As an academic, I bring theory and practice together to help my clients solve real-world problems through their personal and professional development. I am also an executive coach. I coach leaders as they take on the challenges of more strategic senior roles and I work with organisational teams. I also teach a coach development programme for those wanting to integrate coaching into their own practice in a range of sectors and contexts. When I refer to team coaching in this research project I am referring to myself as an external coach working with intact organisational teams with shared objectives. I explore the distinctions of this role in more detail later in this chapter.

With dyadic coaching, I have confidence, skills and underpinning theory to explain my approach. However, when asked to deliver team coaching or provide advice to professional coaches who want to work in a team context I noticed a feeling of vulnerability creeping in. I was intrigued by my reaction as, on the face of it, I had built a significant catalogue of theory, experience and expertise about teams during my 20-year career in a corporate environment.

At the commencement of this research project I completed a retrospective reflection exercise (Duncan, 2004), described in detail below, to elucidate the tacit knowledge (Polyani, 1965) underpinning my practice. I could articulate some knowledge and skills but lacked conceptual clarity, leading to feelings of doubt about how to act in any given moment.

In addition to recognising a personal deficit, I observed that I was failing to find answers to develop my approach from the team coaching research base. My first experience of exploring this literature came in 2009 in planning for the senior manager coaching programme recalled at the beginning of this chapter. The search yielded a disappointingly short list of material. I based my session on Clutterbuck (2007) who approached the task by explaining coaching from a dyadic perspective before going on to explore the additional complexities and demands of teams. With hindsight, I may forgive myself the teaching approach adopted with Kate and her colleagues as it echoed literature available to me at the time.

One article that failed to resonate for me in 2009, and again later when commencing this research, was the single empirical paper, which contributes to the literature base by Hackman and Wageman (2005). I discovered that this paper referred to the 'accepted' theory of team coaching as it regularly appeared in empirical research articles relating to team effectiveness and has been cited 759 times according to Google Scholar (May 2017).

On re-reading the paper four years later I identified four significant reasons why the paper failed to resonate.

- a) The research is based on short-lived single-task student project teams where the lifecycle and the task cycles coincided; this simple linear process is unlikely to be the case in many work teams who are managing multiple projects and activities and have been working together for several years.
- b) The research utilises underpinning theory that draws from a coaching paradigm rooted in the training and development literature from the 1980s and

1990s with approaches that are somewhat directive and task focussed in nature and fail to include a wider range of developmental perspectives prevalent in contemporary coaching research. See Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck (2014); Palmer and Whybrow (2014); Wildflower and Brennan (2011) for comprehensive reviews of coaching philosophies and approaches.

- c) Hackman and Wageman (2005) assert that coaches have no requirement to attend to relational concerns within a team coaching context as these would resolve themselves as a consequence of task-related interventions. This view did not resonate with my experiences of team coaching and is in contrast to those who would take a relational approach, for example Clutterbuck (2014) and Thornton (2016).
- d) The coaching context assumed by Hackman and Wageman (2005) is team leader coaching, where the team leader is likely to have hierarchical power and organisational objectives. I wanted to consider the role of a coach who is external to the team.

As a professional coach and coach educator, these concerns caused me to want to challenge Hackman and Wageman's apparent monopoly of the conceptualisation of team coaching, and represented an opportunity to make my own contribution to team coaching theory and practice. My instinct was that if the prevailing discourse failed to respond to my professional concerns this may also be true for other team coaches. I was motivated to reflect closely upon my own experiences in order to engage critically with the research base and contributory theoretical streams. In the next section I outline my research objectives and research questions in more detail.

1.3. Research objective and questions

My overarching question guiding this doctoral research is *what is going on when I am coaching a team?* In other words, I want to establish a frame of reference to make sense of team coaching. The question '*what is going on here?*' (Collville and Pye, 2010: 373; Weick, 2009: 136) is common for practitioners and members of organisations who want to make sense of their experience and decide how to act. I intend to create a conceptual framework supported via a robust theoretical

underpinning that provides me with a way to understand team coaching practice. In answering my research question, I hope to elucidate this process from both the team members' and the coach's perspectives, although the overall focus is to inform the practice of being the coach. As such, I recognise I privilege the needs of the coach practitioner.

My objectives are to i) develop greater confidence and mastery as a team coach, ii) contribute to the knowledge base of team coaching practice and iii) shape a curriculum of team coach education that would enable me to support the development of others.

I would measure the success of a conceptual framework to meet objectives i) and ii) if I was able to use it to make sense of team coaching in-the-moment, during the flow of practice, during preparation for a coaching assignment and during coaching supervision.

In order to respond to objective iii) of shaping a curriculum of team coaching, I would measure the success by how effectively I was able to respond to the questions that professionals on a team coach development programme might ask, typically, those working with teams have come from a variety of backgrounds such as executive coaching, organisational consulting, organisational development (OD), human resource development (HRD) and occupational psychology. Therefore, the conceptual framework would need to enable these professionals to connect team coaching with their prior experiences such as facilitation, team building or team process consultation and various forms of one to one development such as coaching, mentoring or counselling.

Recognising that the research questions are rooted in my own professional practice I have chosen to write the thesis from the first person perspective in line with my autoethnographical approach. In Chapter 2, I will explore the approach in detail to justify the choice for this research project. In the next section, I introduce autoethnography in order to set the scene for the thesis that follows.

1.4. Introducing autoethnography

Autoethnography is a form of ethnography where I am a member of the organisational culture under study; that of team coaches and team coaching. Therefore, I am the subject of my own critical inquiry, drawing on the rich experiences of working alongside my clients and professional peer group (McIlveen, 2007).

Autoethnography emerged from the disciplines of ethnography and anthropology when cultural studies involved anthropologists who were also considered members of the cultural group being studied (Hyano, 1979). Contemporary scholars describe autoethnography in a variety of ways. For example, as *'an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience'* (ethno) (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011: 1). It is *'an emerging style of social science writing which not only draws on the researcher's observations and involvement in a particular social setting, but also includes the researcher's own personal experiences of the cultural phenomenon being studied'* (Sambrook and Doloriert, 2014: 174). It is *'an act of sense making'* (Vickers, 2007: 223).

Whilst autoethnography is established as a research method to explore sensitive personal issues relating to life experiences that may address wider social concerns such as child sex abuse (Ronai, 1995), teenage pregnancy (Muncey, 2005) and childbirth and bereavement (Spry, 2011), there are fewer examples of using this research method within management and organisation studies. However, there are now calls to embrace autoethnography within the organisational context (Doloriert and Sambrook, 2012), and where it is applied there is a richness and accessibility to the insights that are shared relating to organisational concerns (Boyle and Parry, 2007). Examples of organisational autoethnography include a review of conflicting academic identities (Learmouth and Humpreys, 2011), workplace bullying (Vickers, 2007), experiences of workaholism (Boje and Tyler, 2009), experiences of sexuality in an accounting firm (Haynes, 2013), an exploration of employee engagement (Sambrook, Jones and Doloriert, 2014), experiences of emotion and narrative coping within a

leadership role (Blenkinsopp, 2007), and making sense of social accounting within accountancy practice (Gibbon, 2012).

Autoethnographic work can reveal, through personal insights, (Douglas & Carless, 2013) when the human or professional experience seems to be absent from the academic account within a particular field of inquiry or accepted understanding of organisational life. Far from remaining as neutral observers, these accounts challenge dominant discourses and extend our understanding of a particular practice or phenomenon. Choosing to approach the research in this way allows me to bring my experiential knowing to existing team coaching texts, to reflect critically on issues emerging in practice in relation to theory, and offer a new perspective.

An additional advantage of this personal style of writing is that it enables exploration of topics that may be taboo or hidden from view, such as bullying (Vickers, 2007), workplace emotion (Blenkinsopp, 2007) or gender discrimination (Haynes, 2013). In my case, I am illuminating an aspect of organisational life that often occurs behind closed doors rendering it invisible to outsiders. As a team coach, I rarely have the privilege of observing other coaches in action. I hope that by bringing my private practice into the public domain I can stimulate a different conversation.

At the commencement of the study, my supervisor repeatedly advised me to write down an account of my existing team coaching practice. Whilst I recognised this activity as aligned to my autoethnographic and interpretive approach, I was unsure how to capture a muddled and unsatisfactory process in writing. The breakthrough arose upon reading Duncan's (2004) exploration of her practice of hyper media design. She describes creating a 'retrospective account' of her design practice for the three years prior to the beginning of the research period, explaining how this provided the themes that inform her work and the beginning of a language to describe her activities (Duncan, 2004: 32). Considering the themes that guided my practice provided an impetus and was a starting point. As I brought the foundations of my practice to conscious awareness, I aimed to

develop a deeper understanding of what I was doing, and where I had to explore further. I describe the reflections on my practice below.

1.5. A retrospective exploration of my team coaching practice

To structure my thinking I adopted the concept of a 'personal model of coaching practice' (Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck, 2014: 461) by elucidating: The personal philosophy that underpinned my work with people and organisations; the purpose and outcomes I sought to achieve with teams; and the methods and approaches that contributed to my process in a team context. I outline the resulting philosophy, purpose and approaches below.

1.5.1. The philosophy of my coaching practice

My professional identity was profoundly influenced by the values and principles espoused by Procter & Gamble, a multinational corporation specialising in fast-moving consumer goods. I joined the company straight after graduation and stayed for 17 years. Their ethos advocated an overriding philosophy of the belief in the capabilities of people and the value of human potential as a source of competitive advantage (PG.com). The messages of engagement I absorbed have remained core to my approach as a manager and a coach.

In organisations where people are engaged (MacLeod and Clarke, 2009) they see a positive alignment with organisational goals and their own development and satisfaction. I have observed how people flourish when they experience their fundamental psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence being met through their work and relationships (Deci and Ryan, 2000). I operate from the humanistic philosophy (Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1959) that people are intrinsically motivated and want to reach their potential, and will do so within the constraints of their social environment. These ideas inform how I relate and work with people in organisations. Like many coaches, I believe in the capability and the will of individuals to achieve positive outcomes, particularly when they align to organisational values (Crabbe, 2011) and I resist directive approaches that impose my will or expertise. The person-centered belief that clients working within

a supportive relationship can find their own solutions is a powerful driving philosophy (Joseph, 2014; Joseph and Murphy, 2013).

1.5.2. The purpose of my coaching

For a significant portion of my career, I held roles that focussed upon building capability of the organisation in order to achieve business results. In two particular phases of my career, between 1993-1996 and 1999-2004, I was responsible for leading culture change programmes based upon the thinking of the Total Quality Management movement (Hackman and Wageman, 1995) and embracing the ideas of Tom Peters (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Peters, 1988). They implored the leaders of Corporate America to shake off their rigid hierarchies and embrace flexible customer-focussed organisations that thrived on knowledge sharing, multifunctional teamwork and integrated customer supplier relationships. This was my education in creating teams embedded in supportive high-performing cultures and my first introduction to organisational systems thinking (Senge, 1990).

As such I recognised the purpose of my coaching was in the service of OD, described as:

Any systematic process or activity which increases organisational functioning, effectiveness and performance through the development of an organisation's capability to solve problems and bring about beneficial change and renewal in its structures, systems, and culture, and which helps and assists people in organisations to improve their day to day organisational lives and well-being, and enhances both individual, group, and organisational learning and development. (Hamlin, Ellinger and Beattie, 2009: 1)

This understanding of OD, aligned with my beliefs about people, provided a dual purpose for organisational coaching: To grow capability of the organisation to perform more effectively over time and to enhance people's experience of organisational life in order to create sustainable results.

1.5.3. Coaching approaches

My toolkit is an eclectic collection of ideas, models and frameworks. However, the person-centered approach is foundational and reflective listening is a core approach. I provide active attention to what is said and not said and choose what to reflect back based on empathy and a desire to demonstrate a true appreciation and connection with the coachee. This focused attention enables the coachee to explore a particular topic with some depth in order to gain awareness and open up possibilities and new perspectives (Joseph, 2014).

To recall other approaches I reviewed my client engagement diary from the previous three years and identified a small number of tools that I repeatedly utilised, depending upon the client context and the type of intervention required.

The types of interventions comprised four main categories:

- Systemic intervention focused upon a leadership team wanting to make cultural changes in an organisation. I used a proprietary organisational culture tool (Denisonconsulting.com).
- Strategic interventions focused upon vision, mission and values. I facilitated discussion and activities based on well-known strategy tools (Porter, 2011; Kaplan and Norton, 1996; Lencioni, 2002).
- Functional team effectiveness interventions utilising some kind of team effectiveness questionnaire - usually self-generated based upon my knowledge of teams from well-regarded team specialists (Katzenbach and Smith, 2008).
- Interpersonal interventions utilising psychometric tools such as MBTI, based upon personality types allowing participants to learn how to work together better based on improved understanding of preferences.

Characterising all of these activities was the one-off nature of the intervention; usually educational in nature, with myself placed as the expert facilitator. What struck me was my apparent need to scaffold the session and remain in control, whereas in dyadic coaching I was much more comfortable to work with what the

client brought in-the-moment. The *'involved thematic deliberation'* of my practice (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011: 344) created an insight; the need for scaffolding, and a nagging anomaly; I did not describe these interventions as coaching and yet I retained a deeply-held belief that I entered every interaction with the mind-set of *'being a coach,'* informed by my purpose and philosophy. This meant I was bringing *something* to my work with teams that was different to team-based practitioners who did not hold a coach identity. I wanted this research project to articulate what that *something* was, in significantly more detail.

The retrospective consideration of my coaching approach offered two potential explanations for my discomfort with team-based assignments. First, the cognitive dissonance between a functionally-directive approach clashing with my espoused value of non-directive person-centred developmental relationships. Second, I felt a discomfort with being in-the-moment with teams without a tightly-controlled process. Clutterbuck's (2014: 282) observation that team coaching is *'highly demanding of the coach since there is a need to manage simultaneously the coaching process and the interactions of team members'* echoes this second concern. It was clear that I possessed a limited number of *'response repertoires'* (Weick, 2009: 16) and that this impacted my ability to manage either the process or the interactions and reinforced the motive to pursue the research for my own self-efficacy.

Having surfaced my own understanding of my coaching practice based upon experiential learning in the workplace, I now turn to the published practitioner literature and empirical research base to make sense of how scholars currently understand the practice of team coaching.

1.6. A brief exploration of the team coaching research base

In this section I outline the research base for team coaching. First, I clarify some fundamental boundaries relating to this work in order to illustrate the inconsistencies and pitfalls prevalent in the literature in relation to questions such as Who is the client? Who is the coach? What is the context? Second, I present a thematic analysis of the literature, outlining the stated purpose of various team

coaching interventions along with underpinning theoretical assumptions. Third, I summarise how existing theory informed my understanding of what I was doing in practice as I commenced the research project. Finally, I draw three overarching conclusions that summarise the challenges inherent in the extant literature.

1.6.1. Fundamental concepts relating to team coaching research

As I specified when outlining the motivations for my study, when I refer to team coaching in this research project I mean an *external coach* working with an *intact organisational team as a whole unit*. Confusion arises when authors are inconsistent in what they mean by 'team coaching' in relation to these specific dimensions *italicised* above.

First, it is useful to distinguish between a group and a team, as both words are used interchangeably. A group is a general term that describes any collection of two or more people that come together for some purpose and exist as a complex, dynamic open system that changes over time (Berdahl and Henry, 2005) whereas a team is a specific type of group described as

a collection of individuals who are interdependent in their tasks, share responsibility for outcomes, who see themselves and who are seen by others as an intact social entity embedded in one or more larger social systems, and who manage their relationships across boundaries. (Cohen & Bailey, 1997: 241)

Whilst I am specifically interested in teams, concepts from the body of work relating to groups can be applicable to teams and sometimes the generic term 'group' is used even when the author is referring to a team. Caution is required to clarify the author's meaning in each case. Of significant interest to the team coach is the fact that team members are *interdependent in their tasks* and *share responsibility for outcomes*. The focus for team coaching is therefore with these shared responsibilities, activities and goals in mind versus those relating to individuals. Hence, when I describe coaching the team it is as a *whole unit*. This is to distinguish from coaching focussed on individuals within a group or team

context (Kets de Vries, 2005; Stelter, Nielson and Wikman, 2011).

I explicitly describe myself as an *external coach* to distinguish this process from coaching behaviours displayed by a team leader in pursuit of their management role. I am external to the team even when the coaching assignment is within my own organisation. The issues of power and trust and directed coaching agenda, which are significant in line management coaching (Ladyshevsky, 2009) are also likely to be relevant when a line manager coaches a team. These issues however are outside the scope of this research.

Finally, I want to clarify the type of coaching context that is under investigation. I am interested in working with teams at all levels in an organisational setting over a period of time. I have chosen to avoid working with senior strategic leadership teams as these teams have a very specific team context in leading the organisation and a unique set of challenges due to the leadership role. Of the small number of team research cases that do exist, a few refer to the executive or top-team scenario (Anderson, Anderson and Mayo, 2008; Carr and Peters, 2013; Diedrich, 2001; Hawkins, 2011; Thornton, 2010) and therefore I do, at times, draw insights from this research. However, I am cognisant that I do not have the space to consider the particular issues pertaining specifically to leadership teams within the scope of this project.

I have also considered the relevance of sports coaching research to the organisational coaching context. Clutterbuck (2007) cautions against the appropriation of sports team research for application in organisational settings. There are four main concerns; the role and relationship of the external coach, the purpose of the coaching, the type of team to compare with, and the ethical complexities of the field of business compared to sports.

Taking each issue in turn, sports coaches are embedded either with their teams, as part of the team themselves or as part of the sporting organisation in which they reside. They are leaders or managers, have control over the team selection and have different obligations to the key stakeholders compared with an

organisational coach. Typically sports team coaching refers to the development of technical execution of sports skills (Lyons, Rynne and Mallett, 2012) or development of game play strategy (Light, Harvey and Mouchet, 2014) and is often focussed upon unique contexts such as adolescent teams in schools and colleges (Feltz, Chase, Moritz and Sullivan, 1999) or elite sport (Hodge, Henry and Smith, 2013). Sports teams are not easily comparable with organisational teams. For example, is a project team where members all bring different functional specialisms more like a football team; working together to get the ball in the net, or a cricket team displaying individual skills with an overall aim of beating the opposition? Finally, there is the complexity involved. Sports teams follow clearly-defined rules of the game whereas organisational teams may have more delicately-balanced ethical decisions to navigate and a more complex system in which to operate with multiple stakeholders.

Having said this, I do not rule out utilising sports coaching examples altogether. I can appreciate that if I wanted to explore a specific type of coaching intervention I may still gain insights from a different context and that sports coaching research may have something to offer, for example, in techniques for behavioural coaching (Smith, 2010) or creating an appropriate climate (Hodge, Henry and Smith, 2013).

In Table 1.1 I have summarised the main researchers and writers in team coaching, along with an analysis of where their focus resides in respect to the boundary issues highlighted above. The table shows that none of the empirical research specifically fulfils all of my criteria, based in organisational teams, with an external coach and not focussed upon leadership teams. Hauser's (2014) work is perhaps closest in that she collates experiences from a wide variety of external coach contexts.

Table 1.1. Summary of team coaching research base

Practice-based papers/chapters	Organisational teams?	External coach	Leader coach	Leadership teams
Diedrich, 2001	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Anderson, Anderson and Mayo, 2008	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Hackman and Wageman, 2008	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Thornton 2010, 2016	Yes, also works with groups	Yes	No	Not always specified
Brown and Grant, 2010	Groups	No	Yes	No
Hawkins, 2011	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Clutterbuck, 2007, 2014	Yes	Yes	Yes	Range of team types
Empirical research				
Hackman and Wageman, 2005	No	No	Yes	No
Ben Hur, Kinley and Jonsen, 2011	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Rousseau, Aubé and Tremblay, 2011	Yes	No	Yes	Innovation teams
Carr and Peters, 2013	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Hauser, 2014	Yes	Yes	No	Not specified

1.6.2. Themes in the coaching literature

In this section, I review team coaching from the practitioner perspective and the limited research base. There is agreement that this is an immature research field, team coaching interventions need to take account of the wider organisational system, and temporal issues in teams are often significant. I explore each of these themes briefly below.

1.6.2. i. An immature research field

As described in the foundational issues above, team coaching is not well understood, team coaching research is sparse (Peters and Carr, 2013) and there is 'conceptual confusion' (Brown and Grant, 2010: 36) as to how team coaching is distinctive from other team-based interventions, such as team consultation,

team building and team facilitation. Team coaching research is some way behind the general body of 1:1 coaching research (Hawkins, 2011) and understanding team coaching as distinctive from other team-based intervention is reminiscent of the debate around the differences in coaching, counselling and mentoring, prevalent in the early coaching literature. In order to create some clarity, I briefly describe how team building, team facilitation and team process consultation are conceptualised.

'Team building' is used as a generic term for a myriad of interventions. In a recent review of the literature relating to team building, Klein, DiazGranados, Salas, Burke, Lyons, and Goodwin, (2009) identify team building activities as addressing four distinct aspects of team functioning: goal setting; improving social relations; clarifying roles and; developing capacity for problem solving. With a diversity of cases and methodologies presented, the term remains poorly conceptualised making it difficult to extract learning relating to what takes place during the intervention, and how and why these interventions may work. Buller (1987) recognised that a likely variable in the success of an intervention could be the 'consultant' and the quality of the relationships formed between themselves and the client team.

Team facilitation is typically described as a series of activities designed to help a group achieve a particular outcome often related to problem solving or decision making (Thomes, 2008; Wardale, 2013). Facilitators guide their clients through a defined process to achieve a particular outcome whilst creating and maintaining a suitable collaborative climate (Azadegan and Kolfshoten, 2014; Garavan, et al., 2002). Facilitators are seen as the experts in a particular process technology. However, Schwartz (2002) describes a developmental form of facilitation that has a closer resonance with coaching in that it seeks to help the group solve a problem whilst building their capacity to become self-facilitating.

Team process consultation described by Schein (1999) articulates this work primarily as a helping relationship where the consultant supports the clients in learning how to diagnose problems and design interventions whilst retaining

ownership and responsibility. The language of process consultation may feel initially off-putting to a coach. Consultants are described as experts in organisational systems observing task processes and diagnosing problems, evoking a relationship of expert and client, and of unequal power that is at odds to the typical assumptions underpinning a coaching relationship. I explore the similarities and differences of team coaching and other team-based interventions in Chapters 3 to 6.

1.6.2. ii. A systemic intervention

There is acknowledgement that team coaching relates to working with a team within a wider system and that this is a significant advantage of team coaching over dyadic coaching which has been criticised (Brown and Grant, 2010) for not taking the organisational context sufficiently into account, or failing to enable individuals to operate effectively within the wider system. Systemic awareness is important for both the coach and the team members. Hawkins (2011) advocates that teams focus upon engagement and dialogue between themselves and key stakeholders as a critical step in establishing their mandate. Professional coaches report creating leverage by raising awareness of a team's interactions with customers, stakeholders and other parts of the organisational system (Hauser, 2014).

1.6.2. iii. Temporal considerations

A number of studies relating to team interventions raise the issue of time sensitivity. Temporal issues have been conceptualised in two different ways:

- The time a team has spent together and the stage of development.
- The stage in a team's performance cycle and resultant team focus.

Team development was first conceptualised by Tuckman (1965), and many practitioners recognise these developmental stages in team building interventions (Carter and Hawkins, 2013) primarily through team-forming activities such as 'getting to know you exercises' and norming activities of

agreeing team behaviours, followed by the development of team performance processes for decision making, problem solving or information sharing. However, Kasl, Marsick and Dechant (1997: 231) demonstrated how it is possible for a team to go through stages of forming, storming, norming and performing *'yet never challenge dysfunctional assumptions or create new knowledge through strategies such as reframing or perspective integration'* thus remaining relatively immature in terms of demonstrating shared learning and collaborative behaviours. In other words, these teams exist in organisations, performing to some degree, but never achieving anything close to optimal functioning. As a coach, I am seeking to move from the surface level, functional approach of team interventions towards enabling a deeper level of transformation and change.

Wheelan (1999) also presents a developmental perspective, describing the stages as: Dependency and inclusion; counter-dependency and fight; trust and cooperation and finally; productivity and effectiveness. Each stage is characterised by a key concern for the team participants: Do I belong? Can I have my say? Can we work together cooperatively? Can we develop a cohesive and effective unit even during task-related conflict? These issues begin to illuminate where I might focus as a coach in order to raise awareness for the team members of what might be going on beneath the surface and how this affects their ability to work effectively together. Thornton (2010, 2016) provides the most comprehensive overview of typical social interactions in groups and the impact upon a group's ability to work together, to learn and change. Her work draws upon analytic group therapy and is the main advocate for coaches paying attention to the significance of psychodynamic interactions within groups, commonly known as 'group dynamics.' This raises the question of what degree of psychodynamic competence is required of the team coach.

The second temporal consideration concerns taking account of the team's status within any performance period. Gersick (1998) raised questions about the developmental stage models described above based on a field study of natural work teams where she observed that teams appear to establish fixed routines within a very short time of forming and maintain those routines until a notional halfway point towards their performance goals. At this time, teams appear ready

to review performance and make significant transitions in approach for the second half of their time together.

Hackman and Wageman's (2005) theory of team coaching is based upon Gersick's work and introduces the concept of '*readiness for coaching*' (2005: 275). The work is useful in raising the issue of a team's potential perception of its priorities at a given point in a cycle of activity. The theory suggests that the type and timing of coaching offered should be closely aligned to three key stages in the performance period: Motivational type coaching aimed at achieving maximum collective effort towards shared goals at the beginning; consultative type coaching aimed at providing feedback on action strategies around mid-point and; educational type coaching aimed at extracting learning from experience at the end of a performance cycle.

Hackman and Wageman (2005) suggest that team-based interventions may be focussed upon different purposes at different times. Defining the purpose for coaching appears to be a major area of discrepancy amongst team coaching scholars, which creates lack of clarity when considering a range of sources. Next, I consider the purpose of team coaching interventions in more detail and explore five different types of intervention depending upon the context and the intended coaching focus.

1.6.3. *The purpose of team coaching interventions*

There is a consensus that team coaching is ultimately about enabling the team to achieve its goals and perform over time. Hackman and Wageman (2005: 272) provide a comprehensive '*three-dimensional conception*' of performance that comprises: The team delivering quality outcomes as defined by stakeholders; social processes used by the team to develop over time to make them more capable and; the experience of working in the group enhances individuals' learning and wellbeing. This generalised conceptualisation of team performance is helpful as individual performance targets based on a team's specific context are often difficult to compare with each other.

The purposes of team coaching interventions focus on five main themes; a) operating effectively within the context or wider system, b) clarity of team purpose and direction, c) task accomplishment, d) team working behaviours and e) the team climate. This section will review each of these five focus areas in turn outlining the existing knowledge base.

1.6.3. i. Coaching Purpose Theme 1. Operating within the wider context

The idea of a team nested in a wider organisational system is inherent in the definition of a team (Cohen and Bailey, 1997). Therefore, it is not surprising that a number of team coaches advocate a systems perspective in their work. Thornton, (2010) and Hawkins (2011) both describe specific interventions. Thornton describes how a team may require help in navigating issues within the wider organisational system by helping them to become more aware of the interconnections and multi-levels of complexity within their environment. Thornton offers examples of how she supports teams to work with, and influence, different parts of this system. Hawkins, working specifically with leadership teams, describes approaches to influencing the key stakeholders within the wider system via case examples; one involves interviewing stakeholders and giving the team feedback via a process of inquiry and dialogue and a second case where a joint stakeholder and board of directors' team meeting is facilitated by the coach.

Considering my purpose of coaching from an OD perspective, the system theory approach makes sense conceptually. However, my challenge is how to recognise and create awareness of a myriad of systemic issues, and help the team to deal with them. I explore approaches to building this contextual awareness in more depth in Chapter 5: Team as Living System Metaphor.

1.6.3. ii. Coaching Purpose Theme 2. Clarity of team purpose and direction

Researchers and practitioners agree that establishing clear team purpose and goals is an important focus for team coaching (Carr and Peters, 2013; Clutterbuck, 2014; Hackman and Wageman, 2005; Hawkins, 2011; Thornton, 2010). Activities include creating a process for setting and reviewing goals, ensuring alignment with personal or sub-team goals and developing motivation

and commitment. However, Clutterbuck (2014: 279) advises against *'too narrow a focus on goals'* if this obfuscates other, more limiting, behaviours within the team's make up. Goal-focussed coaching is aligned with performance coaching approaches first established in the business world by Whitmore (2002) with his GROW coaching approach. GROW represents the mnemonic for the key stages; Goals, Reality, Options, What Next. This model was further developed for teams by Brown and Grant (2010) with the mnemonic GROUP to represent the coaching activities of Goals, Reality, Options, Understand Others, Perform. As with all tool-based coaching the success is dependent upon the skills and experience of the coach in the room and their ability to work flexibly depending on the situation (Thornton, 2010), reinforcing my call to fully understand how the practitioner makes choices in-the-moment. I explore the role of goal-focussed coaching further in Chapter 3: Team as Machine Metaphor.

1.6.3. iii. Coaching Purpose Theme 3: Task accomplishment

Hackman and Wageman (2005) place the emphasis of their coaching on *'task performance processes'* (2005: 273) and direct criticism at those who work with the interpersonal relationships. They argue that a focus on task-based activities would bring performance success and, as a result, relationship and communication issues are minimised. The evidence is from experimental teams of students working together for an hour, building a Lego house (Wooley, 1998) and is unconvincing when considering organisational teams whose interpersonal relationships become critical when working together over a longer period.

Hackman and Wageman describe team coaching as a:

Direct interaction with a team intended to help members make coordinated and task appropriate use of their collective resources in accomplishing the team's work. (Hackman and Wageman, 2005: 269)

Task accomplishment is associated with a behavioural type of coaching most suited to team leader coaches with an emphasis on goal setting, assessment, feedback and action planning (Clutterbuck, 2014; Rousseau, Aubé and

Tremblay, 2011). I consider the role of behavioural coaching in Chapter 3: Team as Machine Metaphor.

1.6.3. iv. Coaching Purpose Theme 4: Facilitating team working behaviours

In direct contrast to the Hackman and Wageman model, most authors recognise the importance of the social and relational aspects of team working and focus their coaching accordingly. Central to the ideas presented are those of learning and dialogue, which enable the team to collaborate effectively. Creating the space and conditions for dialogue is explored further in the section below on creating a climate. However, coaches also describe facilitating dialogue through agreeing, and role modelling, appropriate behaviours such as suspending assumptions, letting go of the need to be right and seeking shared understanding and insight (Brown and Grant, 2010).

As described above, group dynamics are of particular concern to Thornton (2016: 28) who provides clear explanation of a coach's role in '*holding*' the group such that anxieties are minimised or '*contained*' and team members are able to encounter unfamiliar information or explore issues normally avoided by the team. Creating a safe space to explore issues is a common concept in dyadic coaching where the quality of the relationship is key. Carl Rogers (1961) first described the conditions for a genuine helping relationship including the elements such as empathy, unconditional positive regard and ability to connect with the client. I consider the issues of relationship, trust and creating a safe space for collaborative behaviours in chapter four: Team As Family.

There is some agreement (Clutterbuck, 2014; Hawkins 2014; Thornton, 2016) to support the idea that team coaching is about learning with a focus on building long-term sustainable development which has resonance with the products of dyadic coaching described by Flaherty (2005: 3) as '*long-term excellent performance,*' '*self-correction*' and '*self-generation.*' Thornton (2016: 117) identifies that '*team interventions should be directed at relationship between the team's goal and the team's capacity to carry it out*' which implies a developmental process, whilst Clutterbuck describes team coaching as

a learning intervention designed to increase collective capability and performance of a group or team through the application of coaching principles of assisted reflection, analysis and motivation for change.
(Clutterbuck, 2014: 271)

What is missing is the detail of how the coach applies these principles to achieve learning. For example, Clutterbuck (2014: 281) suggests enabling ‘*collective awareness*’ through dialogue and mutual feedback. As a coach, I must interpret how to operationalise this in practice. I look at team learning in the context of adapting to the external environment in Chapter 6: Team as Living System Metaphor.

1.6.3. v. Coaching Purpose Theme 5: Creating an appropriate climate

It can be inferred from those coaches that advocate the importance of dialogue within teams that there is a need to create an appropriate climate for this behaviour to emerge, a climate that requires ‘*appropriate set-up, group commitment and skilled coaching*’ (Brown and Grant, 2010: 49). However, coaching research provides only limited explanations of how this appropriate set-up is achieved. Examples of creating appropriate team climate have been explored in research involving organisational teams to develop better decision making in the banking sector (Ben Hur, Kinley and Jonsen, 2011) and to improve innovation in a public safety organisation (Rousseau, Aubé and Tremblay, 2012). In these examples, the coach provides behavioural feedback encouraging behaviours that support the desired climate. However, Thornton (2010) provides practice-based examples of team member behaviours that may indicate a dysfunctional team climate such as arriving late, appearing bored or displaying covert hostility and suggests practical approaches she has used to overcome such situations. As a developing coach I found this list of scenarios evoking anxiety as it began to articulate my own fears of being out of control in an emerging team situation, further exacerbated by Thornton’s advice to ‘*look relaxed*’ even if we do not feel it and to seek adequate supervision to identify coping strategies.

I consider how to create a climate for effective dialogue in Chapter 5: Team as Family Metaphor, and consider conditions for effective learning in Chapter 6: Team as Living System Metaphor. Finally, I will consider the issues of dealing with coach anxiety and vulnerability in the face of emergent situations within coaching in Chapter 7: Team and Coach in Wonderland.

1.6.4. The knowledge gap in team coaching research

There are three major issues with the existing research base, which I seek to respond to in this research project.

Firstly, there is a greater need for integration between practice and theory. The majority of work published on the subject developed through practice (Clutterbuck, 2008; Hawkins, 2011; Thornton, 2010) and, whilst these writers share valuable experience, the tools and approaches presented do not always draw from a transparent theory base. Practical how-to guides offer ideas, however a theoretical understanding helps me to make informed choices about why a certain approach might work and to build a more integrated conceptual frame. My research aims to integrate theory with practice to extend the team coaching theory. I use practice-based inquiry to guide me towards exploring a diverse range of established theories from other disciplines, such as psychology and team effectiveness, to inform and extend team coaching theory.

Secondly, the existing empirical research fails to resonate with my practice of working with established organisational teams for two reasons. One is that the research ignores organisational complexity, for example research that is conducted in artificially-controlled conditions such as short-term student experiments (Hackman and Wageman, 2005) or research that adopts a positivist perspective exploring an isolated element of coach behaviour with an isolated element of team performance (Ben Hur, Kinley and Jonsen, 2011; Rousseau, Aubé and Tremblay, 2011). The second reason is that the research reflects coach or team contexts not relevant to my practice, for example research conducted with leader coaches (Brown and Grant, 2010) implies a hierarchical and directive

relationship not relevant for external coaches or is conducted with leadership teams that have a unique role in the organisation that emphasises their strategic imperatives and specific issues of top team leadership (Carr and Peters, 2013; Hawkins, 2011). My research aims to investigate qualitatively the experiences of the external coach working over a six to twelve-month period with established teams, and to consider how a coach may respond to a range of emergent issues as they arise.

Thirdly, the extant research base, combined with practitioner literature, presents a fragmented, confusing and inadequate picture of team coaching; fragmented as the existing frameworks oversimplify by presenting a limited single perspective (Brown and Grant, 2010; Hackman and Wageman, 2005), confusing when they share a lifetime of experiences from multiple perspectives that are difficult to integrate (Hawkins, 2011; Thornton, 2010), and inadequate when they name what coaches say they do without explaining how they arrived at the decision to do it (Hauser, 2014). As a practicing coach I am left wondering whose perspective to follow and when and how to apply which approach. I do appreciate that a framework can be very helpful as a heuristic device to simplify and connect with experience, and that scenarios help to bring examples alive on the page. My research aims to support a coach in reading different situations and making choices about how to respond by providing a framework illustrated with practice-based vignettes. I seek to create an integrated framework that is simple enough to retain conceptually yet offers a flexible range of perspectives to help me make sense of the inherent complexity of practice.

1.6.5. My understanding of team coaching as it informed my practice in December 2013

In this first chapter, my intention is to explain the foundations of my team coaching practice informed by the extant theory base and my experiential knowledge as it was at the start of my research project. Thus far I have described my retrospective review of my practice and outlined a thematic review of team coaching theory. Specifically, I outlined five purposes for team coaching that are present in the team coaching literature. In December 2013, prior to the start of

my fieldwork or analysis phases, I proposed a description of team coaching that represented my understanding at that time:

Team coaching is a series of contextualised, systemic, developmental interventions intended to increase the collective capability, collaboration and performance of the team over time.

I also summarised the literature informing each team coaching purpose and combined it with my personal model of coaching elucidated by the retrospective review of my practice. This information is collated in Table 1.2 and represents a summary of the knowledge, skills and philosophies that I was explicitly aware of informing my practice at the commencement of my fieldwork in January 2014. Presenting the information in a table reinforces the disparate view of the activities as I perceived them. Taking the description above and the table together, my role could perhaps best be described as a team performance facilitator, rather than a team coach. The table is shown below.

Table 1.2. My understanding of my team coaching practice in December 2013

Coaching Philosophy: Person-centred, relational helping. Whole systems thinking.

Coaching Purpose	My coaching approaches	Additional approaches described in team coaching literature
Clarify purpose and direction	Strategic interventions focused on vision, mission and values (Porter, 2011; Kaplan and Norton, 1996; Lencioni, 2002)	Goal-focussed coaching (Brown and Grant, 2010; Thornton, 2010) Establish stakeholder expectations (Hawkins, 2011)
Operate effectively within the wider context	Systemic intervention focused on a leadership team wanting to make cultural changes in an organisation. I used a proprietary organisational culture tool (Denisonconsulting.com)	Raising awareness of a team's interactions with customers, stakeholders and other parts of the organisational system (Hauser, 2014)
Achieve tasks	Feedback and gap analysis based on team effectiveness best practice (Katzenbach and Smith, 2008)	Behavioural approaches with an emphasis on goal setting, assessment, feedback and action planning (Rousseau, Aubé and Tremblay, 2011; Clutterbuck, 2007)
Enable effective collaborative behaviours	Use of psychometric tools such as MBTI to develop understanding of preferences	Role modelling behaviours of effective dialogue (Brown and Grant, 2010; Clutterbuck, 2007)
Create a climate for dialogue and learning	Listening, offering reflections and summarising what is being said (Rogers, 1961)	Holding (Thornton, 2010) Psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999)

1.7. Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, I have set out the foundations for this team coaching research project, establishing the boundaries and clarifying terms. I have described my motives for the project and my understanding of my team coaching practice in the context of the extant research base. I have established the start point for my developmental journey and indicated my research aims. In the chapters that follow I shall explain my research methodology and then explore team coaching from a range of perspectives, integrating theory and practice, and culminating in an integrated framework.

In Chapter 2, I continue the journey by outlining the research design. I highlight my research philosophy, the context of the practical fieldwork with two operational teams, and the engagement and collaboration with a peer group of practicing coaches. I explain the data collection methods and the processes of analysis and interpretation in line with my autoethnographic approach. I justify the choices behind my approach and explain the criteria by which I wish the research to be evaluated. I highlight the practical and ethical dilemmas throughout.

Chapter 2: Research Design: From Fieldwork to Data Analysis

2.0. Introduction

In this chapter, I explain my research design and methods. First, I consider the fundamental philosophical and conceptual commitments that underpin my research approach to develop knowledge in a practice context and justify my choice of autoethnography. I demonstrate how I immersed myself in the world of team coaching via three fieldwork sites; two cases of team coaching with organisational teams and a discussion group of professional coaches. I introduce the fieldwork participants and the methods of data collection. Second, I describe the developmental journey through the iterative process of analysis and interpretation to make sense of my fieldwork. It is not always apparent how autoethnographic work has been created (Anderson and Glass-Coffin, 2013), therefore I have endeavoured to make my process transparent, revealing the challenges of engaging with autoethnography. I reflect upon the strategies I have adopted to meet these challenges, leading to a discussion exploring quality criteria within my research and how I would wish it to be evaluated. I conclude this chapter by considering the ethical concerns inherent in the research and how I have responded to these issues.

2.1. Fundamental commitments within the research design

In creating my research design I aimed to realise certain fundamental commitments that aligned with my personal values and beliefs. Specifically, I was looking for a research design that enabled practice-based inquiry to surface implicit knowledge; a process whereby I could construct knowledge through dialogue in relationships with others, recognising my epistemology of social constructionism. In addition, I was seeking a sense making process that enabled me to answer my core research question of 'what is going on?' that responded to the flow of practice. I now explain how autoethnography enables me to meet these fundamental commitments.

2.1.1. Autoethnography as practice-based inquiry embracing social constructionism

Through this research project, my aim was to answer a research question and develop my practice as a researcher. It was inherent in my process of becoming a researcher (Mantai, 2017) to make sense of what constitutes knowledge. With a background as a scientist, I was familiar with the positivist tradition where theoretical knowledge is perceived as a single objective truth established through '*observation, experiment and comparison*' (Crotty, 1998: 22). However, I question the efficacy of attempting to isolate and test independent variables or knowledge for practice-based research when we experience our practice more holistically (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011). I am committed to developing research that is embedded in the experience of practice and my own emerging context, now, in-the-moment. To achieve this I am drawn to explore moments in practice when I do not know what to do, when I move from a state of '*absorbed coping*' to a '*temporary breakdown*' (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011: 348) such that I am required to reflect critically on thoughts, feelings and deliberations that are informing my practice.

I relate to social constructionism where '*meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world*' (Crotty, 2006: 43) and in particular to Cunliffe (2008) who articulates a form of relational social constructionist research that is intersubjective, dialogical, reflexive and embodied. To take each in turn: it is intersubjective in that we create realities with others in '*spontaneous responsive ways*' (p. 126); dialogical in that I make sense of what I know through dialogue with others and myself; reflexive in that we are aware of issues of power, gender, class, race and professional ideology that may drive taken-for-granted assumptions (Cunliffe, 2003) and; embodied in that we learn through our senses and feelings in addition to our cognitive processes (Cunliffe, 2008).

I see the notion of behaving as a team coach as an example of relational social construction as I negotiate my role as a team coach in relationship and dialogue with team members and stakeholders. Similarly, Kempster and Stuart (2010)

draw upon the relational aspects of learning and sense making within practice in their co-produced autoethnographic account of becoming a CEO.

I discovered autoethnography after an exploration of action research, specifically first person action research (Whitehead, 2009; McNiff, 2013) where a practitioner-researcher explored their own practice (Kemmis, 2009) in participation with others (Cassell and Johnson, 2006; Reason and Bradbury, 2006). Acosta, Goltz and Goodson (2015) combined action research with autoethnography to create a collaborative, reflexive, self-aware approach to insider research which struck a chord with my project aims.

However, there were fundamental elements of action research that did not work well with my research context. The teams themselves were less interested in being co-researchers, as might be expected in cooperative inquiry (Reason, 1999), and more focussed upon their contextual concerns. Equally, I found a conflict in researching my emerging practice in a structured, cyclical method, typical of action research approaches (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). After six months of fieldwork I concluded that autoethnography alone would enable a more appropriate approach to self-research as it allowed me to make sense of my experience in the flow of practice, letting the process evolve in a more organic way (Boyle and Parry, 2007).

Within the autoethnographic method, writing itself is '*a mode of inquiry*' (Adams, Holman-Jones and Ellis, 2015: 68), such that I develop a deeper understanding of what I am doing through analysis and reflection of my self-narratives, discovering tacit knowledge and making it explicit through telling my story. Occasionally, I catch myself feeling vulnerable when offering stories as research; '*will they ask me – where is your data?*' To this end, I explore the concept of sense making as a core aim of my research to legitimise my choice of a research method that embraces storytelling.

2.1.2. Sense making through story telling

The research question '*what is going on when I am coaching the team?*' is an act of sense making, both in reflective analysis after the event and in-the-moment, as I attempt to make sense of experiences (Colville and Pye, 2010). In other words, sense making was central to my aims as a researcher and practitioner. Sense making involves becoming aware of what am I noticing, naming, interpreting and taking action on, from the cues I extract from my complex dynamic context (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005; Moore & Koning, 2016).

The central role of sense making within my research project informs my interest in storytelling. '*We narrate to make sense of experience over time*' (Bochner, 2000: 270). Storytelling creates a mechanism for giving meaning to experiences, to interpret them and decide how to act (Colville, Brown & Pye, 2012). Through narratives, we immerse ourselves in the '*lived, felt bodily experiences*' (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2011: 68). I am overtly creating stories from my data. Storytelling provides an opportunity to frame experiences in ways that others can understand and a richness of experience (Weick, 2007).

I have come to appreciate storytelling as a powerful approach for learning and creating insights. However, I recognise that stories rely on subjective language and is open to interpretation by the reader/listener (Linstead, 1999). Autoethnographers demonstrate compelling interwoven perspectives within their writing, describing their work as: '*Layered*' (Ronai, 1995: 396); an '*assemblage*' (Denshire and Lee, 2013: 222); '*multifaceted*' (Muncey, 2005: 70) and; '*deconstructive*' (Denzin, 2014: 38). A deconstructive approach is valuable for practice-based research in which I '*de-centre the knowing I*' (Denzin, 2013: 38) such that I resist jumping to superficial conclusions or remaining locked in fixed ways of thinking. I explore the deconstructive way of seeing the world (St. Pierre, 2011) later in this chapter through the process of analysis and interpretation. This situated, contextualised and subjective approach rejects essentialism or knowledge as a single objective truth and, instead, opens up the possibility of '*ambiguity, relativity, fragmentation, particularity and discontinuity*' (Crotty, 2006: 185). These ideas fall within a postmodernist theoretical perspective and allow

messy, partial evocative stories to enable unconventional and creative ways of developing knowledge about our lives and experiences (St. Pierre, 2011; Stalke Wall, 2016).

As I describe above, there is a vulnerability in offering stories that may not be judged as meeting the established standards of qualitative research. However, with transparent presentation of my claims to knowledge and the criteria by which I consider they may be evaluated, I demonstrate the rigour that underpins the quality of my research outcomes. A discussion of the quality criteria follows in the next section.

2.2. Evaluating the quality of my research design

In the early days of autoethnographic research there was a debate contrasting analytical approaches (Anderson, 2006; Atkinson, 2006) with more evocative writing (Denzin, 2006; Ellis and Bochner, 2006) and criticism that a self-obsessed retelling of a personal experience contributed nothing to our methodological, pedagogical or theoretical understandings (Delamont, 2009). Further critique addressed ethical concerns such as informed consent and author vulnerability (Medford, 2006; Tollich, 2010). Contemporary scholars make the case for research that demonstrates a balance between evocative personal insight combined with a transparent, ethical and theoretically-grounded analytical process (Tedlock, 2013; Wall, 2016). A balance demonstrated creatively by Learmouth and Humphreys (2012) in their multiple representations and reflexive critique of their experiences in academia and by Sambrook, Jones and Doloriert (2014) who provide deeper insights into experiences of employee engagement.

In this section I draw on elements of best practice from published work that resonate with my personal standards of research quality and align with Tracy's (2010: 840) eight '*Big Tent*' criteria for qualitative research which has achieved a significant following illustrated by 1600 citations recorded on Google Scholar (May 2017). The quality criteria by which I would like to evaluate my own work are that it is impactful, credible, engaging, reflexive and ethical. In Table 2.1.

below I summarise how these five criteria align with Tracy's. I then consider each in turn.

Table 2.1. My quality criteria aligned with Tracy's (2010) criteria for excellent qualitative research

'Eight Big Tent Criteria' taken from Table 1 Tracy (2010: 840) and paraphrased in places for brevity	My quality criteria
Worthy topic: The research topic is relevant, timely, significant and interesting.	Impactful
Significant contribution: The research provides a significant contribution conceptually or theoretically, practically, morally, methodologically or heuristically.	
Rich rigour: The study uses sufficient abundant, appropriate and complex theoretical constructs, data and time in the field, samples, contexts and analysis methods.	Credible
Credibility: The research is marked by thick description, concrete details, explication of tacit knowledge, and showing rather than telling. The research includes triangulation or crystallisation, multivocality and member reflections.	
Meaningful coherence: The study achieves what it purports to be about, uses appropriate methods and meaningfully connects literature, findings and interpretation.	
Resonance: The research influences, affects or moves a variety of audiences with aesthetic, evocative representation, naturalistic generalisation and transferable findings.	Engaging
Sincerity: The study is characterised by self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases and researcher inclinations. There is transparency about methods and challenges.	Reflexive
Ethical: The research considers procedural, situational and relational concerns.	Ethical

Firstly, having an impact is about contributing in a variety of ways. I hope that by selecting a topic that is of relevance to team coaches and presented in way that meaningfully connects literature, findings and interpretations I can offer insights that say something that is useful for others (Tracy, 2010). In this regard, I will demonstrate how I make a theoretical contribution by extending the theory of team coaching to incorporate new perspectives and how I make a methodological

contribution through autoethnographical analysis of practice. In addition, I demonstrate how I make a practical contribution by creating a coaching framework that others can apply. This element aligns with Tracy's (2010) criteria of worthy topic and meaningful coherence along with her requirement to make a contribution.

Secondly, I am aiming to create research that is credible to the reader. I combine Tracy's criteria of rigour, credibility and meaningful coherence. Tracy (2010) suggests we demonstrate rigour and credibility through the depth and abundance of the data presented including multiple viewpoints and rich descriptions. I describe how I achieve multivocality and rich description through a range of participant voices and reflective diaries along with my own descriptions, reflections and interpretations. Meaningful coherence is demonstrated as I integrate fieldwork, team coaching research data analysis and further theoretical themes into a coaching framework. I would also include Tracy's (2010) criteria of resonance as contributing to credibility. Through participant voices and fictional vignettes I am aiming to create work that is believable (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011), has emotional credibility (Bochner, 2000) and has resonance for others (Ellis and Bochner, 2006).

Thirdly, I want to create an engaging text that holds the reader's attention. Again, I connect with Tracy's (2010) criteria of resonance here. I aim for writing that has aesthetic merit through an engaging narrative that takes the reader on a temporal and developmental journey of discovery (Bochner, 2000), in a variety of creative forms (Shoemaker, 2013; Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005) and utilises literary devices such as dialogue, rhythm or repetition to create an experience for the reader (Pelias, 2011). I hope to place the reader in-the-moment with me and invite them to add their own interpretations as they read (Adams, Holman-Jones & Ellis, 2015), considering how the experience resonates with their own. Riveira and Tracy (2014: 206) offer '*embodied "messy" stories*' to bring the reader into their challenging fieldwork context in order to say something new about the emotional aspects of research. Kara (2013) uses fictional vignettes to convey the emotional experience of conducting doctoral research which taps in to our own emotional responses and engages our senses.

Fourthly, I want to consider reflexivity within my work. I am aware of the need to recognise my position as the researcher in relation to my context, my research participants, my epistemological commitments, and my claims to the quality of the research process and outcomes (Corlett and Mavin forthcoming; Cunliffe and Karunanayake, 2013; Johnson, 2015). I accept the subjective, contextualised nature inherent in what I write and aim to engage in '*a self-aware meta-analysis*' (Finlay, 2002: 209) that takes into account complex inter-relationships of levels or types of reflexivity (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009) that examine: The self, one's own experiences, insights or feelings (Rivera and Tracy, 2014; Southgate, 2011); the relational, inter-subjective dynamics between researcher and participants (Johnson and Duberley, 2003; Spry, 2011); and recognises the need to continually critically appraise the assumptions and blind spots inherent in our work and relationships (Corlett and Mavin, forthcoming). In Chapter 1 I provided an account of my personal history to make transparent the personal and professional motivations for the research study (James and Vinnicombe, 2002). This leads to a reflexive dialogue that runs throughout the thesis, making apparent the development of my philosophical position, my thinking, assumptions and methodological choices along the way. Kara (2013) presents an account of her fieldwork through stories to bring greater transparency to the challenges and choices she faced in her research.

Finally, I want to make apparent my ethical commitments and moral responsibilities to those whose stories I tell (Bochner, 2000; Pelias, 2011; Shoemaker, 2011) and to produce ethical texts that consider issues of consent, consultation and vulnerability (Tolich, 2010). Some authors have criticised autoethnographers for assuming that consent is not required when telling our own stories (Delamont, 2009; Tolich, 2010). I describe how I gain consent and protect the anonymity of participants who appear in my stories, particularly those who might be recognised through their association with me. I contemplate the challenges associated with retrospective consent, particularly when considering elapsed time and relational ethics (Ellis, 2007; Tracy, 2010). I consider issues of vulnerability in relation to myself as I describe the choice to reveal doubts, uncertainties and failings in relation to my professional practice, and in relation to

others. I describe at the end of this chapter how I approached the ethical decisions that I faced.

Developing my research design has been an emergent and organic process. The personal focus has enabled me to adopt a scholarly approach of discovery that responds to the messiness of practice and aligns with my paradigm of sharing and creating knowledge in participation with others. However, at times a loose unfolding process can feel uncomfortable and unclear. In the next section I explain how I created a sense of structure to frame my approach.

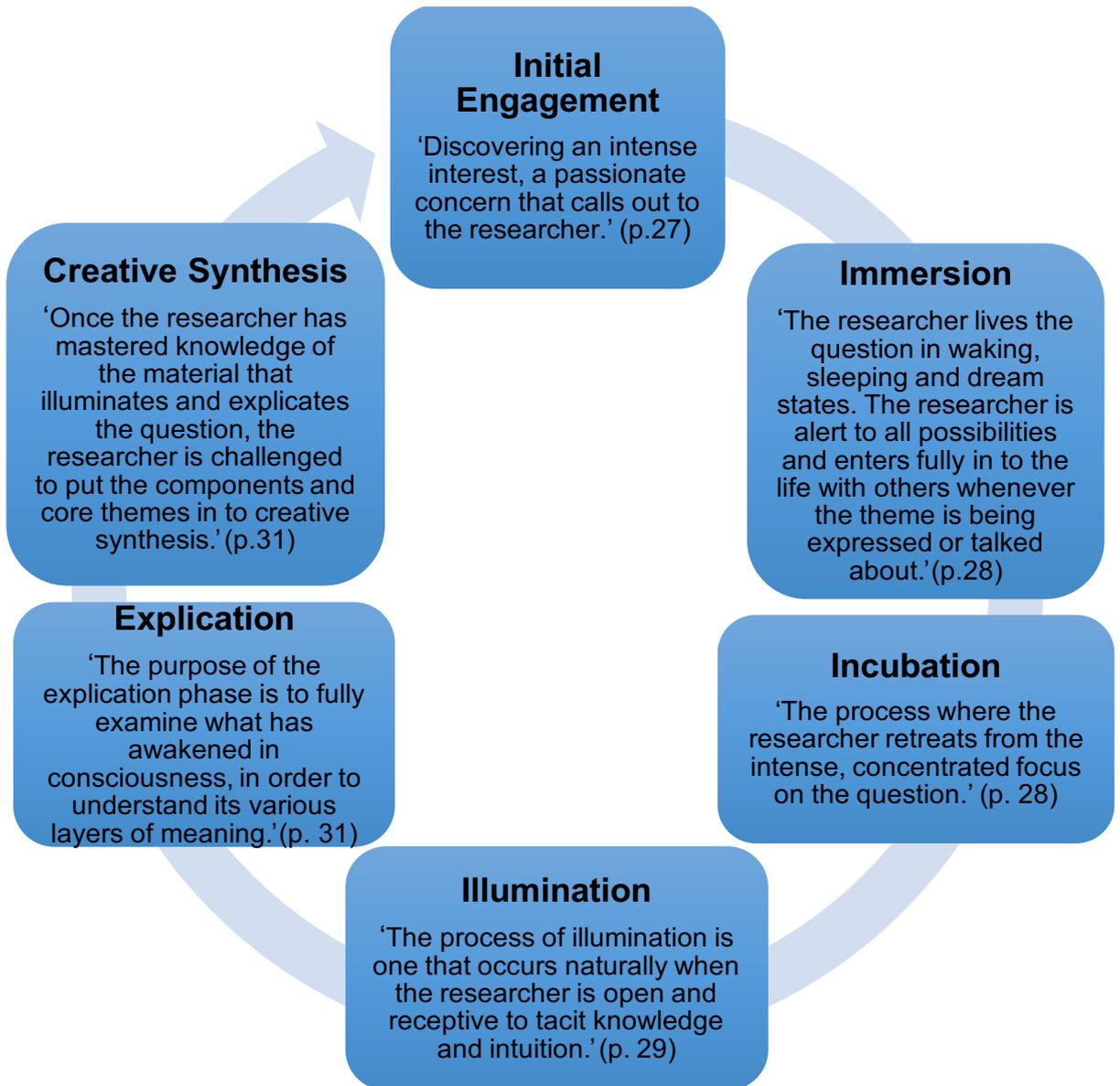
2.3. Doing Autoethnography: Scaffolding my approach

In the section above, I outlined my motives for selecting autoethnography as a flexible method of practice-based inquiry. Whilst the objectives and fundamental principles of my research were clear to me from the outset, what was less clear at the commencement of the project was quite how to go about it.

Although it is generally accepted that autoethnographers “learn by going,” little attention has been paid to the question of “how” one learns and how one “does” ... (Anderson & Glass-Coffin, 2013: 57)

At first, I found myself seeking validation of my autobiographical method and some structure to alleviate my insecurities about how I took my research forward. Wall (2006) charts her own initial discomfort with this unconventional method and sought historical validation in earlier forms of personal inquiry such as heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990) which suggests a series of research phases; initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis. I have created a visual representation of the phases in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Six phases of heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990)



In line with the idea of research phases I was drawn to the idea of mentally and chronologically separating out the doing of autoethnography in a particular field of activity and the representation as a final piece of research afterwards (Duncan, 2004; Whybrow, 2013). Perhaps I was reliving the fourth moment of qualitative research known as the crisis of representation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011), '*It is this insistence on the difference between writing and fieldwork that must be analysed*' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011: 16) but I considered the chronological separation helpful.

As a novice autoethnographer, it allowed me to plan how to get started by thinking first how I might immerse myself in the research topic and collect data about my practice. I believed it offered two separate phases of sense making first through the reflective journaling, participant observations and field notes during the experience, and then through creating the stories that emerged from this data, with the benefit of reflection and the opportunity to weave theory with personal insights representing the whole in a creative synthesis.

Over the course of the research project I have grown in confidence in operating within a postmodernist, theoretical perspective (Wall, 2016) and do not have the same need for reassurance that I am following a legitimate research method. However, I owe a debt of gratitude to Moustakas (1990) for providing me with a conceptual framework to scaffold the research design in the early days and for the notion of creating the concept of *illuminating stories* that later became fictionalised vignettes. I have outlined the connections between Moustakas' phases and stages of my research in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Phases of heuristic research connecting to my research project

Phases of heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990)	My research project
<p>Initial Engagement</p> <p>‘Discovering an intense interest, a passionate concern that calls out to the researcher.’ (p. 27)</p>	<p>Identifying the drivers for the research project as described in Chapter 1 of the thesis. ‘<i>Whether by epiphany, aesthetic moment or intuition we begin autoethnographic projects by starting where we are.</i>’ (Adams, Holman-Jones and Ellis, 2015: 49)</p>
<p>Immersion</p> <p>‘The researcher lives the question in waking, sleeping and dream states. The researcher is alert to all possibilities and enters fully in to the life with others whenever the theme is being expressed or talked about.’ (p. 28)</p>	<p>Immersion in the field of team coaching both with my own operational teams and in dialogue with team coaches and in immersion in the data and analysis afterwards. The practical and emotional immersion is described in Chapter 2 in descriptions of fieldwork and analysis, whilst theoretical immersion runs throughout the thesis. As I read, I am looking at how theory may inform or explain experience.</p>
<p>Incubation</p> <p>‘The process where the researcher retreats from the intense, concentrated focus on the question.’ (p. 28)</p>	<p>I consider incubation to be the natural process that occurs as we attend to our responsibilities of daily life outside our role as researcher. I experienced it with heuristic inquiry itself, at first rejecting it and then revisiting it.</p>
<p>Illumination</p> <p>‘The process of illumination is one that occurs naturally when the researcher is open and receptive to tacit</p>	<p>Illumination occurs through a multiple-stage process of analysis described later in this chapter. The moments of illumination are experienced as momentary flashes of insight and connection during reflection, writing and reading texts. Sometimes connections are made through a planned and</p>

<p>knowledge and intuition.’ (p. 29)</p>	<p>painstaking search for meaning by following a particular flow of logic or experience. Often, however, I fall unexpectedly on a text or conversation that suddenly seems to shed light on my understanding of what is going on. <i>‘To make meaning of seemingly unconnected data, researchers need to transcend minute details and see the big picture, hear an overtone, or imagine a smell that is not buried in data.’</i> (Chang, 2015: 116). Knowledge and insight are illuminated in chapters three to seven.</p>
<p>Explication ‘The purpose of the explication phase is to fully examine what has awakened in consciousness, in order to understand its various layers of meaning.’ (p. 31)</p>	<p>This phase occurs six months after the first data analysis phase; I take my metaphorical themes and engage in a ‘conversation’ with the literature to enable a ‘full elucidation... that characterises the experience being investigated’ (Moustakas, 1990: 31). Chapters 3 to 6 demonstrate how I underpin each metaphor with a robust theoretical foundation.</p>
<p>Creative Synthesis ‘Once the researcher has mastered knowledge of the material that illuminates and explicates the question, the researcher is challenged to put the components and core themes in to creative synthesis.’ (p. 31)</p>	<p>The structuring and writing of the whole thesis and the creation of a coaching framework in Chapter 7 is a result of the creative synthesis. To illustrate the experience of team coaching I have created a series of vignettes, running through the thesis. These vignettes are a creative synthesis of the research project as a whole. I named them ‘illuminating stories,’ playing with the language of the earlier phase.</p>

2.3.1. Doing autoethnography: Immersion in fieldwork and data collection

In this section, I consider the practical issues related to the fieldwork elements of the research project. I describe the issues of access and the challenges of balancing the needs of my case study teams as clients and my dual role of practitioner-researcher.

In December 2013 I obtained ethical agreement to carry out research in three fieldwork sites; fieldwork sites one and two were operational teams where I worked as a team coach, and fieldwork site three was a discussion group for professional coaches who worked with teams. In selecting the operational teams, I was interested in working with intact organisational teams that would work together for at least 12 months. Professional coaches were accepted on the basis that they had at least five years' experience as a coach in organisational contexts and they had some experience of working with teams. Brief biographical details of the team members and professional coaches, along with a brief outline of the context of each fieldwork site, are provided below. Where names and locations are presented, I have used pseudonyms to protect identities and retain anonymity.

2.3.1.i. Fieldwork site one: Local authority management team (Jan 2014-Nov 2014)

Fieldwork site one was a management team of 12 in a local authority organisation. The objective for the team was to develop the use of coaching within the directorate. The Head of the Directorate considered that it would be impracticable to release the whole team from operational duties simultaneously, so had divided the managers into two sub-teams for the project. In the initial stages some of the managers were unhappy about the composition of the two sub-teams and the imposition of the project. After four coaching sessions with the two sub-teams it was agreed that six volunteers would self-select to form one developmental team. The team comprised five women and one man aged between 35 and 55 years. We met a further four times over a nine-month period. I was an outsider to this organisation. In my initial writing I located this work at a fictional location: Melrose Community Centre. In each sub-team there were three

levels of hierarchy: A senior manager, either Peter or his senior colleague (my client contact Margaret); two middle managers and; three team leaders. The management team are described in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3. Participant profiles: Fieldwork site one (Jan 2014-Nov 2014)

Participant	Age	Gender	Role
Margaret	50-55	F	Client contact. Senior manager and internal OD
Peter	45-50	M	Head of Directorate
Valerie*	40-45	F	Organisational Coach and Team Leader
Barbara*	50-55	F	Organisational Coach and Team Leader
Bob	50-55	M	Team Leader
Shirley*	50-55	F	Section Manager
Fiona*	45-50	F	Section Manager
Jill*	35-40	F	Organisational Coach and Team Leader
Mark	40-45	M	Team Leader
Mike*	50-55	M	Organisational Coach and Team Leader
Sheila	50-55	F	Section Manager
Chris	40-45	M	Section Manager

Names marked with an * continued in the self-selecting developmental team as described below.

2.3.1. ii. Fieldwork site two: A university team (Feb 2014-July 2014)

Fieldwork site two was a university team who were a mix of academics, managers and professional support staff developing a new programme of study. The team leader invited me to work with the team to reflect on changes required to implement an experiential learning approach. I knew the majority of staff members to some degree and was aware of the strategic aims of their project as well as some of the background planning and implementation over the previous year. This team represented internal organisational coaching and insider research. In 12 months the team of five experienced three leavers and two new starters, constantly challenging the stability of the team. We met four times over six months. The team member profiles are outlined in Table 2.4. below.

Table 2.4. Participant profiles: Fieldwork site two (Feb 2014-July 2014)

Participant	Age	Gender	Notes
Martha	20-25	F	Attended first three sessions
Rose	45-50	F	Attended last two sessions
Sarah	35-40	F	Attended last session
Martin	40-45	M	Attended first two sessions
Stuart	50-55	M	Attended first three sessions
Jorge	50-55	M	Attended all sessions
Gavin	40-45	M	Attended first three sessions

2.3.1. iii. Fieldwork site three: Professional coaches group (Jun 2014-March 2015)

Fieldwork site three was a special interest group of 15 professional coaches who I invited from my professional network to engage in dialogue relating to the experiences of team coaching. The participants each had between five and 30 years' experience of coaching in organisations and all had experience of developmental work with teams. I met with the coaches seven times over nine months. Participant profiles are outlined in Table 2.5. below.

Initially, aligned to my early interest in action research approaches, I designed these sessions based on co-operative inquiry groups where participants share an interest in a research question and cycle between action and reflection to develop a deeper understanding of the question under discussion (Heron, 1996). Over time the dialogues became more loosely structured around areas of interest relating to team coaching. Participants told stories about their experiences and the group collectively reflected upon what the stories meant to them. I shared my fieldwork and research approach, my observations and tentative interpretations. The group reflected on the sense they were making from my stories and challenged me on my thinking.

Table 2.5. Participant profiles: Fieldwork site three (Jun 2014-March 2015)

Participant	Age group	Gender	Professional role	Sector	Years coaching experience
Beverley	55 - 60	F	Freelance coach / facilitator 1:1 and teams	Private and public	20
Charles	50 - 55	M	Freelance coach 1:1 and teams	Private	15
Tom	60 plus	M	Freelance coach 1:1 and teams	Private	30
Cheryl	40-45	F	Freelance coach and HR consultant	Public	10
Tina	35-40	F	Freelance coach and coach trainer	Public	10
Felicity	40-45	F	Freelance coach 1:1 and teams	Private	10
Fabio	40-45	M	Organisational leader	Not for profit	5
Lola	50-55	F	Organisational leader	Private	8
Patrick	55-60	M	Freelance coach 1:1 and teams	Private and public	20
Freda	50-55	F	Organisational OD expert	Public/ third sector	20
Dev	35-40	M	Internal coach and OD partner	Private	10
Hilary	40-45	F	Freelance consultant and coach	Public	15
Gordon	55-60	M	Freelance consultant and coach	Public / private and third sector	5
Cecile	40-45	F	Freelance coach	Private	10
Erica	44-50	F	Freelance coach 1:1 and team	Private and public	15

2.3.2. Ethical consent

Prior to commencing the research in both organisational fieldwork sites, I gained organisational consent from my fieldwork sponsors. An example of the organisational consent form is attached in Appendix 2.1. At the first meeting with each team I was aware of my researcher responsibility of explaining the research, and gaining informed consent whilst simultaneously establishing rapport and trust as the coach. I sent the participants an electronic copy of the ethical consent forms (attached in Appendix 2.1) prior to each meeting, along with an introductory document explaining that the purpose of our first meeting was to *'agree the nature of our collaboration and set the foundations of our work together.'* At the beginning of each team meeting I explained the research objectives and requirements of the participants in terms of data collection, time commitments and behaviours. I then described how I proposed we might work together such that we would all benefit. I attempted to present the idea from the start that we were all learning about the process of team work and team coaching as we went along and that I did not want the process of my research to dominate our work together as a team. I contracted with them that my primary role was as their coach. After this initial set-up I formally requested if they were happy to proceed and requested the signed consent forms. Once consent was given, I commenced the team coaching and began audio recording the meetings. The practical challenges encountered within this process are described at the end of this chapter.

I carried out a similar process with the professional coaches group. Having expressed an interest to participate I sent to participants an electronic copy of the consent form prior to the first meeting along with an agenda indicating purpose and objectives of the first meeting. At the meeting I reviewed the consent forms and asked for questions before collecting the signed copies.

As described in section 2.1.1 above, my autoethnographic approach emerged during the fieldwork and I did consider whether I needed to resubmit ethical approval and confirm ongoing consent with participants at this stage. I concluded

this was unnecessary as I was asking them to participate in the same activities and share reflections in the same way.

2.3.3. Data collection approaches across three fieldwork sites (Jan 2014-March 2015)

In fieldwork sites one and two, I collected data by audio-recording team coaching sessions and asking the team participants to provide feedback in the form of a reflective diary (Symon, 2012). The diaries were intended to encourage reflective practice and to collect real time thoughts and feelings of the team sessions as they happened. I chose this form of data collection as it was aligned to both my practice as a team coach and my role as a researcher. From a coaching practice perspective, the diaries encouraged reflection and the sharing of thoughts and feelings about the experience of working in the team. My plan was that participants would share their reflections with me and each other in order to initiate open dialogue and feedback about how the team was working. From a researcher perspective, the diaries provided me with participant observation and interpretation of what was going on in the team to compare with my own observations. I sent out a prompting e-mail with a set of standard questions after each coaching session and encouraged the participants to complete the diary promptly whilst the experience was fresh in their minds and to circulate their responses electronically. I then intended to commence each coaching session with a dialogue about the data from the diaries in order to inform our approach. The standard questions I asked participants were:

1. What were your thoughts/feelings about the session?
2. What happened in the session that seemed significant for you?
3. What did you appreciate about the behaviours of any of the team members or the coach in the session?
4. Were you aware of any shared learning or shared understanding developing through the discussion?

In addition, I collected ad-hoc correspondence between team members, the organisational stakeholders and myself. I made field notes and kept my own

reflective diary to record my actions, thoughts and feelings about my practice (Duncan, 2004; Whybrow, 2013). At the end of the fieldwork period I collated all of the data in a chronological portfolio that told the story of events as they unfolded (Muncey, 2005). I did not transcribe audio recordings, rather, I embedded them into the portfolio as audio files enabling me to listen back and re-immense myself in the coaching experiences.

In fieldwork site three, with the professional coach groups, I audio recorded our discussions and made notes reflecting upon the ideas and insights. Often the coaches reflected on questions raised in the sessions and shared their thoughts by e-mail later, thus I was able to collate their correspondence. In Table 2.6. below I outline all of the data collection approaches and indicate examples of each contained in Appendix 2.2.

Table 2.6. Fieldwork data collection approaches

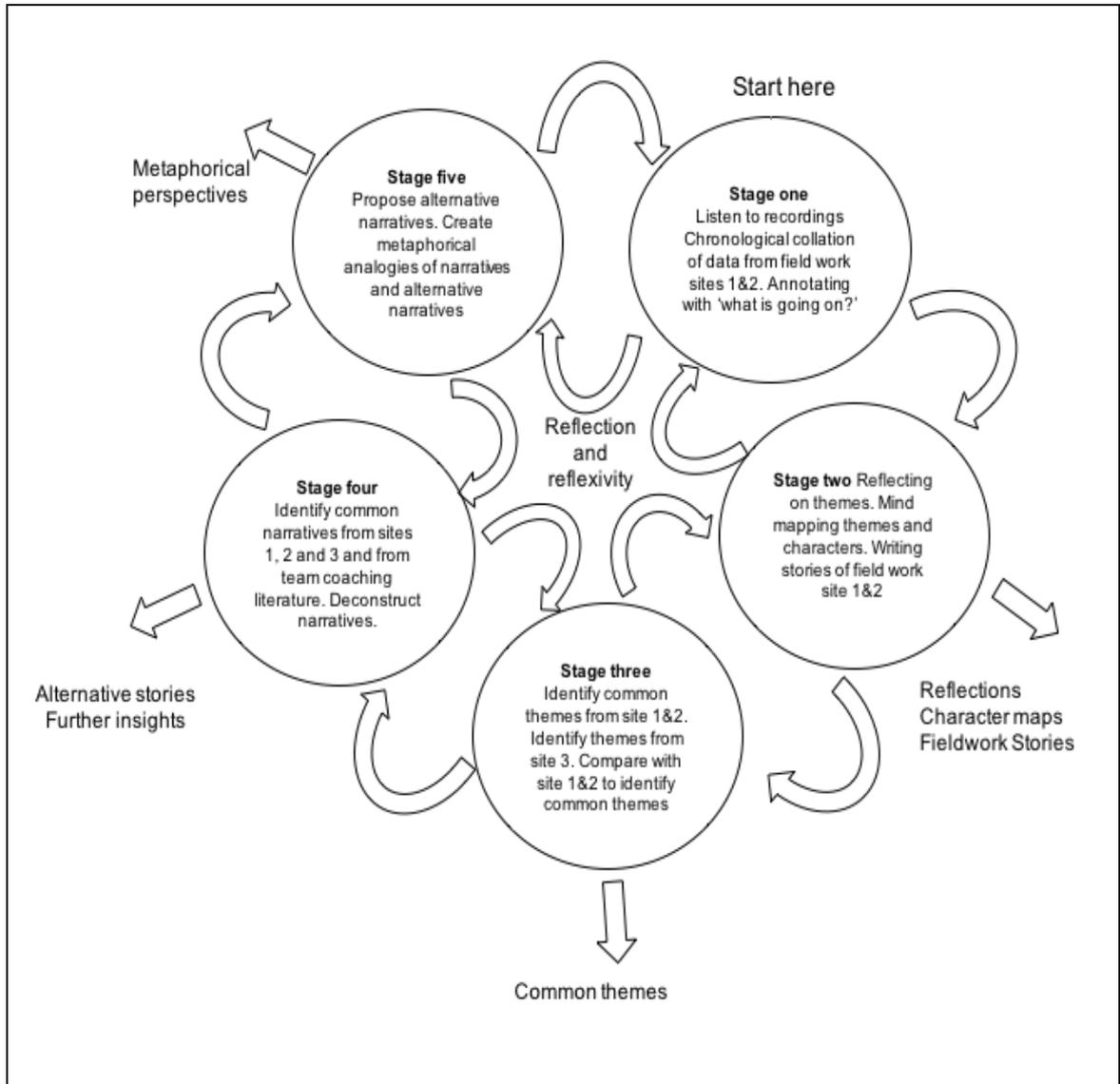
Fieldwork site type	My role	Activities and dates (Jan 2014-March 2015)	Data types collected	Examples displayed in appendix 2.2
Site one Operational team A local authority management team	External coach Outsider research	A series of team coaching sessions each 1.5 hrs over 11 months January 8 th 2014 February 5 th 2014 March 5 th 2014 April 2 nd 2014 Jun 4 th 2014 July 4 th 2014 September 10 th 2014 November 26 th 2014	Field notes My reflective diary Participant reflective diary Session audio recordings	Field notes March 2014 Reflective diary July 2014 Example of participant diary entries from Jan 2014 and Dec 2014
Site two Operational team A university management team	Organisational coach Insider research	A series of team coaching sessions each 1.5-2 hrs over 6 months February 14 th 2014 March 14 th 2014 May 9 th 2014 July 9 th 2014	Field notes My reflective diary Participant reflective diary Session audio recordings	Field notes March 2014 Participant diaries March 2014 and July 2014
Site three Professional coaches' discussion group	Co-researcher	A series of discussion groups each 1.5-2 hrs over 10 months June 2014 July 2014 September 2014 October 2014 November 2014 January 2015 March 2015	Session audio recording My field notes and reflections Participant written correspondence	Example of reflective notes May 2014 Example of field notes July 2014 and March 2015 Participants 2 and 3 correspondence March 2015

2.4. Data analysis and representation of autoethnographic research

In this section, I address the process of making sense of experience through my story as a researcher. In autoethnographic representation, the route from research question to finished text is not always apparent (Anderson and Glass-Coffin, 2013). I found the process of getting started challenging because descriptions of developing autoethnographic work often emphasised the creative writing element (Richardson, 2000; Adams, Holman-Jones and Ellis, 2015). I decided it was necessary to articulate my own process of writing and analysis in the form of an autobiographical narrative. I reveal the deliberations, obstacles and the choices within the analysis journey such that readers can follow a transparent description of my approach with the intention of demonstrating that *'quality is embedded in the practice of completing or doing autoethnography'* (Doloriert and Sambrook, 2011: 596).

To mitigate the potential risk of 'losing' the reader along this messy journey, I have provided a summary of the main stages in the process in Figure 2.2. I demonstrate how I have moved from initial analysis of individual fieldwork sites one and two to a process of analysing themes across the two sites. Originally I had intended to analyse the distinctive contexts and contrasting roles of an external coach in fieldwork site one with that of an internal coach in fieldwork site two. However, as my analysis progressed I noticed significant commonality between the two sites and saw a benefit in extracting common themes in order to make sense of the large volume of data whilst employing the individual contexts to contribute a richness to each theme. Combining the two fieldwork sites and extracting common themes then allowed me to compare my experience with themes emerging from the professional coach dialogues (fieldwork site three) and ultimately to establish five common themes emerging from all three fieldwork sites. I then analysed these themes further through a process of deconstructive narrative analysis (Boje, 2001), which I explain in detail later in this chapter. Ultimately, I generate four metaphorical perspectives that enable me to make sense of team coaching practice. The return arrows linking each stage indicate the cyclical process of reflection and returning to earlier stages inherent in the approach.

Figure 2.2. The iterative process of analysis and interpretation



2.4.1. Stage one: listening, immersing, collating and annotating

In May 2015, I commenced my data analysis. I started by listening back to the team coaching recordings. After an initial attempt to transcribe a team coaching session, I soon realised I was being drawn in to line-by-line analysis. To answer the question *what is going on?* I wanted to approach the data more holistically and to capture the experience inside and outside the coaching room. I read the collated notes around each session and then listened to each recording so I could make sense of the whole story with the benefit of a wider perspective. In order to evoke memories of the experiences it was more effective to listen to the

recordings and relive them in a more embodied way, *'paying attention to physical feelings, thoughts and emotions'* (Muncey, 2005: 70). I made notes as I listened, reflecting on what I was hearing.

An example of a note is reproduced below:

'It was a nervous start for me. Perhaps because I am on their territory and they all seem comfortable with each other. I am cringing at my tone of voice and demeanour as it appears I am starting by setting myself up as the expert.' (1st level analysis notes on listening back to a team session (fieldwork site two) - May 2015)

I was curious to know if what seemed important at the time still seemed significant later or if other issues emerged when listening to the events from a distance. It transpired that listening back to the recordings enabled me to relive the experience; I found myself reliving the same emotions and observations. For example, a repeated concern in my reflections at the time was the apparent lack of urgency in the sessions and the meandering nature of the dialogue. Listening back to the recordings a year later I comment on

the lack of urgency that I need to demonstrate impact and the challenge of feeling responsible for the outcome (1st level analysis notes on listening back to a team session – May 2015)

Another year later in June 2016, having reflected on the whole experience from the participants' point of view and looking at the experiences from the different interpretive perspectives that follow, I can see the value in the dialogue, and the participants' feedback reinforces this. They are more concerned with the content of the sessions and the fact that everyone had a chance to air their views, particularly when unpopular views were shared and ***"not stifled"*** (Participant feedback fieldwork site one).

2.4.1. i. Stage one continued: Annotating field notes - what is going on here?

I annotated the collated data with memories of my feelings, thoughts, emotions and observations from the time and with new observations that struck me as I relived the fieldwork experience with the benefit of a period of reflection. Initially I asked myself questions to stimulate the annotation comments. The questions were

What is going on for me?

What is going on for them, both as individuals and collectively?

What is going on in our respective contexts that appears to be influencing the behaviours of the team members?

An example of annotating my field notes is shown below in Table 2.7. The original notes were made in January 2014 as I anticipated commencing my coaching at fieldwork site one. The annotations come from June 2015 as I began my data analysis. The notes show how I am anticipating the session and becoming anxious at not knowing what to expect. In other words, I demonstrate an example of the vulnerability I would typically feel at the start of any coaching assignment. In my annotations 18 months later I am able to step back and observe this process. At one point I notice:

I think the control point dominates – how does this fit with not being the expert? (From annotated field notes June 2015)

This table also indicates examples where I have characterised my behaviours as in (***professional expert coach***). These characterisations were added later in the process which I describe in more detail in stage two.

Table 2.7. Example of Annotating Field notes June 2015

Field Notes: Fieldwork site one	Annotations
<p>January 2014</p> <p>Just agreed a schedule of dates at Melrose Community Centre and very excited as 1st session is next Wednesday. Feeling slightly overwhelmed suddenly feeling I have no time to plan.</p> <p>Thinking about the first session I need to articulate the coaching principles that underpin what I do as I suspect I shall be drawing on these instinctively in the session in response to what is going on.</p> <p>Or do I?</p> <p>I'm wondering to what extent I need to make this transparent to my participants and myself at this stage. I have a lot of questions.</p> <p><i>I don't know what they know about being a team.</i></p> <p><i>I don't know how much they know about coaching.</i></p> <p><i>Do they see themselves as a team when they are not in the room?</i></p> <p><i>I have no idea how quickly they can learn – or the potential barriers to learning.</i></p>	<p>Annotation added Jun 2015</p> <p>When I have a lot of uncertainties I seem to try to create some structure to navigate my way through a session. Is this for my benefit or theirs (<i>Uncertain coach</i>)? Vulnerable and yet trying to maintain a sense of assurance and control? (Professional expert coach?)</p> <p>Still very muddled in relation to my role as researcher and role as coach – trying to juggle the different ideas and not confident about how to integrate that.</p> <p>Characterisation – confused scholar practitioner – what am I trying to do, how do I apply my expertise? How transparent do I make my expertise? – do they care?</p> <p><i>I think the control point dominates – how does this fit with not being the expert?</i></p> <p>Compare to my one on one coaching where I go with the flow and work with what is in the room.</p>

2.4.2. Stage two: Mind mapping themes and characters

As I explained earlier in this chapter, this research project involved sense making through story telling. However, at the start I had no idea how to proceed from fieldwork experience to telling a story. I stayed with the question *what is going on?* and decided to make sense of the material by creating mind maps of the key themes (Buzan, 2005; Eppler, 2006) emerging from stage one. This entailed re-reading the collated data, noticing where I had made annotations interpreting *what was going on?* I then transferred these ideas to labels on the thematic map. Below I illustrate with three excerpts from my annotations from fieldwork site one and link them with how they appear as a comment on the map.

Perhaps some issues were aired because I was there providing a mediating effect. Is this a coach role?

Provide a mediating effect?

I feel that my intervention keeps them on the topic, when otherwise they could have changed direction.

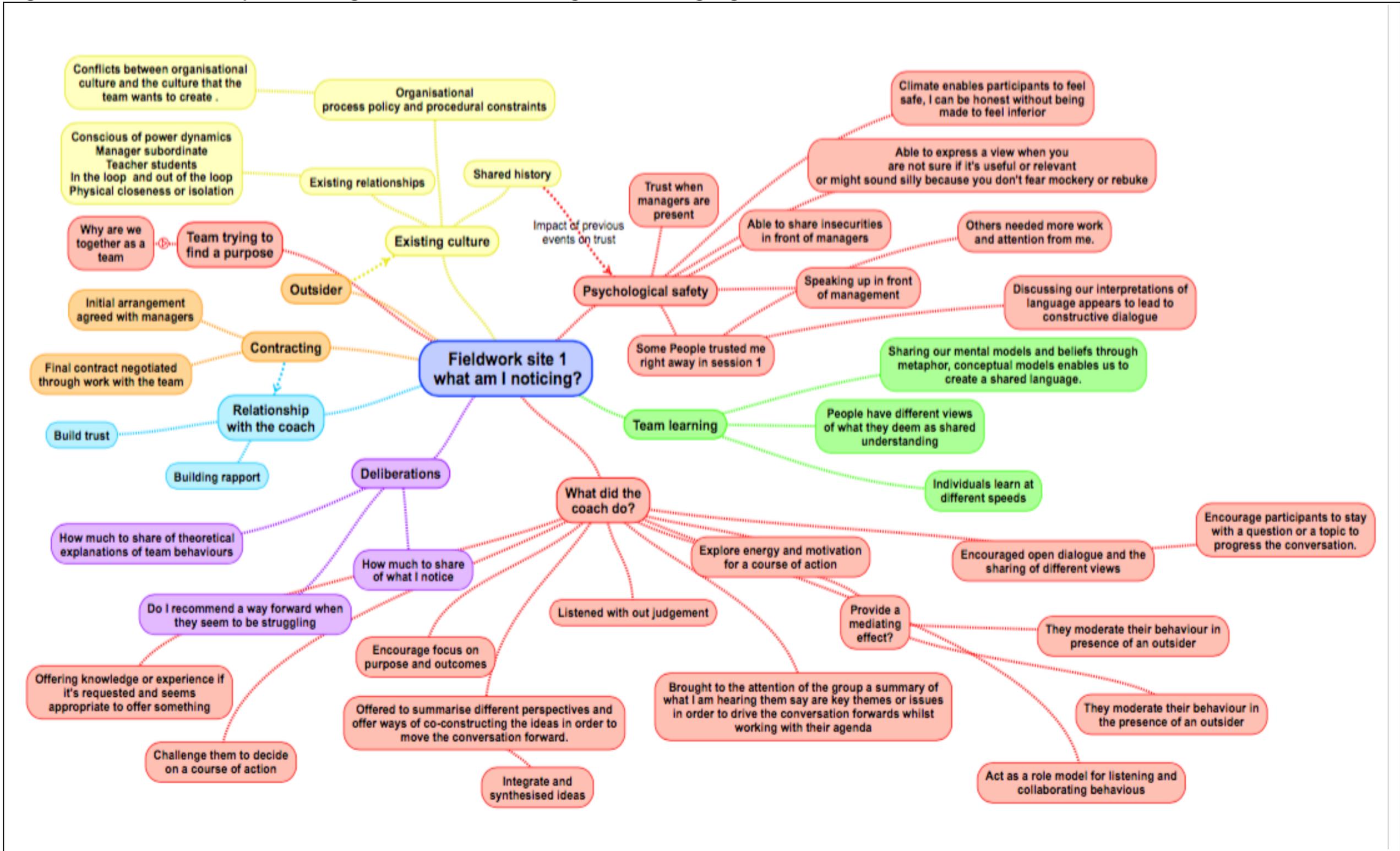
Encourage participants to stay with a question or a topic to progress the conversation

In the session I create a space for dialogue through asking questions, asking them to share their understandings and encouraging others to contribute.

Encouraged open dialogue and the sharing of different views

The maps allowed me to shine a light on what I was paying attention to and noticing within the sense making process. Much of the material in my collated data did not make it on to a thematic map as it related to descriptive elements about the chronological events or content about the team-specific issues, or because it did not strike me as an element that explained what was going on. I hoped that identifying themes would begin to illuminate what the story was about and may create some scaffolding for me to begin to construct the plots or story lines. A sample thematic map from fieldwork site one is shown in Figure 2.3. A similar map of themes from fieldwork site two is attached in Appendix 2.3.

Figure 2.3. Thematic mind map summarising themes - what I am noticing about what is going on in fieldwork site one



Armed with the thematic maps of what I noticed going on in fieldwork sites one and two I returned to the question of representing my story. I felt uncertain about this method of research and inadequate in creative writing. I recognised a reluctance to commence writing without some framework to guide me. I returned repeatedly to Denzin's work on interpretive autoethnography (2014). As I read, I was inspired by a form of scholarly writing that could evoke and inform in equal measure and yet I was somehow 'stuck;' paralysed.

I am still at a loss. How do I begin to write the story?

(Reflective diary entry - July 2015)

Denzin (2014) explains how stories are required to follow conventions such as creating characters, scenes, dramatic tension, an order of events, a turning point or epiphany and a moral to the story. I decided to consider the first item on the list: '*People depicted as characters*' (Denzin, 2014: 4). I found that identifying characters and characterising behaviours of my team members and myself offered a practical way forward as I could extract these from my fieldwork observations and they would create another level of detail to my rookie writer's scaffolding and another way of noticing what was going on. I was able to notice how individuals presented themselves like characters in a story and how my coaching interventions and deliberations could be characterised.

I created mind maps of characters and characterisation from each fieldwork site. An example of a character map from fieldwork site one is shown in Figure 2.4 below. A character map from fieldwork site two is provided as Appendix 2.3

Figure 2.4. Thematic mind map summarising characters - what I am noticing about what is going on in fieldwork site one



Creating characters and characterisation contributed to my autoethnographic writing and analysis in four ways. Firstly, I began to appreciate how giving names to the characters could evoke verisimilitude on the page, bringing the story alive with playful representations. For example, in my mind map from fieldwork site one I characterised the participants as *railroaded, kidnapped, deflated and dejected*, and *Mr and Mrs angry and resentful*. These characterisations bring to light the feelings of the participants about the organisation and their role in the team. On a more positive day, I called them *the intellect, the advocate* and *the good disciple*. Whilst participants from fieldwork site two were identified as *the charmer, the joker, the philosopher* and *Eeyore*.

Secondly, characterising was a way to present multiple voices. I could make visible the '*ethnographic I*' in the story and '*explore the character weaknesses, struggles and ambiguities of the researcher*' (Leon and Glass-Coffin, 2013: 71). I was drawn to the idea of a voice that questions itself or raises questions for readers (Denzin, 2013). Equally, characterising enabled me to empathise with the participants in my stories and give them their voices. Putting myself in their shoes and imagining their experiences, their values and motives led me to how they may respond in a given situation and helped me to create characters within my fictional vignettes in Chapters 3 to 6.

Thirdly, characterisation enabled analysis, in that I was able to tease apart the different roles I was playing. I was interested in what the characters might tell me about *being* a coach. For example, in both fieldwork sites one and two my coach characterisations carried conventional roles such as *coach, facilitator, teacher* and *mentor*. However, I also described myself with more unexpected monikers such as *weaver, diplomat, tour guide* (fieldwork site one) and *trapeze artist, priest* and *cheerleader* (fieldwork site two). I begin to explore what these names might mean in terms of being a coach and my coaching activities in Chapter 4: Team as Family Metaphor.

Fourthly, the characterisations began to elucidate the relationships. For example, the naming of *Mr and Mrs angry and resentful* in fieldwork site one was an

instinctive reflection, not only of negative feelings revealed, but the *'Mr and Mrs'* implying a relational aspect, a kind of unspoken allegiance which I had sensed but could not immediately make sense of. I explore such a relationship in my fictional stories. Similarly, I noticed relational aspects between the participants and myself as the coach. In my mind maps I recognised unequal power relationships such as *parent and child, teacher and naughty school boys* (fieldwork site two). I also explore these relational aspects further in Chapter 4 as I explore the coach's role in moving to a position of equal collaboration.

In both the thematic maps highlighting what I was noticing and in the character maps where I identified my roles, I was preoccupied by the deliberations of the coach. These deliberations brought to the surface my uncertain inner voice that was represented in my reflective writing and field notes. For example, in the character map for fieldwork site one I describe myself as a coach but linked to this are the deliberations: How do I add value? What observations do I share? How do I make the theoretical practical? I return to these questions and further deliberations in the remaining chapters of the thesis.

2.4.2. i. Stage two continued: Making sense of fieldwork; writing as a method of inquiry

Having created themes and characters I attempted to sense the plot and the crux of each story. I tried writing each case story in only a few lines to capture the essence of each one. The outcome of this exercise is included in Appendix 2.4. I considered trying to summarise significant moments or turning points (Denzin, 2013) or the essence of a personal change (Bochner, 2000). In the end I decided I had to trust the process and that I would find the story if I started writing. An example of an early attempt at creative writing, based on experience in fieldwork site one, follows below.

2.4.2. ii. Stage two continued: Making sense of fieldwork; writing as a method of inquiry - Vignette one

Vignette 1: February 5th. First meeting at fieldwork site one Melrose Community Centre It's 3.30pm in the afternoon. The sky is a thick relentless grey and at this time of year the daylight is fading fast.

I am driving to Melrose community centre in the industrial end of town to meet with a new coaching client team. This is the first meeting. I am not quite sure what to expect.

The room is fuggy and hot from the previous meeting. Peter, the manager, is already there and deep in conversation with two colleagues. The room is small, the table very large so that everyone crams on the outer periphery with a huge empty void in the centre; there is a problem with the IT so no access to the few slides I prepared to set the scene for the session. An IT technician is attempting to reconnect the system.

Time is ticking. The session will start late. My anxiety begins to mount.

Team members shuffle in. I greet each person as they arrive, struggling round the furniture to introduce myself whilst still keeping half an eye on the technician who still cannot log on to the shared IT system. The messy reality of working on someone else's turf hits home.

Finally, we get started.

Me: *So tell me about your experiences of coaching?*

Barbara is first, she outlines her coaching credentials and her enthusiasm for coaching. My mood lifts. Others share some limited experiences.

Peter: *Well, I have never coached anyone and I have never been coached.*

Curious! I am thinking. I maintain a fixed smile. Sheila looks down at her notes and wraps her cardigan more tightly around her. Barbara is looking at me expectantly, curiously, a wry smile of amusement playing on the lips.

Me: So! Let's talk about our work together. I thought we could begin with hopes and fears...

Valerie: (Seizes the moment) I have to raise a concern about Peter being here, I really don't think people will be comfortable about sharing their concerns about coaching in front of him? It's not personal Peter, it is your position as the manager.

Barbara: We tried this before on our coach training, everyone says the managers shouldn't be in the teams.

My mind accelerates into overdrive...what is going on here? Is this a plan being executed? As leaders of the coaching training do Barbara and Valerie want to demonstrate their credentials and leadership in this area?

Perhaps they feel I have usurped them?

Peter keeps smiling serenely. He says nothing.

Bob: Well, I think there is another issue. I've said before coaching doesn't work in my area. If someone doesn't follow a procedure that's mandatory I have to just tell them what to do!

Sheila: Exactly, I don't know when it was agreed we have to coach all the time. I mean, now we are tracking it and making it compulsory no one wants to do it. It doesn't work like that.

Barbara: We are not saying you have to coach all of the time Bob. We are not saying you are a bad manager. Perhaps we could just discuss benefits where it does work. My hope is we can all learn something.

Peter: Well, I was hoping that working together like this would go beyond the discussion about using coaching as a management approach. It's about us working together differently.

Sheila: Well it was a three-line whip to be here. I'm being paid to be here... I'm not saying I won't commit to it but...

2.4.3. Stage three: Common themes from site one and two compared to site three

My intention at the commencement of the research was to explore different themes prevalent within the two contexts based on what was going on in each setting. However, having reflected on the stories for each coaching experience I was drawn to the similarities in the themes. I decided that to progress my research aim of creating a flexible coaching framework it would be more useful to have clear sight of the common themes and then illustrate them with contextual differences, as opposed to maintaining the two fieldwork sites for data analysis and interpretation. During fieldwork practice I had developed the notion that a coach may find it useful to articulate certain 'modes of awareness,' such that it was possible to view any situation from a variety of perspectives, hence remaining flexible and responsive. I considered that the emerging themes could provide a route towards articulating these modes more clearly. I have tabulated the themes from the two stories in Table 2.8. below illustrated with the contextual nuances in each case.

The examples in the two fieldwork sites illustrate how I was noticing and paying attention to similar issues but my position as an external coach, entering an unknown context, compared with my role as an internal coach with established relationships and contextual knowledge, changed the experience. For example, there was more work to do to build rapport with the new team than the team from my own organisation. However, in both cases I noticed that I modified my behaviours in relation to individuals in the teams based on their behaviours towards me, and each other. In addition, I noticed in my coach activities that I am more inclined to adopt a managerial or teaching role with my own colleagues and deliberate more intensely on what to say and not say on issues about which I have prior knowledge. In both cases I deliberate about how much theoretical input to offer and how directive to be. I explore the issue of building relationships in Chapter 4: Team as Family Metaphor and I revisit the question of offering theoretical input in Chapter 3: Team as Machine Metaphor.

Table 2.8. Common themes in fieldwork sites one and two

Common themes	Examples in practice from fieldwork site one	Examples in practice from fieldwork site two
Contract for coaching	Agreed with team leader. Unclear and challenged by participants. Significantly renegotiated.	Agreed with the team leader and assumed by participants. I contract and re-contract at each session as new participants arrive.
Relationship with the coach and within the team	All relationships remain individually negotiated. I modify behaviours to bring in the dissenters and acknowledge contributions. I am aware of power dynamics between participants and occasions where I am treated as the expert with power over the process.	Relationships are based on our previous histories. I modify behaviours to acknowledge shared understanding and to encourage new relationships. Some of the team see me as an expert and invite expert contributions. The team is relatively new. Relationships based on shared endeavour.
Context for coaching	Dominated by the prevailing culture within the organisation which impacts team sense of self-efficacy and empowerment.	Dominated by operational issues and the need to resolve technical problems.
Team muddling through Coach encouraging clarifying purpose and direction	Clarity of team purpose and team structure. What do we want to achieve? How can the team influence externally?	Clarity of team purpose and benefits of having a team approach. How to add value as a team?
Trust	Limited trust between team and senior managers. Mixed levels of trust apparent between team members. I have to earn trust with team members. Trust builds over	Variable trust established between team members based on shared past experiences. Trust with me built over previous experiences. I am known and treated with trustworthiness.

	time. Self-selecting team trust each other.	
Team behaviours of dialogue and learning	The team dialogue is guarded at times and only opens up when the senior managers are absent. When trust is built the dialogue is constructive and developmental at times. Dialogue can be meandering.	Dialogue is relaxed but often remains descriptive. Few examples of shared learning where concepts are challenged. Developed more reflective and conceptual dialogue in last meeting.
Coach activities	Exploring, encouraging participation, summarising, integrating, challenging, and asking for next steps. Offering an external perspective.	Exploring, encouraging participation, summarising, integrating, challenging, and asking for next steps. I find myself intervening in content, teaching, providing management perspective and telling.
Coach deliberations	How much of what I notice do I share? Should I offer advice and direction? Would some theoretical input be helpful? Lack of previous knowledge makes remaining open and non-judgemental much easier.	How much of what I notice about content and behaviours do I share? Should I offer advice and direction? Should I offer theoretical explanations? Far more deliberations in the inside team as I am interpreting actions and outcomes from my own inside knowledge. Harder to remain impartial.

2.4.3. i. Stage three continued: Integrating themes from coaches' discussion groups: Fieldwork site three

My research aim was to create a coaching framework that would resonate with other professional coaches therefore I was interested in how my themes chimed with theirs. To establish which themes emerged from the work with the professional coaches I listened to the dialogues from our group meetings, revisited my notes and collated their written contributions. As I immersed myself

in the data I was looking for examples where coaches answered the question *where do I focus when I am coaching a team?* I was interested in this question as I wanted to compare the answers with what I had found myself noticing and focussing upon in my own practice as described above.

During the coach discussion groups, I asked open questions to stimulate the dialogue such as:

What are you curious about in relation to team coaching?

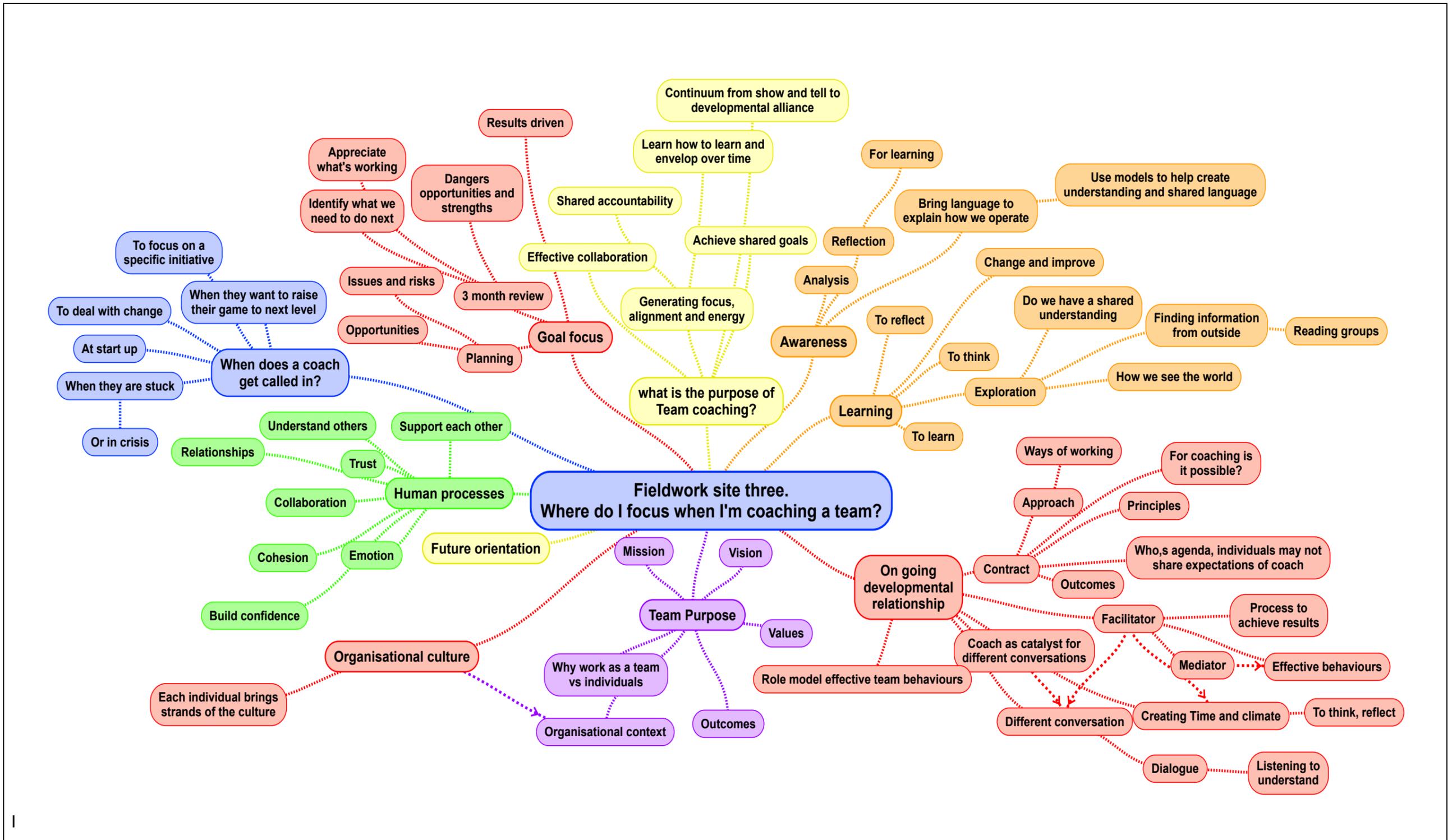
What concepts do you draw from when you are working as a team coach?

Tell me about the kinds of teams you work with?

What do you do when you coach a team, what approaches do you use?

At first, coaches often struggled to articulate their approach. Their tacit knowledge was slowly revealed through sharing values, stories and the concepts that had inspired them. Sometimes participants expressed a preferred 'mode of awareness' and described how they focused particular attention on human relationships, the context, or the effectiveness of the team in delivering against goals. I noted key words and phrases as I listened to the discussion and annotated my notes and their written materials. From the notes and annotations repeated themes emerged which I then brought together in a mind map as illustrated in Figure 2.5. below.

Figure 2.5. Mind map depicting themes from peer group discussions



The coach dialogues revealed that coaching a team involved a complex integration of activities. For example, in the lower right portion of the map I link ideas that emerged from coaches talking about their ongoing developmental relationships with the team. They talked about being a facilitator and enabling a different kind of conversation, which led to creating time and a climate in which to think and reflect. In another dialogue, we spoke specifically about team learning, and helping the team to learn, presented in the upper right portion of the map. Again, reflection emerged, both learning to reflect and reflecting on team behaviours as a form of analysis. I do not identify reflection as a common theme as it was not identified as a core focus area but emerged as an approach or as an outcome of coaching. Reflection, reflective dialogue and reflexivity are developed further as activities in Chapters 3 to 6.

The themes I described at this stage were goal focus and alignment, team purpose, human processes, team awareness, learning and change, contracting, and building the developmental relationship. I compared the key themes emerging from my own story (summarised in Table 2.8.) with the themes reported by the coaches. The connections are shown in Table 2.9. below. There is a significant similarity in themes emerging from my own stories and those of the peer coaches. This gave me some confidence that a framework based upon the combined fieldwork sites may have resonance for others.

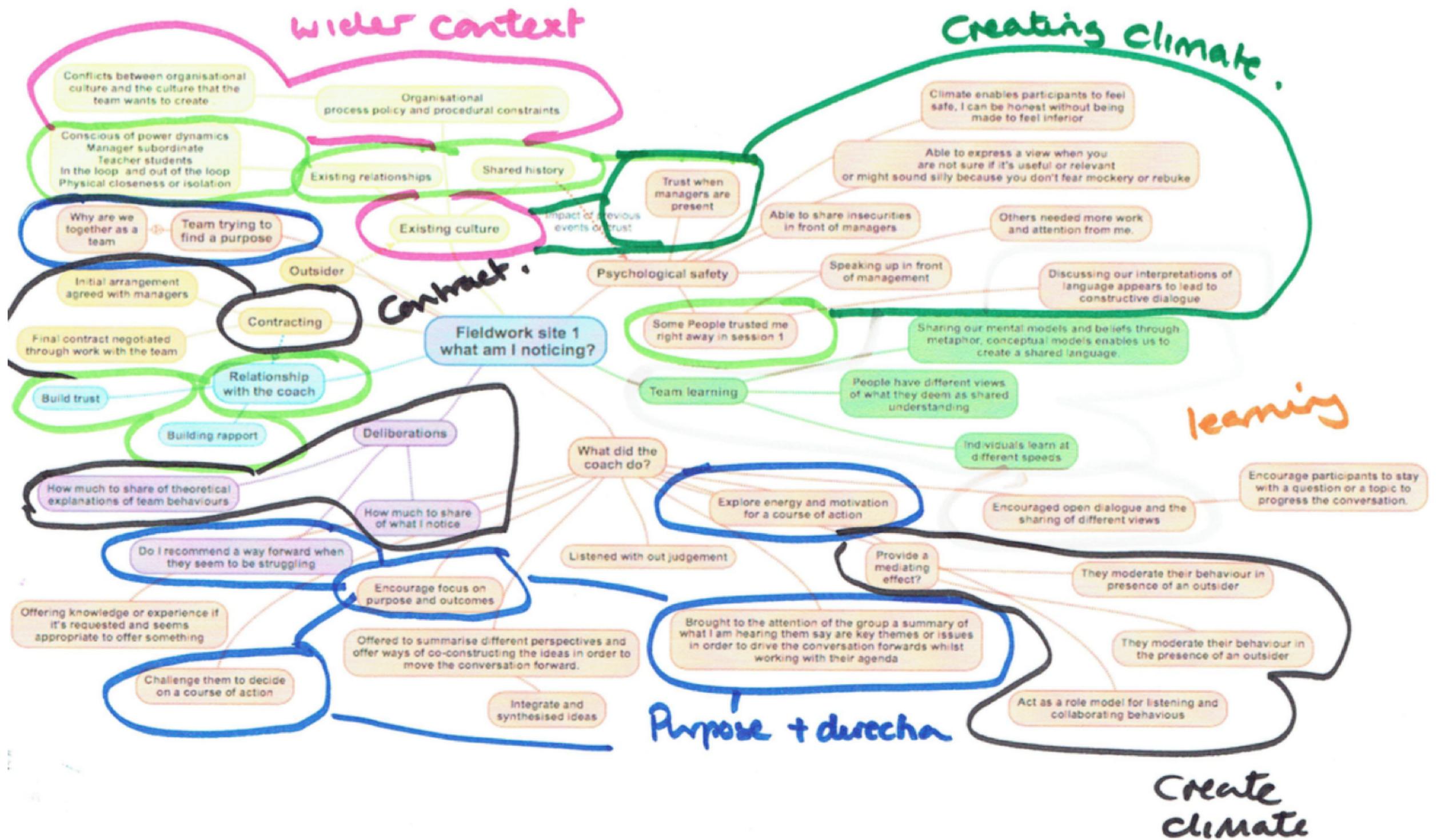
Table 2.9. Where do I focus when I am coaching a team?

Peer coaches Where do I focus?	Similar and connected themes	My coaching experience. What am I noticing?
Goal focus and alignment		Muddling through
Team Purpose, and mission in this context		Organisational context
Human processes		Team behaviours: learning and dialogue
Team awareness		Trust and safety
Change and learning		Facilitating dialogue, learning, awareness and change
Contracting		Contract with coach
Our developmental relationship		Relationships

2.4.3. ii. Stage three continued: Naming common themes from all three sites

The next step was to bring together the common themes under a common set of descriptors. In fieldwork sites one and two the mind maps had examined everything that I had noticed going on in the team setting, both for me, for the participants and the wider context. To bring these themes together with fieldwork site three which had focussed on coaches' practice I developed the themes from the coach practice perspective. Taking the coach perspective enabled me to move towards language that could contribute to my research aim of creating a framework for team coaches. In Figure 2.6. I provide an example of an annotated mind map indicating how ideas coalesced into themes. I completed the exercise for all three fieldwork sites.

Figure 2.6. Mind map indicating the drawing together of themes from a fieldwork site



I identified five common themes across the three fieldwork sites. The themes and descriptions are shown in Table 2.10.

Table 2.10. Common themes from fieldwork sites one, two and three

Themes	Description of theme
Clarifying purpose, direction, action steps and goals	Enabling clarity of purpose linked to wider context, developing clear goals and action plans, developing ways of working to achieve tasks, make decisions etc. Move the team from muddling through to focus and alignment.
Creating a climate based on trusting relationships	Build relationships based on trust with the participants and between participants. Recognising the relational dynamics within the team. Work with human processes. Creating a safe space of holding and containment.
Working with the wider organisational context (system)	Awareness of organisational culture playing out in the team. Recognising constraints and drivers. Recognising temporal issues such as time together and current priorities. Recognising stakeholder network and complexities within the system. Team's relationship with wider system.
Developing a capacity for collaborative dialogue and learning	Building awareness of dialogue compared to discussion. Encouraging learning processes and a climate of learning to enable change. Encouraging collaborative behaviours.
Contracting for the coaching assignment	Understanding the coaching assignment. What are the team wanting to achieve, what is their current context, what do they perceive as the challenges, what are the individual needs? Establish expectations across stakeholders.

The first theme is clarifying purpose, direction, action steps and goals. I combine the professional coaches' ideas of seeking goal focus and alignment with creating

clarity of purpose. This links to my observation of helping the team to move from muddling through to a more focussed and purposeful conversation in order to agree actions.

My second theme is creating a climate based on trusting relationships. Here I have brought together the human processes such as recognising emotion, and issues of trust and understanding, and combined this with the coach's role in creating a safe space in order for supportive, collaborative relationships to develop.

The third theme is working with the wider organisational context which brings together ideas of the team's awareness of its relationships with the organisation as a whole and its stakeholders. This theme also incorporates the professional coaches' focus of understanding the team's mission, given an understanding of the context and the coaches' role in helping the team to make sense of challenges within its environment.

The fourth theme is creating capacity for collaborative learning and dialogue, which brings together ideas of collaborative behaviours, learning, and facilitating change.

My fifth theme relates to activities of contracting, this includes agreeing a contract with the coach, understanding the team members' requirements of each other and linking to the team's contract with its context.

To conclude stage three, I compared my themes from across all three fieldwork sites with the five themes describing different purposes of team coaching implicit in the coaching literature. This revealed that the five purposes aligned with four of my themes. See Table 2.11.

Table 2.11. Comparing team coaching literature and fieldwork themes

Team coaching literature: The purpose of team coaching	My fieldwork: Common focus areas for a team coach
Theme 2: Clarity of team purpose and direction Theme 3: Task accomplishment	Clarifying purpose, direction, action steps and goals
Theme 5: Creating an appropriate climate	Creating a climate based on trusting relationships
Theme 1: Operating within the wider context	Working with the wider organisational context (system)
Theme 4: Facilitating team working behaviours	Developing a capacity for collaborative dialogue and learning
Contracting appears as part of the coaching process	Contracting for the coaching assignment

2.4.4. Stage four: Identifying narratives and deconstructing narratives

In November 2015, concurrent with my thematic analysis described above, I was invited to speak at a team learning conference that was aimed at a mixed professional and academic audience. Whilst I was somewhat reticent about sharing work in progress, I could see the opportunity in sharing my vignettes and themes with another professional audience. I shared vignette one, presented above, by reading it aloud to the assembled audience. I shifted the form to second person narrative, addressing the reader as ‘you’ and placing them in the shoes of the coach with the intention of overtly involving them in the experience as if they were seeing through my eyes and hearing my thoughts. Researchers have found that this device works well when the reader is likely to share some of the life experiences of the protagonist (Mildorf, 2016). The audience responded to the scenarios I created. There was verisimilitude; it was believable, they imagined themselves there in the coaching role (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011). This gave me some confidence that a framework based upon my findings had the potential to make a contribution. A description of the conference experience and my reflections and insights are included in Appendix 2.5.

However, despite the success of the conference I was also concerned that the themes seemed somewhat predictable, that they appeared to replicate the

existing literature, and I questioned if my exploratory writing had really crystallised a different way of seeing (Richardson, 2000). This led me to explore the idea of the deconstructive stance (Denzin, 2013) of questioning one's own voice, even as one attempted to explain one's point of view. This seemed a powerful technique to invoke reflexivity and to elicit a more transformational learning experience for myself.

In this chapter thus far, I have described how my research was an act of sense making through story telling. This led me to research narrative analysis as a method of analysing the stories in my data. Boje's (2001) work resonated as he describes how stories are fragmented, chaotic and emerge differently, depending upon who is doing the telling. Boje distinguishes between a story, and a narrative, which has a coherent plot, a chronology and characters presenting a particular point of view. He implies that the narrative emerges as we choose how to make sense of the story. Boje also describes a process of deconstructive narrative analysis that appeared to offer a method to challenge my assumptions, and ways of knowing, through identifying the multiple ways I could interpret a story. This approach was used by Jorgensen and Boje (2010) to challenge established ways of thinking about corporate social responsibility, and by Middleton (2009) to explore narratives of reputation management in an organisation.

I revisited my chronological stories from the two operational fieldwork sites and the emerging themes coming from both, along with the professional coaches' themes and my coaching literature review. With the whole spectrum of this primary and secondary data in mind, I employed Boje's '*eight deconstructive moves*' (2001: 23). Taking each tactic in turn, I reflected upon where it might apply to my data and how the tactic could help me to see the data differently or develop a deeper appreciation of what might be going on. A summary of the insights and examples emerging from each deconstructive tactic are shown in Table 2.12.

For example, the first tactic is to search for pairs or dichotomies within a story. To deconstruct such a pairing, Boje suggests looking for where a pairing is implied but not stated; this suggests a voice is not being heard or a player is invisible in

the data. I carried out a review of my character maps to see how often I had implied a character that could be part of a pairing within a relationship, for example parent is paired with child and, in each case, I looked to see if the implied partner was overtly identified in my data. This led to deeper reflections about my relationships with team members as a coach and the implications for practice. For instance, in the mind map relating to fieldwork site one in Figure 2.3, I identify characters as kidnapped and captives. This begs the question who is doing the kidnapping and what role was I playing in that dynamic; was this leading me to want to rescue? The pairings exercise is attached in Appendix 2.6.

Table 2.12. Deconstructing stories - eight tactics and emerging insights

Deconstruction tactics (Boje, 2001: 21)	Insights emerging from narratives inherent in fieldwork sites, combined themes and team coaching research	Illustrative examples
1.Duality search Find the pairs/dichotomies. One term mentioned implies its partner.	I notice pairings in my characters, in some cases only one side is stated which questions the role being played on the other side.	Teacher–pupil; expert–non-expert; victim–rescuer? See Appendix 2.6. for further analysis. I continually navigate the dynamics between team members and myself and consequently negotiate my role in this context.
2.Reinterpret the hierarchy Is there a hierarchy of thinking or a dominant paradigm?	A dominant paradigm in my story is the uncontested assumption that teams are a good thing and that participants will want to be a part of them.	Whilst the teams spend a lot of time struggling to define a purpose, we do not question the need for a team. However, at the end of my fieldwork neither team chooses to continue as an autonomous entity. The team is not privileged.
3.Rebel voices Whose voices are being heard or silenced?	I notice a regularly silenced voice is my own as I deliberate a course of action and question what to share from my observations of the team members and their behaviours.	I resist being seen as the expert. I deliberate sharing team models, of sharing team learning theory, or advocating certain collaborative behaviours. A language of teams would be valuable in some cases. The deliberations indicate the need for supervision, to clarify when my voice could add value.
4.Other side of the story Is there a way of reversing the story of showing it from another side?	I speak about the team as a coherent entity, I think about the coaching assignment as based with the ‘team-as-a-whole.’ However, the team members remain individuals.	I consider the point of view of the individuals. Each has a different experience. I recognise that the team-as-a-whole is a social construction of our making and remains contested and fragile. It is the team members I connect with as they connect with each other.
5.Deny the plot To deny the plot is to question the prevailing narrative or to question	The coaching plot, particularly within team coaching literature, is seen as somewhat heroic such as when the coach is	The heroic plot assumes an all-knowing saviour; I recognise a part of me craves being seen in this light. The knight on a white charger rescuing a team. However, this creates a tension; what if the

<p>the established 'script of how to behave' (Boje, 2001, p. 27). Taking some established plot recipes: tragic, comic, fantasy. Which plot are you reading? Could it be a different story?</p>	<p>assessing what is going on and designing interventions or a coach is called in to help stuck or failing teams.</p>	<p>coach does not know all the answers – does that make them a failure? Was this the root of my vulnerability, my need to take responsibility, to be in control?</p>
<p>6.Find the exception Plots have inherent rules and values. How can these rules be broken? What if they were?</p>	<p>There could be many types of plot: A fantasy; how will I ever really know what is going on? Or a comedy, we could apply humour and playfulness to what is going on. Or a journey of discovery with coach and team travelling together as equals.</p>	<p>Creating multiple types of plot devices opens up the possibilities for multiple stories. The coach can play many characters. Perhaps the coach is more like Alice following the White Rabbit down the rabbit hole where things may not be quite as they seem, where Alice takes part in many scenes and enacts different roles.</p>
<p>7.Trace what is between the lines What is not being said?</p>	<p>I see a number of seemingly dichotomous perspectives. The dichotomies serve to illustrate the complexity which I had felt in practice but could not always articulate.</p>	<p>Expert vs Collaboration Team vs a group of independent individuals. Team as fallible human beings vs. team as efficient machine. Team with boundaries vs. wider system without boundaries.</p>
<p>8.Resituate the story Taking the insights from steps 1-7 how can you resituate the story with a new script, or a different viewpoint?</p>	<p>I begin to consider multiple stories or how plot lines may be operating together. There is not one way of knowing what is going on as there could be multiple explanations.</p>	<p>I began to recognise that perhaps the way of working as a coach is to be able to notice how we and the team are telling the story. Which plot do we focus on? How do I remain aware of the dichotomies and multiple perspectives? I began to see not knowing as a strength as it enables the coach to remain open to possibilities.</p>

2.4.5. Stage five: Propose alternative narratives and create metaphorical analogies

The *deconstruction* process encouraged me to question the dominant narratives and to look for the other side of the story, or the unspoken sub-plots. I identified three additional insights that further developed the five initial themes described above. First, I reframed contracting, recognising it was a continuous process of negotiation; relating with others in any given moment, such that a collaborative relationship is maintained. Second, I noticed that the concept of team-as-a-whole had led me to think about the team as a stable, single entity that I should work with en-masse. Challenging this narrative revealed the team as a continuously contested, fragile entity made up of individuals. Third, I challenged the dominant discourse of the coach as a professional expert who can make sense of what is going on and plan interventions accordingly. Perhaps the coach can never know what is going on in all of the dynamic complexity. As such, I recognised there is strength in accepting one's vulnerability; in not knowing and remaining curious and open to learning.

2.5. From narratives to metaphors

Narrative analysis led me to thinking about plot lines. Contrary to the image of the coach as expert, like the knight on the white charger coming to save the struggling team, an alternative narrative was to visualise a coaching assignment as analogous to following the White Rabbit down the rabbit hole into Wonderland, where nothing is quite as it seems, and the cast of characters in the team are potentially unpredictable and as unknowable as the participants at the Mad Hatter's tea party. The rich evocation of Alice's world as an allegory for team coaching led me to think that metaphorical language could help to articulate my 'modes of awareness;' a way of balancing complexity and simplicity.

Morgan (1986) popularised the use of metaphor in organisations to help managers make sense of their environment; as a way of thinking about what was going on in a given situation. Metaphor resonates with the experience of practice, offers insights into what is going on and allows us to make sense of new experiences in relation to something that is commonly known (Landau, Keefer

and Meier, 2010). Qualitative researchers have also adopted metaphorical approaches to elicit and analyse qualitative data. For example, Cassell and Bishop (2014) explored taxi drivers' experiences of their work as dirty work and Jackson (2016) investigated how staff involved in information technology implementations perceived their work. Shoenenborn, Vasquez and Cornelissen (2016) and Gheradi, Jensen and Nerland (2017) propose metaphors to offer further ways to understand and conceptualise organisations. Metaphor has also been utilised within autoethnography (Gibbon, 2011; Muncey, 2005). Building on his own work, Morgan (2016: 1035) encourages an emergent and playful appreciation of metaphors that facilitates the development of multiple ways of seeing by creating '*clusters or constellations of metaphors that offer important insights about the same phenomenon in different yet related ways.*' I explore the constellation of metaphors further when I elucidate my use of metaphors in Chapters 3 to 6. Metaphor is also used in coaching conversations (Zeus and Skiffington, 2002) so has the potential to appeal to coaches.

2.5.1. Creating metaphors

Considering the data analysis as a whole, my five themes from fieldwork and themes apparent in the team coaching literature I identified three metaphors that were present throughout.

The metaphorical perspectives are:

- Team as machine following a functionalist model of effectiveness that is managed through process. This metaphorical perspective aligns to my first theme; clarifying purpose, direction, action steps and goals. Whilst all team coaching researchers and practitioners describe goal setting and action planning, this metaphorical language particularly dominates the team effectiveness literature and is the perspective adopted by Hackman and Wageman (2005) in their theory of team coaching.
- Team as family experiencing the interwoven nature of individual relationships over time infused with history, hierarchy and dependency. This metaphorical perspective aligns to my second theme of creating a climate of trusting

relationships and resonates with teams who have worked together over a long time period and whose personal and professional lives are intertwined. Thornton's (2016) work places understanding of these relational dynamics at the centre of her coaching.

- Team as living system within a dynamic and ever-changing interrelated environment. This metaphorical perspective aligns to my third themes of working within the wider organisational context, as discussed by Hawkins (2011) and Thornton (2016) who place emphasis on a systemic model of coaching teams, and my fourth theme of developing capacity for collaborative dialogue and learning. Clutterbuck (2014) places particular emphasis here.

Additionally, I identified a fourth metaphor that emerged within my own experience that is not apparent in existing team coaching research:

- The metaphor of the coaching assignment being likened to *Alice in Wonderland* where there is a curiosity about what is going on and a recognition that things are not always what they seem. This metaphor relates with each of the others, reminding the coach to remain curious and embrace their vulnerability along with a willingness to learn, and to adopt a stance of not knowing. This metaphor sits in juxtaposition with my theme of contracting for coaching in that, as the coaching assignment emerges, the contract and role is negotiated and re-negotiated continuously, not from a position of coach as expert, but as a collaborative process. Whilst contracting is apparent in team coaching literature as a process that requires attention in order to commence a coaching assignment, it is not presented as an on-going process or as being particularly challenging or problematic.

In Chapter 1 I described how I found the team coaching research *fragmented* and *confusing*, as team coaching approaches were often presented from a single perspective and, even when authors considered multiple perspectives, they made the shift without making it apparent when and why they were doing so. In presenting each metaphor individually, I invite readers to explore team coaching

from that particular perspective and to appreciate a number of insights suggested by that constellation of ideas prompted by the metaphor (Morgan, 2016). However, it is also important to emphasise that I see each perspective existing simultaneously and interacting with each of the others.

In a process of circling back to stage two, I returned to my 'raw' data from the chronological stories of each fieldwork site and highlighted a number of examples that reflected each metaphorical perspective from each case. This provided a sense check that there was still coherence in my analysis and findings as they had emerged over time. This data illustrating each metaphor is attached in Appendix 2.7. To summarise the journey of developing analytical findings, I have described the outputs from each stage of my analysis process. This summary is presented below in Table 2.13. which represents a visual overview of the golden threads of each metaphor running through the coaching literature and the data analysis. In the chapters that follow I expand on each metaphor by integrating my fieldwork data and analysis with team coaching research and wider theoretical streams, leading to my contribution of a team coaching framework which is underpinned by theory and illustrated by practice-based vignettes. By drawing attention to the threads, bringing them together and weaving in new insights through the research process, my aim is that a more coherent picture (or tapestry) of team coaching emerges.

Table 2.13. Analytical outcomes from the literature review and five stage analytical process

Literature review themes What is the purpose of team coaching?	What am I noticing about team coaching? (fieldwork sites one and two)	Where do peer coaches focus when coaching a team? (fieldwork site three)	Common themes from fieldwork sites one, two and three	Team coaching narratives	Deconstructed narratives	Metaphorical perspectives
Clarity of team purpose and direction	Muddling through, looking for direction	Goal focus and alignment	Clarifying purpose, direction and action to achieve outputs	Team is like a machine producing efficient outputs through effective processes (engineer)	Team is not always like a machine Team is not a stable entity	Team as machine
Task accomplishment				Hackman and Wageman (2005)		
Creating an appropriate climate	Trust and safety, relationships	Human processes, our developmental relationship	Creating climate based on trusting relationships	Team is a group of individuals with complex history and relationships (Family therapist) Thornton (2016)	Team is a socially constructed entity and remains contested and fragile Individuals want to belong <i>and</i> to retain independent identity	Team as family
Operating within the wider context	Organisational context	Team awareness	Working with the wider organisational context (system)	Team is part of a wide complex system (Organisation development consultant) Hawkins (2011)	Complexity is hard to read in a multi-level dynamic system: intra personal, inter-personal, inter-team, intra-system	Team as living system
Facilitating team working behaviours	Facilitating team behaviours such as dialogue, learning and change	Learning and change	Developing capacity for dialogue and learning	Team is a site of learning and continual growth (Development coach) Clutterbuck (2014)	Learning can only happen in the right climate of safety, motivation and purpose	
Contracting	Contract with coach	Contracting	Contract for coaching	Coach is a competent skilled professional who can analyse team problems and lead them towards solutions (White Knight)	Coach does not always know what is going on – is vulnerable Contract and role is negotiated and re-negotiated continuously	Team and coach in Wonderland

In this chapter, I have described the iterative journey of analysis and interpretation to make sense of fieldwork experience and to begin to answer my research question – *what is going on when I am coaching a team?* I conclude the chapter with a reflection on the ethical considerations that emerged throughout the process and how I chose to respond to them.

2.6. Ethical considerations and strategies

When I submitted a request for ethical consent from my University Ethics Committee to conduct my research I had considered standard procedural considerations of informed consent, rights to privacy, and protection from harm (Christians, 2011). Initially I considered that the ethical concerns were straightforward as I believed that my participants would agree to participate willingly, and from a completely informed standpoint, aware of the inherent consequences. At the outset I perceived the project as collaborative and, as such, the notion of my 'participants' to be other than a traditional research paradigm where the researcher *does* research *to* a subject group such that the participants need to be protected (Christians, 2011). I supposed that the volunteers came willingly to the study, were interested in the content and the outcomes and felt equal in the process.

However, when I arrived at fieldwork site one to discuss the project with the management team I did not meet with the willing participation that I had anticipated due to confidentiality issues raised by the staff around discussing their management practices with senior managers present. I had not foreseen this situational issue arising (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004). Originally, I had hoped to record our sessions once participant consent was granted. Instead I had to conduct the first two meetings with the management teams without my digital recorder. In the end, I gained consent from participants whilst negotiations were still underway. It appeared that the staff began to trust me once they could see I was taking their concerns seriously. My demonstrating that they had a voice in the process facilitated their consent.

Guillemin and Gillam (2004) describe the need to be reflexive during practice of research, cognisant of potential ethical concerns arising and to be

responsive in taking action. One example of this came early in fieldwork site one where I had requested the participants' complete reflective diaries commenting on the team experience. From a coaching practice standpoint, I was keen that these diaries were shared with everyone involved, such that the contents would feed into a reflective dialogue at the start of each team session. However, the participants were reluctant to share their reflections with each other due to trust issues but agreed to share them with me. I was torn between wanting an open process and wanting to collect their honest feedback as the researcher. I resolved the issue by restating the desire for us to operate openly whilst acknowledging they may not wish to share everything right away. Initially, written copies of reflections were shared with me alone, and I invited participants to share what they were prepared to reveal at the next meeting. Over time, the participants built sufficient trust that the reflective diaries were shared fully, and used for discussion about team behaviours as I had originally intended.

Having built some trust and rapport with my participants as a team coach I encountered a third type of ethical concern inherent in autoethnographic accounts, what Ellis (2007: 4) describes as 'relational ethics;' the people we are close to are implicated within our personal stories or we develop a relationship with our participants such that we are concerned to protect that relationship in considering what we may want to write publicly about. This concern first became apparent as I commenced working with the internal university team and recognised it would be extremely difficult to write openly about my personal thoughts and feelings concerning our professional experiences and, at the same time, protect my colleagues and the institution with the privacy I had promised.

The dilemma was brought into focus when I presented my work at the Team Learning Conference described above. It was held at my university, where colleagues involved in the project were in attendance. When I shared stories of my fieldwork, I consciously chose examples from the fieldwork site not associated with the university. The impact was powerful, but I felt a sense of unease. In revealing my inner voice, I also revealed the judgements I was

making about the characters. I imagined reading out one of the alternative stories from my insider research with the pertinent team members in the audience (Tullis, 2013; Ellis, 2007) and concluded it would be relationally damaging and inappropriate. My stories revealed organisational challenges, my inner voice was judgemental. In fact, I decided the same would be true if any participants had been in the audience. Even if I did not reveal their identities to others, they may suspect I was commenting on them. I concluded that if I was uncomfortable about sharing my work with those it described, then I could not and should not make it public.

The likelihood of tracking down all of my participants two years after the event to have them read and approve all of my accounts felt too impractical. Hence the stories in this thesis are fictitious, designed to '*extract meaning from experience*' (Bochner, 2000: 270) whilst maintaining respectful relationships and protecting the identities of colleagues and participants (Doloriert and Sambrook, 2012). The fictionalised vignettes throughout the rest of the thesis illustrate aspects of practice and are drawn from my imagination, inspired by the many characters and situations encountered in my professional life over the past 20 years. In line with my postmodernist approach, vignettes move forwards and backwards in time and present alternative stories where different characters' voices offer fragmented and partial accounts. However, all of the stories are collated together and presented as a chronological story in Appendix 2.8.

The final ethical dilemma concerns the potentially damaging professional risk of revealing vulnerabilities in a published text that will exist long after I may choose to focus my professional attention elsewhere, or indeed have cause to change my mind and potentially view the events with a new perspective (Wall, 2008). I can attest to the intense feelings of vulnerability as I stand before a group of my peers both in the academic and professional worlds and anticipate their challenges to my work (Tullis, 2013). What professional risks do I take in sharing my own inadequacies with those whom I hope to influence or teach in other settings? What damage could I cause to my credibility with my current and potential clients through this personally revealing work?

Ultimately, I have concluded that autoethnographic work was the best way for me to answer my research question and reveal what is going on under the surface in my team coaching practice. I am also compelled to work in this vulnerable space where the messy unfolding experiences of research and practice can be brought into a conversation with others. I am committed to the creation of knowledge through processes of relational social constructionism, and for me that requires us to expose our questions and doubts such that we open up the possibility of curiosity, reflexivity and learning. I explore the relationships between curiosity and vulnerability further in Chapter 6 - Team and Coach in Wonderland.

2.7. Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, I have outlined the research design, describing my underpinning motivations for practice-based inquiry and my justifications for the autoethnographic approach before describing in detail the fieldwork, data collection and analysis methods culminating in the summary of five narrative themes leading to four metaphorical perspectives. I have concluded the chapter with a review of ethical considerations and highlighted a requirement to fictionalise accounts to protect participant and organisational anonymity and professional relationships.

In Chapters 3 to 6 that follow, I develop each metaphor to make sense of what is going on in a team and to suggest coaching focus and coaching approaches, leading to the creation of a framework of team coaching practice.

Each chapter is structured to respond to the research questions: How does this metaphorical perspective help to explain what might be going on in a team coaching context? I consider how each metaphor can inform my practise as a coach; in the moment, during preparation, during supervision and reflective practice, and to develop a team coach curriculum. I discuss how each metaphorical perspective is similar or distinctive from other team-based interventions and use the metaphors to help me understand how team coaching may be similar to, or distinct from, dyadic coaching. I substantiate each metaphor under discussion by drawing from the fieldwork experiences

and integrating appropriate theory, and then illustrate the potential scenarios through the fictional vignettes. I discuss potential coaching approaches by inspired by team coaching, dyadic coaching and therapeutic practices, and compare and contrast these approaches with other team-based interventions. I reflect on my learning and development with reference to previous practice with teams and individuals. Chapter 3 will consider the metaphor of team as machine.

Chapter 3: Team as Machine Metaphor

3.0. Introduction

In this chapter, I adopt Morgan's (1986) metaphor of organisations as machines to develop my first metaphorical perspective of team as machine, drawing upon fieldwork experience, team effectiveness research and the team coaching literature. I illustrate how using this perspective can create clarity of purpose, a common language and behavioural norms to enable effective team functioning. I describe how I might apply this approach within my own team coaching practice. The team as machine perspective invokes team assessment and functional development approaches that have resonance with team building, team facilitation and team process consultation. I discuss how coaching may be similar to and distinctive from these types of interventions. Finally, I review the benefits and drawbacks of this metaphorical approach and reflect upon my own learning. Fictional vignettes of a coaching assignment illuminate the practices and contexts under discussion.

3.1. Developing the metaphor of team as machine

I chose to name the first metaphor 'team as machine' as it uses functionalist language prevalent in organisations and team-based research. This type of language first emerged at the time of the industrial revolution when factory owners recognised the need to influence human behaviours to integrate effectively with the newly emerging technologies of the day and was characterised by Morgan (1986). Mechanistic thinking is evident in organisations, illustrated by orderly organisational structure charts, process maps and assembly lines, with metaphorical language such as *"I'm just a small cog in the wheel"* and *"that will put a spanner in the works."*

In my retrospective review of my practice, I describe how my work with teams was predicated on the basis that following effective team processes would lead to effective functioning. I also shared my concerns that a functionalist mind-set led to a directive approach, which contravened my humanistic coaching philosophy. My observations and deliberations in my early fieldwork revealed a continuing preoccupation with the tension between the two approaches.

'They do not seem to have a clearly-articulated model of team effectiveness. Should I have been more directive? More structured in clearly defining an effective team?' (Reflective field notes from fieldwork site two).

My participants appeared familiar with a functionalist language. The professional coaches (fieldwork site three) provided a pragmatic perspective by treating team effectiveness frameworks as if they were any other coaching tool. In other words, if they thought it might help the members to have a useful conversation, they would offer one.

'You need to establish with the team, what a good team is.' (Participant one, fieldwork site three).

'Sometimes a model may provide you a structure, give you a language to talk about teams.' (Participant six, fieldwork site three).

Similarly, my operational team members recognised that there was some benefit in developing team-working approaches:

'We had a clearer agenda, were more focused, and, yes, we actually have a working framework for the team. That's an outcome.' (Participant reflective diary, fieldwork site two)

My fieldwork reinforced the view that a functional approach to explaining what is going on in a team assignment makes sense to team members and their coaches as a basis for coaching but the mechanism to achieve that clarity was flexible. Equally, I acknowledge that my predisposition to such an approach meant I was likely to be attuned to noticing it in action. In the next section, I build on the machine metaphor by bringing in perspectives from team effectiveness and team coaching research.

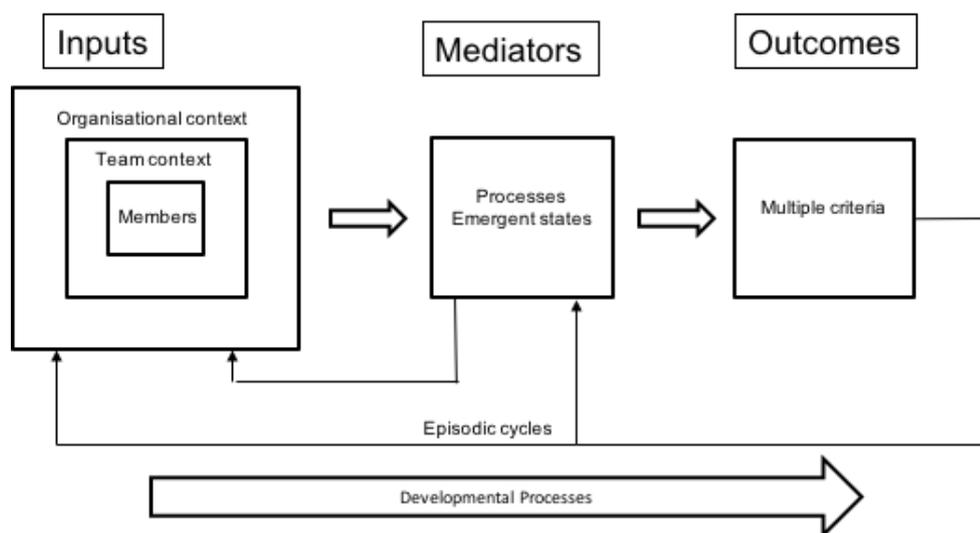
3.1.1. Developing the team as machine metaphor: Team effectiveness and team coaching research

There is an extensive research base relating to team effectiveness and performance spanning over 50 years (Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006). The majority of work on teams draws on an Input-Process-Output (IPO) model and

the functional machine metaphor retains a strong presence. Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp and Gilson (2008) developed the IPO model further to recognise that mediating factors, known as emergent states, could contribute to, or detract from, the team performance. One example of an emergent state is trust, which I will revisit in Chapter 4. Coined the Input-Mediator-Output (IMO) framework, this representation of team effectiveness (reproduced in Figure 3.1.) is typical of the machine metaphor within the team literature; a series of key components joined by arrows invoking a mechanical process where inputs are converted by way of a black box to a series of outputs. Mathieu et al.'s (2008) representation was based on a review of the literature over a ten-year period which attempted to capture the state of knowledge at the time. They acknowledge that the contributing concepts and criteria for measuring effectiveness continue to be developed and refined, and individual variables continue to be evaluated against hypotheses of where one may have an impact on another.

Figure 3.1. The IMO model of team effectiveness

(reproduced from Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp and Gilson, 2008: 413)



The dominant image is one of predictable variables influencing process outcomes that are controlled through designed interventions and structural adjustments (Pina, Martinez and Martinez, 2008). Hackman and Wageman (2005) adopt a mechanistic language as they attempt to articulate cause and

effect relationships between coaching functions and team performance outcomes.

Coaching functions are those interventions that inhibit process losses and foster process gains. (Hackman and Wageman, 2005: 273)

Looking back to the framework in Figure 3.1. where the team cycles through periods of task-intensive activity, the episodic cycles are reminiscent of a machine in a production run generating outputs; the feedback loops indicate where the team may review how well their activities are meeting performance outcomes. Hackman and Wageman recommend that the coaching function prior to a performance episode is focused on team motivation to achieve the tasks, whereas part way through a performance episode the coaching function should be aimed at exploring task and process effectiveness and providing behavioural feedback. At the end of the activity the coaching function is focused on learning from the experience and providing education to improve skills for the next round of activities.

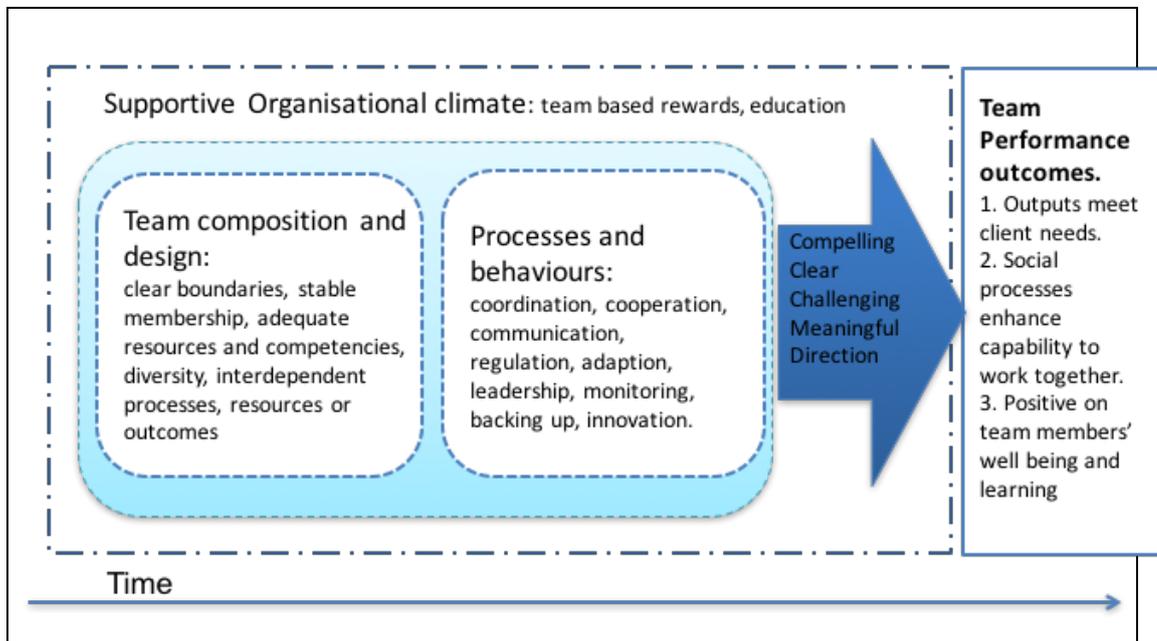
Consultants writing in the popular business publications of the early 1990s originally informed my conceptual framework of a team, for example, 'The Wisdom of Teams' (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993). Their definition gained credibility and popularity such that it was reprised in Harvard Business Review in 2005:

A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, a set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves accountable. (Katzenbach and Smith, 2005: 2)

To create my own depiction of the team as machine metaphor (shown in Figure 3.2.) I combined this definition of a team with elements of effectiveness drawn from the team research base. The depiction here represents a foundational understanding of teams as it includes items that are agreed upon across multiple studies.

Figure 3.2. Depiction of team as machine metaphor

(developed from Cohen and Bailey, 1997; Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006; Mathieu et al., 2008; Salas, Sims and Burke, 2005; Wageman, Hackman and Lehman, 2005)



In this section, I will briefly outline the elements from Figure 3.2. to establish a basis of team effectiveness. Then, in the section that follows, I will explore how and where a team coach may support the team in building and maintaining their effectiveness through the metaphor of team as machine.

An effective team comprises a clearly-defined group of people who share a common purpose and have clear meaningful goals (Wageman, Hackman and Lehman, 2005). Researchers agree that a critical indicator of a group who would benefit from forming a team is when they have interdependencies in resources, processes or outcomes (Cohen and Bailey, 1997; Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006; Mathieu et al., 2008). A significant body of research has looked at varying factors relating to the composition of the team and the effects of factors such as diversity, personalities and complementary skills, with the results varying depending upon the team context and requirements (Cohen and Bailey, 1997; Mathieu et al., 2008). Whatever the composition, effective teams

are likely to be supported by organisational policies that develop and reward teamwork (Wageman, Hackman and Lehman, 2005).

Effective teams clearly define and agree performance outcomes. However, team effectiveness researchers have used multiple measures to establish degrees of performance (Cohen and Bailey, 1997) which are often based upon specific organisational measures. Wageman et al. (2005) proposed generalising performance measures in order to compare studies. They suggest three categories of measure: A measure of the ability to deliver a quality product or service, as defined by the client or stakeholders; a measure of the team's improved ability to collaborate; and a measure of the impact upon the well-being and learning of team members such that they wanted to continue working together. These broad definitions of performance are helpful to stimulate a discussion about the team's effectiveness from a range of perspectives.

As described earlier, there is a temporal dimension to working with teams. Teams exist in moments-in-time that may change their focus and priorities, this is significant in terms of '*task cycles*' and '*linear development*' (Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006: 81). Team effectiveness researchers also use time factors to distinguish between types of team, such as ongoing operational teams, project teams that have a finite lifespan (Cohen and Bailey, 1997) and very short-life teams such as cabin crew and operating theatre teams (Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006). It is useful for the coach to be aware of all these temporal contexts when agreeing a focus for the coaching.

Finally, there is a myriad of research exploring the behaviours that contribute to carrying out tasks and processes and achieving performance outcomes. Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006) identified behaviours of cooperation and communication to enable coordination of activities. Salas, Sims and Burke (2005) describe this coordination in terms of team working processes. Both research studies agreed that effective teams developed processes for monitoring and evaluating progress against goals, such that team members could support each other and identify innovations or new approaches.

The machine metaphor provides ways of observing the team as a functioning unit and directs the coach to areas of inquiry with the team relating to inputs, processes and outcomes. In my fieldwork I found that initiating a general conversation, related to the functional areas described above, was sufficient for team members to identify what worked for them and to recognise deficiencies they wanted to improve. However, having knowledge of resources in this area can be useful if a team wants to pursue a specific element in more depth. Next, I consider coaching from this perspective in more detail.

3.2. Coaching from the metaphorical perspective of team as machine

In this section, I consider how the metaphorical perspective of team as machine could help me to practice as a coach: In the moment; during coaching preparation; during supervision and reflective practice; and in creating a team coaching curriculum. I describe coaching from the perspective of team as machine by first considering the team's understanding of the team concept, then moving on to consider team effectiveness surveys, coaching processes, and finally behavioural and goal-focused coaching. To set the scene, I introduce the characters in a fictional team coaching scenario that I will use to illustrate how I can practice coaching from this metaphorical perspective. In the vignette that follows I am conducting my first coaching session with a fictional operational management team.

3.2.1. Coaching from the metaphorical perspective of team as machine:

Vignette one

The coach's story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session one: May 2014

It has been a long time coming but I am here at Brampton to work with the management team. I was invited by Diane who took an OD post here 18 months ago. I have known Diane since she was an MBA student five years ago and respected her hard work and intellect. After a meeting in January where Diane had suggested I observe the team in action, I met with her and the Operations Director, Richard Wainwright, to discuss their objectives. Diane told me that she wanted to use coaching as a route towards culture change within the Local Authority and she saw this management team as crucial. Richard was quiet in the meeting, nodding thoughtfully but leaving Diane to do most of the talking. I found myself working within the same dynamic, making eye contact with Richard and then not being

surprised when it was Diane that spoke for them both. We agreed a series of six coaching sessions with the team, with a view to develop a self-sustaining team at the end of it.

When I arrive the room is empty. Will anyone turn up? I'm anxious about how it's going to go. I'm not sure what this group understand by team working, team coaching or the relationship between Diane, Richard and the others.

Suddenly there are voices in the corridor. Diane arrives with Veronica, one of the operations managers; they are conducting a somewhat heated discussion about an incident concerning an e-mail that Diane sent out to Veronica's team.

Paul arrives.

Paul: What's up 'Ronnie', I can hear you ranting all the way down the corridor. Hi Jo - ready to start the counselling session?

Veronica: It's coaching Paul, she isn't going to put you on a couch.

Paul: More's the pity, I could do with a little light therapy!

He squeezes Veronica's arm and gives a wink and changes the subject to a shared problem they are having with the data systems. Diane retreats to get coffee.

One by one the team members arrive and Diane introduces me. Veronica, Paul and Shirley are the operations managers, Dan leads Finance, Clive heads up Information Systems, Jess is the HR partner and Fin is an HR intern.

Eventually Richard bustles in.

Diane: Ok! Welcome everyone to our first team coaching session. For those who haven't formally met our coach, this is Jo and she is going to help us work as a team. You all know that I circulated a paper about creating a coaching culture over a year ago now but we seem to be struggling to really get it off the ground. I believe some coaching for us will help us get moving.

Me: Thanks Diane, it is great to be working with you all. Today is a setting-the-scene meeting, helping me to understand your start point and what you are looking for from team coaching. Let us start by getting some thoughts about what this team is here for and why we might embark on team coaching. Perhaps if you spend 10 minutes talking with the person sitting next to you and then we can share ideas.

Dan: Can I ask a different question? Are we a team or a management group? I noticed you used the word 'team.' I'm wondering what that really means in this context?

Me: Yes, that's a good question, I think that should be part of your discussion. If you are a team, how is it different from the management group that formally has a reporting line to Richard?

Richard: If I can offer an answer to that? I think we meet as a management group to review our various areas of responsibility, but perhaps it is time we worked as a team on our shared responsibility for this organisation.

I wonder if Diane has been coaching him on what to say. I wonder if the question has ever come up before.

Me: Thanks Richard, I think that's an interesting distinction and thanks to Dan for the question. I would like to give everyone a chance to discuss their thoughts and then we will re-group if that's OK?

There is a hum of discussion in the room. Paul and Veronica. Fin and Shirley, Dan and Clive, Jess talking to Diane and Richard together.

Me: Ok so that clearly generated some discussion. Can we have a sense of what you talked about from each pair.

Dan: Well to answer my own question, I don't think we are a team but maybe we don't need to be. Clive and I discussed coming from the service departments. We need to interact with Ops, and we work together quite a lot. Maybe it's horses for courses?

Veronica: I have a team of my own managers and 75 customer service staff who run an operation. They cover for each other, plan the operation for the year, same as in Paul's department. I think the teams sit in departments. We do share a responsibility for the organisation, I understand where Richard is coming from, but as a management team/group - call it what you like.

Diane: Don't we want to create a team that can make a difference - together?

Clive: I think we could be a team, not sure if it's possible.

Me: Not sure if it's possible?

Clive: *I don't know what others think but, we are in competition aren't we? Who can deliver best results each month. My first priority is to my own team. I mean that's how we are measured.*

Richard: *Hmm. That is an interesting observation.*

Shirley: *I would like to feel part of a team.*

Me: *Could you say a little more about that Shirley?*

Shirley: *Well, maybe it's just me, being new. Feeling you have a place where you can share things, where you can say 'I'm not sure what to do here...'*

Pulling together the ideas feels like knitting with spaghetti. I'm still unsure if we are all talking from common experience, or if they have a picture of what good team work looks like to appreciate the benefits.

Me: *Ok so I'm hearing a number of perspectives about how your individual roles contribute to a collective effort. And how you balance working in this team and your department simultaneously, it can create conflicts and it could also create a support mechanism. Would it be useful to spend some time on these issues in more detail?*

There are polite nods. I plough on.

Me: *Would it be helpful if I shared a model of team effectiveness?*

I bring up the team model slide and talk through the elements. They all listen politely. I'm feeling we are at sea, clinging to this model like a life raft. I don't feel like a coach right now, but I do feel we need a shared language.

Me: *So one way forward is to take this model and the questionnaire that goes with it. We use it to assess ourselves as a team and it points to the places where you have strengths and where you might want to develop further. If each of you identifies your own scores. Then in the next session we can discuss how you got on.*

In the vignette above, I am setting the scene for team coaching. I am exploring the degree to which the team members have a common language of teams and a shared understanding of their purpose, direction and current

performance. I am challenging use of the words 'team' and 'group' to establish the degree of commitment to shared objectives. The participants appear to be a team in name only, as they all report to the same boss, what West (2012) refers to as 'pseudo teams.' Dialogues with the professional coaches provided clarity about navigating the line between not wanting to be seen as an expert consultant and at the same time wanting to establish a shared language. If the team can articulate what a good team looks like from their own experience, we have the basis for a conversation. If they cannot articulate a clear picture of effectiveness or there is disagreement about what counts, a framework could be useful (Thornton, 2016). In this vignette I offer a team effectiveness framework and survey to scaffold future discussions and to encourage a discussion about the benefits of working towards a shared purpose.

3.2.2. Coaching from the metaphorical perspective of team as machine: Team effectiveness surveys

Integral to the team as machine approach is the use of self-diagnostics in the form of team effectiveness surveys. The survey provides an enabling bridge helping the team to establish its own development needs and therefore retain ownership for the coaching agenda and the direction of the development process. Numerous team effectiveness surveys exist (Bateman, Wilson and Bingham, 2002; Cacioppe and Stace, 2008; Hawkins, 2011; Wageman, Hackman and Lehman, 2005; West, 2013).

The Team Diagnostic Survey (Wageman, Hackman and Lehman, 2005) is promoted as an instrument that may be of use for team performance and scholarly research and is based on the idea of five enabling conditions that promote team effectiveness; an enabling structure, a compelling direction, a real team, a supportive organisational context and expert coaching. This survey generates a collective view of the team based on a composite view of results. Hawkins (2011: 189) has created a survey based on five team disciplines; commissioning, co-creating, clarifying, connecting and learning. The survey encourages the individual to recognise his or her own responsibility for taking action, along with the collective view. I will consider Hawkins' work further in Chapter 5 in relation to his systemic view of teams. In a coaching

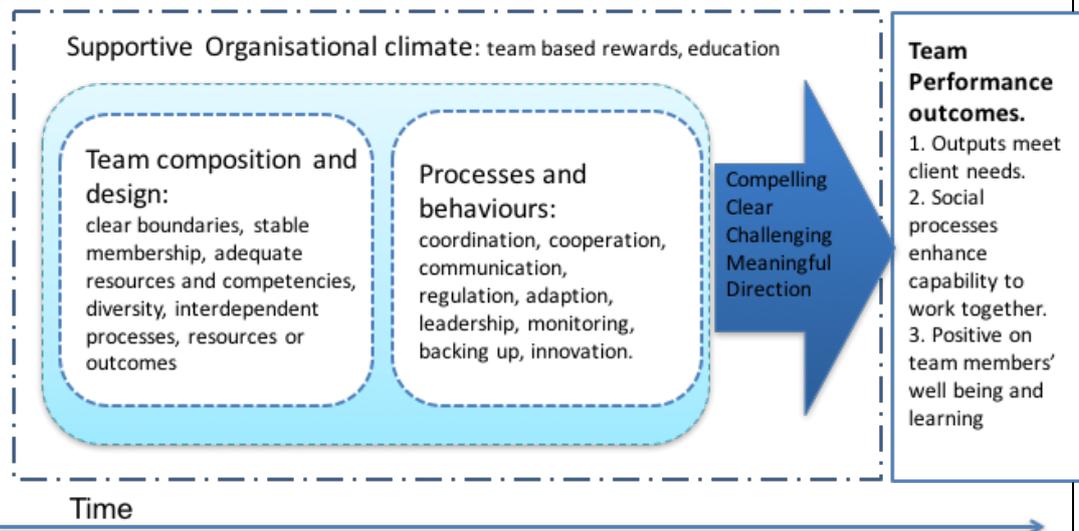
context, data from such surveys enables the team to reflect on the results and supports a constructive discussion regarding potential activities to strengthen their effectiveness and build performance.

Over the course of my fieldwork, I created my own survey tools by drawing on concepts of team effectiveness portrayed in empirical work and describing them as behavioural statements linked to the foundational elements depicted in my machine metaphor. In Figure 3.3 below I have reproduced my version of a team effectiveness survey that could be used in conjunction with the team as machine framework in Figure 3.2. Items for the statements were developed with reference to Cohen and Bailey (1997), Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006), Mathieu et al. (2008), Salas, Sims and Burke (2005) and Wageman, Hackman and Lehman (2005). Over the course of the next three chapters, I will add to this questionnaire to relate self-assessment questions to the further metaphorical perspectives of family, living system and Wonderland. The final survey appears in Appendix 7.2. In practice, I have utilised the whole survey at the start of a coaching assignment, although it could be used in sections to enable a team to focus upon aspects of development in stages. In this case, focus is on the functional components of clear direction, performance outcomes, context, composition and design, and team processes.

Figure 3.3 Team pulse survey © - team as machine

Monitoring the key indicators of your team's effectiveness allows you to reaffirm strengths and address weaknesses. Over time, changes within this complex system may affect the team's performance. Regular time-out to take the team's pulse will allow you to remain healthy and effective. For new teams use the questions to create a road map of development.

The survey is based on 50 years of team effectiveness research and asks the team to consider those elements that have been shown to have an impact upon effectiveness and performance outcomes. The diagram below provides a conceptual framework of the elements of a dynamic team within a wider context.



Team Assessment and Development Process

Individuals score each item based on their experience and perspective.

1. Collate the scores to show averages and range of scores.
2. Discuss the scores to understand different perspectives. Seek to understand different interpretations.
3. Scores with a wide range of perspectives are as significant as those with low or high average.
4. Decide as a team how to make sense of what the scores are telling you. The important thing is the dialogue, not the ultimate scores.
5. Identify which items are having the most impact upon performance right now.
6. Agree action plans to develop team effectiveness. Be selective and set interim goals.

Further reading:

Katzenbach, J. R., and Smith, D. K. (2005). *The discipline of teams*. Harvard Business Review, 83(7), 162.

Kozlowski, S.W.J. and Ilgen, D.R. (2006). *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Work Groups and Teams*. Psychological Science in the Public Interest. 7(3) 77-124

Mathieu, J., Maynard, M.T., Rapp, T. and Gilson, L. (2008). *Team Effectiveness 1997-2007: A Review of Recent Advancements and a Glimpse into the Future*. Journal of Management, 34 (3) 410-476.

Wageman, R., Hackman, R.J., and Lehman, E. (2005). *Team Diagnostic Survey: Development of an instrument*. The Journal of Applied Behavioural Science 41(4) 373-396.

Take the Team pulse ©

Key Indicators of Effectiveness	Score/10
COMPELLING CLEAR DIRECTION	
We have a clear sense of purpose. We know why our team purpose matters to the organisation and key stakeholders.	
Everyone can explain what the team is here to accomplish.	
The team's purpose is challenging.	
I am motivated to achieve the team's purpose. It is important to me and others.	
TEAM PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES – Stakeholders, other teams and team members	
We are meeting expectations of our customers/clients or stakeholders.	
We monitor our effectiveness in working with others and discuss ways to improve performance.	
Our team performance is improving over time through increased capabilities.	
We monitor team members' satisfaction. Team members feel positive about working with the team.	
TEAM CONTEXT	
The organisation values team work. The team is supported by organisational policies and procedures, e.g. we are rewarded for succeeding as a team.	
This is a good moment in time to plan our development.	
TEAM MEMBERS COMPOSITION AND DESIGN	
We are interdependent in resources, processes and/or outcomes. We believe it makes sense to work together.	
We have the right people with the correct balance of experience, knowledge and skills to be successful.	
We seek out diversity and understand what diversity brings to a team.	
We have sufficient stability of membership to be effective.	
The team structure, roles and responsibilities are clear and effective.	
TEAM WORK PROCESSES	
We communicate effectively.	
There are clear expectations about roles, clear assignments are made, accepted and carried out.	
We have agreed ways to share work, we cooperate to get the work done.	
The team tracks progress against goals regularly and discusses how to build on successes and to close performance gaps.	
We all feel responsible for team outcomes and will support colleagues and raise concerns for the overall good of the team.	
We have developed clear norms of behaviour that enable us to function effectively, and bring new members on board with these norms quickly.	
We are good at working together to learn and grow, developing new ideas and adapting to change.	

Scoring Key

0-2 Item missing or working extremely poorly. We have not considered this item.

3-4 Item works poorly or inconsistently most of the time in our team.

5-6 Item works partially, or some of the time. There is much room for improvement.

7-8 Item works well most of the time in our team. Still some room for improvement.

9-10 Item is a real strength sustained over time.

3.2.3. Coaching from the metaphorical perspective of team as machine: Processes models

Coaching from the perspective of team as machine lends itself to a coaching approach that is aligned to a clear process. Teams based in a process-driven environment often recognise and feel comfortable with this kind of approach. A process approach provides a scaffolding to negotiate stages of activity with a client team and appears to break down a potentially complex assignment into a series of discrete interventions. Peters and Carr (2013) developed a team coaching model that adopts a process-driven approach utilising the Team Diagnostic Survey (Wageman, Hackman and Lehman, 2005) as the catalyst for team discussions about behavioural changes that would enable more effective team performance. The process emphasises the role of the coach over time and the structured approach to the coaching. However, as several authors acknowledge (Thornton, 2016; Peters and Carr, 2013; Clutterbuck, 2014) the coach cannot follow any process blindly, and needs to respond to emerging issues and circumstances. The process-driven methods may fail to explain what is going on inside the 'black box' of the team's functioning or offer ways of knowing when the process moves off-script.

3.2.4. Coaching from the metaphorical perspective of team as machine: Behavioural, task-focused coaching

Team coaching following the machine metaphor aligns to a behavioural style of coaching (Passmore, 2007) that focuses on goals, feedback and stepwise activities. Behaviourism is founded on the idea that individuals learn from experiences and that their behaviour is reinforced through positive outcomes, such as a reward, or can be controlled by the application of sanctions for undesirable behaviours. Management thinking is rooted in the belief that behaviour is modified in this way, and underlies organisational systems such as performance management. As such, it is a familiar approach and readily accepted as the norm in many organisational contexts. As I described in chapter one behavioural-type coaching is common in dyadic coaching via the well-known GROW model (Whitmore, 2005). Individuals often respond well to a behavioural approach; setting their own goals, designing actions to move towards goals and establishing processes of assessment and feedback.

Achieving personal goals can result in feelings of success, bringing their own reinforcing reward system (Passmore, 2007).

Hence, as I described in my review of team coaching research in chapter one Brown and Grant (2010) build upon this idea by proposing a practical model directed at teams who are working on a shared goal. The GROUP model emphasises goal focus, diagnosis and action, and aligns well with a process-driven approach. The 'Understand others' phase creates a behavioural norm of checking in with each team member, so that views from all members of the team are heard. Such a tool could be used to help the team develop an action plan from their team assessment analysis or to structure a coaching conversation around a specific development area.

In this chapter so far I have described coaching through the metaphorical lens of team as machine, drawing upon team effectiveness literature to create a framework of an effective team. Utilising behavioural coaching approaches I have described how I might use a team assessment tool to scaffold a coaching process. The emphasis has been on using the approaches within live coaching sessions. In the next section, I consider how team as machine metaphor is useful for planning and reflection, and as part of a coach development curriculum.

3.3. The metaphor of team as machine: Planning and supervision

Team as machine is a helpful metaphorical perspective to plan coaching interventions due to its structured process-driven approaches. The coach can listen for use of team-based language from the commissioning stakeholder and team members from the outset and can make their own tentative evaluations of where the team may have strengths or 'be in trouble,' utilising team effectiveness behaviours as a guide.

In reflective practice and supervision, I would use the team as machine perspective to make sense of the team's functioning, which would help to identify where there may be gaps in knowledge or awareness. In my fieldwork during the research I was unsure when to apply this approach. In future, I will

have more confidence in assessing the team's facility to discuss their own competence, and in offering a framework if I think it would facilitate a conversation. I can also use the functional framework to notice what is going on and identify future areas of inquiry with the team.

3.4. The metaphor of team as machine for creating a team coach curriculum

The team as machine metaphor is a useful foundational perspective for introducing the context of team coaching to those more familiar with dyadic approaches, as it provides a gateway to the extensive research base relating to the functioning of teams. Dyadic coaching does not always take place in the context of an organisation, or minimise the organisational perspective. In team coaching this context comes to the fore. The team effectiveness research is very comprehensive and provides team coaches with a depth of knowledge about factors that may impact upon their team's performance. Whilst not wanting to develop team process experts I would want to build awareness in the coach so that this expertise can inform their questions, and what they draw attention to.

In a team coaching curriculum, I would start with team as machine, as it sets a broader context for the purpose of the coaching relating to team purpose, shared outcomes and functional behavioural norms and begins to illustrate the complexity at play. It also draws upon relatively well-known coaching approaches such as goal-focussed, behavioural-type coaching, likely to feel familiar to the majority of coaches and therefore a comfortable place to start within this new coaching context.

3.5. The metaphor of team as machine compared with other team interventions

Team coaching from the perspective of the team as machine, with its focus upon goals, roles, tasks, diagnosis and planning could look a little like a team building, team facilitation and team process consultation. The use of a team assessment tool could be an effective way to help a team move through stages of team development by establishing norms of behaviour and assessing and

developing performance. Having a team self-coach using a team development tool can be motivational and empowering. Equally, this process could have some similarities with team process consultation in that it helps the client to diagnose problems and take responsibility for designing solutions (Schein, 1999).

In Chapter 1 I explained how I wanted a deeper understanding of what I was bringing to my work with teams from the mind-set of *'being a coach.'* Firstly, whilst the *'doing'* of team coaching from a perspective of team as machine may look similar to other interventions, what distinguishes the *'being'* of coaching is the longer-term, ongoing nature of these interventions (Clutterbuck, 2014; Hawkins, 2011; Thornton, 2016) and, as such, coaching from this metaphorical perspective would mean being in a longer-term, developmental relationship. Secondly, I remain committed to a coaching approach that privileges the capabilities and self-determination of the clients, such that any intervention is planned with that collaborative relationship in mind. Whilst facilitation and process consultation techniques are relevant, being a coach means I would employ such techniques in a way that strengthened this equal partnership.

In the vignette that follows, I continue the story of coaching at Brampton, illustrating how I might utilise a team assessment questionnaire to facilitate a conversation about team functioning taking a coaching approach.

3.6. The metaphor of team as machine: Vignette two

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session two: June 2014

As agreed at the second session, we focus on the team assessment questionnaire. Richard does not appear at the meeting.

Me: *The goal for today is for us to begin to develop a shared understanding about this team, how it operates and where you think you have strengths and development areas.*

The team work in pairs to discuss their high and low scores and discuss the differences in interpretations relating to each category area. Then pairs come together to the main group and share what they have discussed.

Me: Who would like to share their insights?

Veronica: Jess and I had similar scores mainly. We both agree we need more clarity on the purpose for this team and what we are trying to do, in fact we had quite a discussion about our role in the organisation. Jess thinks we are like a project team accountable for delivering specific objectives. I thought we were talking about culture change so it is bigger than that. So the team would discuss ideas, we agree the big picture then implement in our own areas in our own way.

Me: Ok, what did others discuss in relation to that point?

Paul: Shirley and I have talked about that as well, I think we came along with the same idea as Ronnie that we just need to agree the plan and we can action it in our own areas but since you asked about the team thing I am starting to wonder. A team definitely is about shared goals; I mean it's like in football. You all want to win. The goal is clear. And you need a strategy and some tactics as well as strong players and a creative game plan.

Me: Ok, Clive, Dan what came up for you?

Clive: Dan and I discussed about us being in competition with each other, I mean we compete for resources and to show we are delivering KPIs in each department. Using Paul's football analogy, I think we need to recognise when we are playing for our local team and when we put on our national shirt. We have to cooperate to win the world cup! Sometimes clubs give up good players to the national side.

The others are all listening now. The room is quiet and reflective. There were murmurs of agreement.

Me: Ok, interesting. What else did you talk about? Where else would you like to focus?

Jess: Well I think we need to agree some effective behaviours. Not just about how to communicate who is doing what but when it comes to disagreements, how will we resolve them.

Veronica: We talked about trust. I mean we have to trust each other if we are going to cooperate. We need to trust the organisation. We need to know what is going to happen so we can manage effectively. These last two years we have been on a roller coaster.

Diane: I think that's about having a shared purpose so we influence the organisation.

Veronica muttered almost imperceptibly... Hmm

I sensed a tension. I did not feel ready to call it out.

Dan: *We talked about trust a bit as well. I think it can get quite heated at times so sometimes you keep your mouth shut to avoid another... well difficult conversation.*

Clive: *Well just to disagree with Dan a bit here, I think we just need processes, like Jess has said, how to disagree; it's more about behaviours right?*

Me: *Ok so if I play back what I'm hearing: you want to be clear on purpose and goals and develop a creative game plan, and some agreed-on processes so we can work together when the going gets tough? And some of you are saying it goes beyond behaviours to feeling trust between you?*

There were nods.

Me: *Can I come back to the point about competition for resources and results? Having discussed it, how do you see it now – has anything changed?*

Paul: *Veronica talked about culture change. If that's the big prize, we need to cooperate not compete. We share the players, the problems and the plaudits! Hey that was quite neat!*

There is a release of laughter. Paul grins and soaks up the appreciation of his colleagues. Diane sends me an imperceptible glance of appreciation that maybe we are on the verge of a breakthrough. There is a sense of a shift in thinking. Clive and Dan are nodding.

Me: *Very good Paul, you can be our team PR man! So to paraphrase, the team purpose needs to capture that sense of cooperation and togetherness?*

Me: *Ok I'm conscious we are short of time, let's agree to take something forward. What is the next step?*

Diane: *Should I draft a team purpose and circulate it for comments, we could start to develop some more clarity that way?*

Fin: *I could help draw together your ideas for processes and behaviours – how you want to work together? I could share it around for discussion.*

There are nods and time is running out. I notice, despite everyone starting to make good contributions it is Fin and Diane who take the actions. Am I seeing the usual behaviours playing out? And where is Richard?

3.7. Reflecting on the benefits and drawbacks to the team as machine metaphor

Coaching from the perspective of team as machine enables three significant coaching outcomes; creating clarity of purpose, creating a shared language, and developing functional behavioural norms. In the vignette above, discussing a functional team framework highlights differences in the team's previous mode of thinking and moves them towards greater clarity and motivation about shared purpose and outcomes. Highlighting the interdependency of shared resources begins to suggest a different way of thinking about their purpose of coming together as a management team and hints at the benefits of greater cooperation. A framework may help bring everyone into the conversation. It may be particularly useful to encourage those who are tentative about offering their expertise as the framework can legitimise their experience and give them a language to express it. Encouraging team members to discuss aspects of team performance in relation to a framework creates the opportunity for a more nuanced and in-depth discussion and can facilitate action planning to establish more effective team working behaviours.

As discussed above, in my research fieldwork I had resisted sharing a model of teamwork to avoid presenting myself as the expert. However, as I reflected upon the experience I wrote:

'I am becoming conscious that without an explicit and shared model of team effectiveness and team behaviours I implicitly own the process.' (Reflective notes, June 2015)

I noticed that I worked from my own notional model of team effectiveness based on that presented in Figure 3.2 earlier in this chapter. As the sessions unfolded, I would notice and instinctively allow the dialogue to continue when

behaviours appeared to support my model of effectiveness, or look to intervene if the team behaved in a way that contravened the model. By resisting sharing a model due to concerns of presenting myself as the expert, I had a tendency to behave as a covert expert, still with my hand on the rudder; guiding the conversations based on my ideal notion of how a team should behave. I am now of the view that offering an explicit framework develops a shared understanding and empowers the participants to make their own judgements about how they might apply ideas of team effectiveness within their own context.

Empowering others enables me to retain the integrity of the coaching philosophy within the relationship of *being a coach* in equal partnership. In the vignette above, I consciously encourage the team to do most of the talking with very open questions, such as ‘what did you talk about?’ I am inviting the team members to take what insights they see as significant from the stimulus of the questionnaire that begins to open up avenues for further exploration which we can revisit later. However, I do draw upon my expert knowledge at times, as it informs the question I ask about how the team’s thinking has developed in relation to competing for resources, and informs my decision to reinforce the point about shared purpose that had emerged in the discussion.

As Morgan (2011: 26) asserts, the team as machine metaphor that embraces goal setting, efficient organisation and performance monitoring is *‘ingrained in our way of thinking about organization.’* As such, it is a familiar and acceptable approach to take with client teams. Behavioural-based coaching is transparent and straightforward - we can measure it, notice its impact and make adjustments. Teams can coach themselves by identifying behavioural deficiencies, developing new ways of working and monitoring progress. For a team coach eager to demonstrate progress and results to their client organisation, team diagnostic devices are an excellent way of translating what we do in practice into a definable set of outcomes that can be measured.

However, the mechanistic approach to any organisational activity tends to underplay the human and environmental elements. Perhaps by setting out in

a goal-driven process we risk focusing too intently on physical actions and outcomes. In reflective writing, after analysing fieldwork site one and re-reading the participant reflections, I made the following observation:

'I am interpreting lack of progress with lack of action but they see the opportunity to speak and gain confidence as progress in itself. My machine mentality is causing me to look for outputs. Perhaps progress could be like a plant laying down roots; you can't see anything on the surface but they are growing stronger underneath.' (Reflective writing, November 2016)

Thinking of team performance as a series of interconnecting processes is attractive in that it appears to simplify a complex human system. However, this attraction to the functional obscures the other side of the coin – the 'ante-narrative' (Boje, 2001:1) built into the team effectiveness literature. Describing a concept such as trust as an element of the substructure in an input-output model creates the impression that this element can be engineered into existence. For example, emergent states are *'dynamic in nature and vary as function of team context, inputs, processes and outcomes'* (Marks, Mathieu and Zaccaro, 2001: 357). It is easy to be seduced by the team as machine metaphor. However, when one reflects on the words, what, for example, does 'trust' mean in this context? How does it emerge? Surely one is then drawn to ask, what is the relational element here?

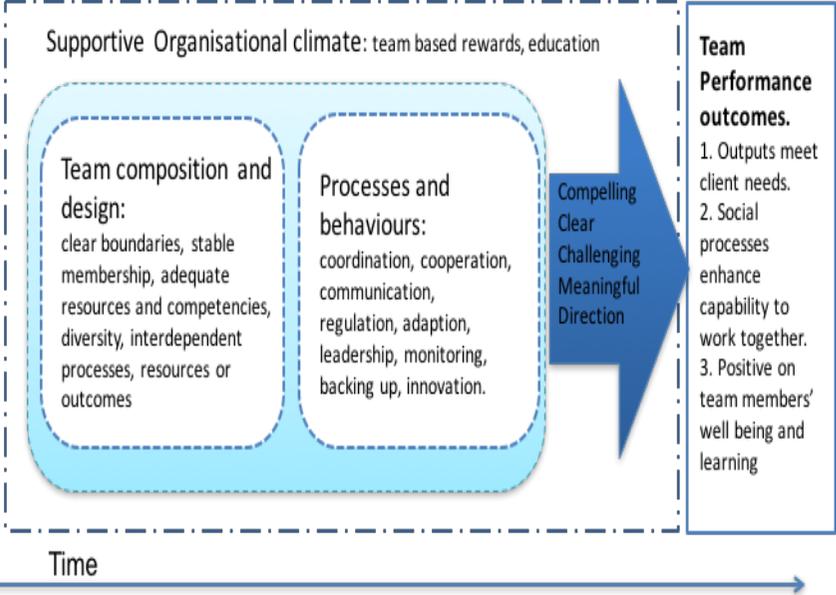
As described above, when preparing a coaching assignment from a process-driven standpoint there is a risk that, as coaches, we assume that the team members will respond in predictable ways that will facilitate a smooth progression along a predetermined pathway. However, in practice we know this is rarely the case. Both Peters and Carr (2013) and Brown and Grant (2010) refer to the need for the coach to be flexible in their approach and to respond to the emerging nature of the coaching assignment. Perhaps they are inferring that coaching effectively requires an ability to hold different modes of awareness simultaneously and be able to consider the situation from more than one point of view. This brings me to the next mode of awareness; to

consider the relational element of the team as family metaphor, which I will explore in Chapter 4.

3.8. Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, I have explored the metaphor of team as machine by considering the fieldwork and the underpinning theory that contributes to this perspective. I have considered how this metaphor allows us to notice what is going on from a functional and task-oriented perspective and suggested behavioural and goal-focussed coaching approaches and their desired outcomes. I considered the pros and cons of coaching from the metaphorical perspective of team as machine and compared this approach with other team-based interventions. Finally, I have summarised the coaching focus and likely outcomes inherent in this metaphor. The ideas are collated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Summary of team as machine metaphor

Metaphor	Coaching Focus	Coaching questions to reflect upon	Coaching approaches	Coaching outcomes
Team as machine	 <p>The diagram illustrates the 'Team as machine' metaphor. It is set within a dashed blue box representing a 'Supportive Organisational climate: team based rewards, education'. Inside this box, two rounded rectangular areas represent inputs: 'Team composition and design: clear boundaries, stable membership, adequate resources and competencies, diversity, interdependent processes, resources or outcomes' and 'Processes and behaviours: coordination, cooperation, communication, regulation, adaption, leadership, monitoring, backing up, innovation.'. A large blue arrow labeled 'Compelling, Clear, Challenging, Meaningful Direction' points from these inputs to a box on the right titled 'Team Performance outcomes.' which lists: '1. Outputs meet client needs.', '2. Social processes enhance capability to work together.', and '3. Positive on team members' well being and learning'. Below the main diagram, a horizontal arrow labeled 'Time' points to the right.</p>	<p>Does this team have a common purpose?</p> <p>Who is in this team?</p> <p>Do we believe we will achieve more together than alone?</p> <p>Are performance goals agreed?</p> <p>What are the team behaviours we are observing?</p> <p>What is working/ not working for the team?</p>	<p>Functional</p> <p>Behavioural</p> <p>Goal and task focussed</p> <p>Analysis via team effectiveness survey</p>	<p>Create clarity of purpose, process and outcomes.</p> <p>Create a common language of teams.</p> <p>Develop functional behavioural norms.</p>

Chapter 4: Team as Family Metaphor

4.0. Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the metaphor of team as family to provide a perspective through which I can explore my research question; *what is going on when I am coaching a team?* I develop the team as family metaphor by drawing upon my own fieldwork and psychodynamic theories of group behaviour, revealing how the individual's unconscious ways of relating combine to create complex group processes. I then move on to consider concepts of trust, safety and belonging, exploring how the coach may create a safe environment to facilitate the building of trust and development of stronger relationships. I conclude the chapter by reflecting on my own learning and considering how I might apply these ideas to my own practice: In the moment; during preparation; during supervision and reflective practice; and in coach training and development. I also consider how coaching from the metaphorical perspective of team as family is similar to and distinctive from team process consultation. In this chapter, in accordance with my postmodernist perspective, the fictionalised vignettes represent parts of the story from different time periods, looking back and then moving the story on, with stories presented from different points of view.

In the vignette that follows, the story looks back almost two years from my first coaching session and begins to reveal how some of the relational dynamics within my team have developed. Then the story moves to my first encounter with the team, illustrating the perplexing and cryptic nature of the dialogue and behaviours that are experienced when entering a new team context. I present my unspoken thoughts in parentheses.

4.1. Team as family: Vignette one

Diane's story: Creating a coaching culture at Brampton Local Authority

June 2012 – Interviews for the post of Organisation Development Specialist

Receptionist: *Good morning Mrs Watson, the interview panel will see you shortly, please take a seat.*

Diane was shown in to a small office overlooking the carpark and the country park beyond. A second candidate was already seated.

Diane: Hello, are you here for the interviews as well?

Veronica: Hi, yes. I'm Veronica. I work here in customer services. Have you come far?

Diane: Reading, but I'm from here originally. I have been doing an interim role for the past year. I really wanted to come back if something permanent comes up in the North.

The receptionist reappeared at the door. 'Mrs Watson, they are ready for you now.'

Diane: I hope to see you again. She smiled, smoothed down her jacket, pressed back her shoulders and took a deep breath as she followed the receptionist down the hall to her interview.

4.1.1. Team as family: Vignette two

Diane's story: Creating a coaching culture at Brampton Local Authority

January 2014: Richard Wainwright's management meeting

It was half past two. Diane was stealing a glance at the clock behind Richard's silver grey head. He was still going through the financial forecasts for the new financial year. Jo should be here by now. I need her to see this lot in operation.

Finally, the door opens. The receptionist is showing Jo in.

Diane: Come in Jo, take a seat, we are almost at the relevant point on the agenda.

Richard finally concludes 10 minutes later than promised. Now they had exactly 20 minutes before everyone would get up and walk out claiming 3.00pm appointments elsewhere. Diane indicates to Fin to raise the blinds as she shuffles the flip chart stand to the front of the room.

A phone vibrates on the table, Richard glances at it and jumps up to answer, waving an apologetic hand as he steps out of the room. The atmosphere lifts. There is an immediate hum of chatter.

(Me: Wonder who that was? They all seem relieved his presentation is over.)

Paul, always the charmer, raises a teacup and waves it at Jo. His eyes indicate the catering tray.

Paul: Hi, I'm Paul Honeywell. Can I get you a coffee?

(Me: He seems friendly at least, I bet they are wondering why I'm here, is he going to sound me out?)

Diane can feel the muscles in her jaw tighten. Richard has just walked out, and this lot would happily chat and drink coffee until they ran out of time to discuss anything. It was an uphill struggle to get anyone to participate.

Diane: *Ok everyone, let's get started again. I want updates from each department. Jess would you start us off please? Where are we up to with developing the coach training programme?*

(Me: Diane seems quite stressed...)

Jess: *Well we are down to the last three suppliers and procurement have set up a selection meeting for next week. We are proposing a three-day programme delivered in a two-day block with a follow-up day after some practice. We will need about 15 attendees to make it cost effective.*

Veronica: *I can give you two names but only if the training is May or June, we need to be clear for year-end in April.*

Paul: *Yeah, Ronnie is right. We will have to do it after April, all of our projects get reassessed in March and April, it's a really busy time. Are we selecting people or inviting them?*

Jess: *Ok, May would work with the follow-up day in June.*

Diane: *Perhaps we could get the first two days in March with the follow-up in May?*

Veronica: *No, schedules for March are already fixed in Operations, aren't they Paul?*

Paul: *Yeah that's right, sorry Diane.*

(Me: What's going on here? We seem to be talking about the minutiae of a training programme. I wonder if Diane wanted me to ask innocent questions or just observe? I don't want to deflect them further.)

Clive: *I'm telling my two team leaders they have to do it. It's a management skill. I can give you the names now Jess.*

Paul: *Well I'm not sending my team leaders - Dave and Chris; they have forty years' experience between them. I will send the younger guys.*

Clive: *Doesn't it depend what the 40 years' experience has taught them? Perhaps there is a different approach that's a bit more collaborative?*

Paul: Perhaps Clive, if you came down from your crystal palace now and again you would see what Dave and Chris have to manage. We repair holes in the road; there isn't much room for 'what do you think we should do?'

(Me: Ouch! Crystal Palace? – that sounds like a bit of 'them and us' on display, I wonder if there is a personality clash between these two.)

Clive: Whatever our different departments I still think we need more agreement about what we mean by 'coaching culture.'

Dan: I think you are overcomplicating things Clive. Let's just say we all utilise coaching and we may well have different approaches depending on department. Georgia is our coach in finance. She teaches month end processes and she has been working with Jess on a performance management process.

(Me: teaches month end?)

Paul and Veronica exchange glances.

(Me: Hmm...was that a knowing look? They seem like a tight unit.)

Clive: Can I just ask about this performance management thing, I'm not sure how you are relating it to coaching?

Paul: Who is supposed to do the training for that?

Jess: Everyone, Paul, it's a general thing, but we think coaching will help to support the process. Shall I just go over the main points of the proposal...

(Me: I can feel my chest tightening. I'm frustrated and anxious but not sure if it's empathy with Diane or because I'm not sure what I'm getting myself embroiled in. Why are we suddenly talking about performance management? This conversation seems to be going all over the place. The statements feel disconnected. I can't quite make sense of it. Are they gerrymandering to avoid progressing Diane's agenda or just not very good at listening to each other? It feels so incoherent. I wish I had asked Diane a few more questions now, I trusted her judgement when she said come along and observe - I didn't expect her to drop me in to something as chaotic as this. What is she up to?)

Diane glances at Jo and hopes she is taking all of this in. They all have a different view of what coaching is for. She's not sure Richard gets it. Veronica still resents her and the others side with her – at least Paul does. Paul is the big personality so they all go along with him. Clive likes to throw out questions no one bothers to respond to and Dan thinks he has it all sewn up with a training protocol in place for month-end. It's almost three. As predicted, they all start checking the time and packing to go. Diane asks Fin to make what he can of the meeting notes and send her the draft. He agrees and sets off with Jess to catch up on another project.

Diane: *So, you can see why I invited you?*

I raise an eyebrow quizzically. I'm not sure how much to say to Diane about my thoughts at this point. I wait for her to explain.

Diane: *I thought with your research interests you could work with the team. We need this coaching initiative to get off the ground and this team are a shambles.*

Me: *This is a team? I fail to mask my incredulity.*

Diane: *Yes, Richard Wainwright's management team. The guy doing the presentation when you walked in.*

Me: *Ahh – Okay... How...erm... How do you think I can help?*

Diane: *Well, I thought you could coach them. I need to create a functioning team.*

Me: *Well... it's possible I could work with you... (I want to play for time, have a chance to think) but I have a few questions. We need to discuss what you mean by 'being a team,' I mean, beyond what it says on the organisation chart. We would need to establish what you are trying to achieve as a team. And I would need to know that Richard agreed there was a development objective. It would also be helpful to know from both of you what you think help looks like - where the challenges lie? (I need to get a handle on what is going on if I'm to step in to this).*

Diane is not sure how much to say. She is still new here. She cannot say what she really thinks of Richard. She can't speak about half of the stuff that's going on, especially not the part that she won't admit to herself; that she feels she is failing and has made a mistake coming here. She just needs someone independent to get them all on the same page.

Diane: *OK, I will talk to Richard. Can I get back to you?*

4.2. Developing the metaphor of the team as family

Creating the retrospective account of my team coaching practice, I recognised that I was reluctant to work in-the-moment with teams. I would scaffold my approach with familiar tools and processes that controlled what might emerge and how we would work with the content, often falling back on a functional approach. I was aware of the '*bodily sensations*' (Cunliffe and Coupland, 2011: 64) inherent in my experiences of working in teams, where I might be sensitive to the visible social cues or the undercurrents of tension between people. However, I was unable to articulate exactly what was going on, and felt vulnerable not knowing. This research process has enabled me to slow down the action and make a deliberate attempt to pay attention to the relational aspects of my practice, to codify what I notice and to observe practice routines within these moments (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011).

In the vignette at the start of this chapter, I step into a context which is new to me, and from which I am trying to read behavioural cues. There appears to be a more relaxed atmosphere when the manager leaves the meeting. Is this to do with the relationship between them, or the formal subject matter of the financial presentation? What is the relationship between Diane and the others? Am I observing polite cooperation whilst under operational pressures, lack of clarity about the purpose of the project or a subversive resistance? What sense can I make of the exchanges between the participants? Where are the allegiances?

I have chosen the metaphor of team as family to illustrate the relational aspects of team life. A family is a group context that everyone has some experience of. Teams are a group of people living and working together over time, sharing experiences and demonstrating patterns of behaviour similar to families. In the teams I work with, people often work together over a number of years, so that they develop close personal relationships, they know aspects of each other's personal lives and at times act as if they are part of a bigger extended family. In some cases, they may even have real family ties or longstanding friendships, such that their personal and professional history is intertwined. Team effectiveness research points to relational issues (Kozlowski and Ilgen,

2006; Brockbank and McGill, 2012) having a role to play in creating the right conditions for team performance. This is in contrast to Hackman and Wageman (2005) who dismiss relational issues as a relevant focus for coaching as they often fail to demonstrate a link with improved performance outcomes. My fieldwork with professional coaches reinforced the significance of the relational aspect of their work. In the dialogues with the professional coaches, each had a story to tell about complex human relationships ‘getting in the way’ of effective cooperation, or expressed the view that relational strength was fundamental for collaboration. Examples of feedback from the professional coaches are shown below.

‘I believe relatedness is the foundation of results so relationship building is a fundamental part of my work.’ (Charles, personal correspondence, fieldwork site three)

‘The individual relationships built into a team hairball. I asked each of them – which part of the dysfunction do you own?’ (Felicity, coach dialogues, fieldwork site three)

‘It’s often about relationships. It’s the rubbish that gets in the way of them achieving their goals.’ (Dev, coach dialogues, fieldwork site three)

Felicity struggled to explain the matrix of relational interactions that had rendered her client team dysfunctional – eventually settling on the analogy of a hairball, choking the team with a myriad of threads that seemed impossible to untangle. Dev described these dynamics as the ‘*rubbish that gets in the way*’ and expressed an understandable resistance to embark on picking through this rubbish if there were a cleaner option on offer. Felicity took the view that she should encourage the team to examine their own rubbish, asking ‘*which part of the dysfunction do you own?*’

4.2.1. Developing the metaphor of team as family: Psychodynamic theory

At the commencement of the research project I was aware that some coach scholars (Hawkins, 2011; Thornton, 2010) credited psychodynamic theories as being foundational in understanding and guiding their work with teams. Psychodynamic theory is defined as

an approach to the study of group behaviour that focuses on the relationship between the emotional and nonconscious processes and conscious and rational processes of interpersonal interaction. (McLeod and Kettner-Polley, 2004: 335).

I considered the possibility that my lack of psychotherapy training may be at the root of my inability to confidently interpret and articulate the meanings of verbal and non-verbal communication between team members. In my fieldwork practice with teams during the research period I continued to operate from a position of relative ignorance in these matters and acted from my existing knowledge base. In the section that follows I explain how psychodynamic theories offer insights for team coaching and provide explanations of what might be going on in a team context. I draw upon group and family therapy to make sense of my fieldwork experiences and subsequently inform my practice.

4.2.2. Developing the metaphor of the team as family: The team of individuals and the group matrix

Thornton, drawing on the work of S.H. Foulkes (Foulkes and Anthony, 1984), describes how the '*group matrix*' is the content of visible and invisible thoughts, beliefs and experiences that contribute to what is commonly described as 'group dynamics.' We can think about this matrix as comprising the '*foundation matrix*' and the '*dynamic matrix*' (Thornton, 2016: 48).

The foundation matrix refers to the knowledge, experiences and fundamental values and beliefs of each individual. Whilst we may assume that such beliefs are widely shared, inevitably these beliefs are infused with cultural, societal, political and gendered notions of what it means to be human. These foundations guide a person's actions. The dynamic matrix represents the shared experiences, knowledge and beliefs that guide patterns of communication and behaviour in the group over time. For example, as team members tell their stories of organisational events from their own perspective, the stories mesh together, creating a shared history and a team story. The

dynamic matrix also reflects individuals' roles within the group, where patterns of behaviour may play out over time (Barnes, Ernst and Hyde, 1999).

Looking back at Diane's story at the top of this chapter, I, as the coach, sensed some of the elements of this group matrix from hints of individual behaviours along with some established group-level routines. The notion of the foundation matrix amplified my observations from fieldwork that individuals all experienced their relationship with the rest of the team and with the coaching and with me, as the coach, in unique ways and I responded accordingly.

In my fieldwork I noted:

I was conscious of the dynamics in the team, the diverse personalities, the history they all bring. (Field notes, fieldwork site one)

I find myself supporting Martha. Their initial response is often to dismiss her ideas as 'nice but...' (1st level of analysis, what am I noticing, fieldwork site two)

I am aware of the power dynamics coming from their roles and relative position in the hierarchy, their personalities and their knowledge base. (Field notes, fieldwork site two)

I had commenced the research with the notion of coaching the team as-a-whole and imagined that this meant minimising individual relationships. As my fieldwork progressed I became increasingly aware that the opposite was true; individuals were the constant threads running through the experience whilst their relationship with the team was contested. The foundational matrix reinforces this sense of the individuals bringing their own history, beliefs and perspectives into the whole and these remain their significant reference points. As Thornton (2016: 49) observes '*to be aware of individuals as individuals is crucial.*' Furthermore, it is thought that individuals live with a constant dichotomy of wanting to retain their independence and identity whilst also wanting a sense of belonging afforded by the group (Stokes, 1995), reinforcing the constantly shifting dynamic relationships between team members and the team.

4.2.3. Developing the metaphor of the team as family: Recognising how individuals unconsciously respond and relate

Psychodynamic theory provides a language to describe the ways in which individuals unconsciously respond and relate to each other. Thornton (2016) draws significantly on Foulkes' work (Foulkes and Anthony, 1984) to outline nine elemental processes experienced in all groups that serve to illustrate the variety of processes potentially in play. These processes are summarised in Table 4.1 below. I am reassured by the assertion that *'no one can notice everything'* and that *'the important thing is to notice persistent, prevalent and repeated behaviours'* (Thornton, 2016: 51). Breaking down the group processes could perhaps provide a way of unpicking the strands of the *'hairball'* clogging the team functioning.

Returning to my fieldwork experiences, I can now more clearly recognise the elements of group behaviour that may betray non-conscious inter-relational dynamics. For example, the subtle forms of communication or shared experiences having resonance for others; *'through the telling the individuals understand each other better'* (Thornton, 2016: 58). I can recognise examples of mirroring and appreciate how the team members built a sense of connection through seeing something of themselves in others. For example:

'Good to know you are not the only one feeling a certain way.'
(Shirley's reflective diary, fieldwork site one)

'It was reassuring to know that Rose also felt anxious...'
(Sarah's reflective diary, fieldwork site two)

In a reflective diary entry, I noted that:

I sense from the feedback that just being able to share feelings and find out – 'do other people feel like me?' - Is a rare experience, which they value. (Reflective diary, June 2014)

Table 4.1. Elemental group processes (adapted from Thornton, 2016: 51)

Group process	Description
Communication	Behaviours that convey units of meaning such as a glance, a gesture, a tone of voice, a pattern of communication between people. (Who pays attention to who?)
Translation	Process of articulating via language previously unexpressed feelings, experiences and ideas. Our ability to express ourselves is limited by the participants' capacity for language.
Mirroring	Non-conscious acts of recognising aspects of our personality traits or experiences in others. 'There are people here like me.'
Negative mirroring	Non-conscious acts of recognising negative aspects of ourselves in others or transferring onto others characteristics we perceive are present. 'I don't like that trait in you. I haven't recognised it because I don't like the trait in myself.'
Exchange	Recognising how we are different from others, and exchanging feedback or contradictory ideas. Open exploration of differences.
Resonance	When group members sense that they appreciate the emotions behind the words in another's experience, that they have a shared sense of understanding. Builds connections.
Condenser phenomena	Where one member of the group discloses a feeling or experience that has been previously left unspoken, but has resonance for others, perhaps creating a vivid image or metaphor that others then contribute too, intensifying the idea. The open sharing of this idea releases tension in the group.
Location	Where an element of the group's identity is personified in one person, such that the person becomes the spokesperson or scapegoat for the associated idea. It is the non-conscious location of this aspect of the group's beliefs within the one person that is problematic.
Reflection via a parallel process	Where a group member describes feelings and insights which others in the group can learn from, recognising parallels in their own experience that were perhaps not available to them previously.

In the vignette above Diane believes that Veronica's behaviours are as a result of resentment over the job selection process. However, perhaps Veronica's behaviours can also be explained through resonance and negative mirroring. Veronica recognises she too could have been in the situation that Diane faces and might have experienced similar challenges. Diane's struggles may bring out an uncomfortable sense of vulnerability in Veronica that she does not want to acknowledge; it may feel safer to focus on the certainties within her own role. As this behaviour is not conscious, it contributes to the hairball without being visible. Neither Veronica nor Diane are aware of the extent of underlying beliefs that remain unspoken.

4.2.4 Developing the metaphor of the team as family: Bion's basic assumption theory

In addition to individual unconscious beliefs causing unproductive behaviours, psychologists working with groups, such as Wilfred Bion (1897-1979), also noticed whole-group phenomena. Bion's basic assumption theory (1961) sought to explain group behaviours through three basic assumptions: Basic assumption dependency; basic assumption fight-flight; and basic assumption pairing (Stokes, 1995). Basic assumption dependency relates to the propensity for a group to become dependent upon a leadership figure and for the group's work to become secondary to the role of maintaining the protection that is afforded by the leader being in place. The group's purpose of coming together becomes driven by the need for the group to be reassured that they will be 'looked after.' Even in the absence of the leadership figures in question groups have been known to fixate on what the leader would do or say if they were present. Basic assumption fight-flight refers to the propensity of a team to coalesce around the idea of a common enemy, for example another part of the organisation. The focus on this fight or flight creates a shared sense of togetherness whilst avoiding any of the difficult work associated in responding to practical changes presented in the environment. Basic assumption pairing is based upon a collective and unconscious belief that a particular pairing between either two members of the team or a team member and an outside entity are the solution to all of the team's problems. The team remains

focussed on the possibility of future events resolving its issues, via the pairing, which absolves them from taking action.

All of the basic assumption mentalities could lead groups or teams to become stuck in unproductive modes of activity. However, Bion recognised that, at times, the team members were able to overcome these unconscious drivers and focus on the tasks in hand, leading to action. This he called *work group mentality*.

During my work with fieldwork site one I participated in a number of sessions where I noticed we discussed a range of fundamental issues but then seemed to stall when action was called for. I reflected in my diary:

I am struck by the observation that whilst they can make insightful comments in assessing the state of things this does not mean they will choose to act. They remain passive observers. (Reflective diary, fieldwork site one)

I reflected later that I may have been observing group behaviour at play and that there was unconscious sense of safety afforded by inaction. Equally, in fieldwork site two, I also sensed avoidance tactics which I have later reflected may have been examples of basic assumption pairing where the solution to the problems were always elsewhere, associated with other people and their behaviours. I often asked myself;

Are they discussing content that is useful or are they avoiding the key issue? (Reflective diary, fieldwork site two)

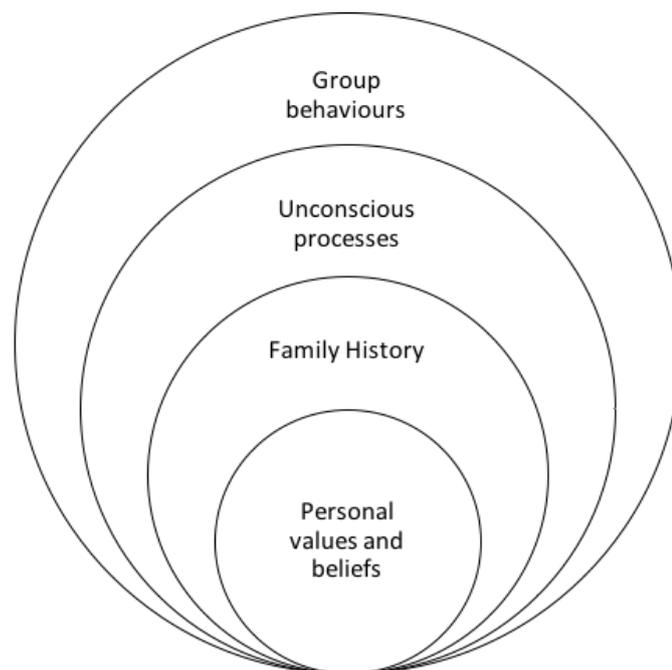
Revisiting the vignette at the top of the chapter, Diane receives polite contributions to her questions but the team do not display a sense of ownership for a shared task. It is unclear if their reticence is due to a shared resistance against her as an outsider, a lack of leadership from the manager or a lack of time spent clarifying shared goals. The team are engaged in operational business and action planning, perhaps masking their uncertainties about how to tackle deeper organisational issues. They appear to be somewhat stuck in a fight-flight mentality, with the organisation as the common

enemy. Have the team located their frustrations with Diane; is she a scapegoat? There appears to be a pairing between Veronica and Paul which resists other team member contributions but the nature of the relationship is not clear. As the coach I reflect on how this alliance contributes to team dynamics and whether to explore it in some way.

In the chapter so far I have built the components of the team as family metaphor drawing on psychodynamic theory from the work of Foulkes and Bion. I have depicted the components of the team as family metaphor in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Components of team as family metaphor from a psychodynamic perspective

Adapted from Foulkes and Anthony (1984), Stokes (1995), Thornton (2016)



The team dynamic is a complex combination of: The values and beliefs of the individuals (the foundational matrix); a shared history of the team (the dynamic matrix); the unconscious interactions between individuals, such as mirroring or resonance; and group level behaviours of dysfunction such as fight-flight. In the next section I move on to consider the relational aspects of teams

highlighted in team effectiveness research, namely trust, psychological safety and cohesion. I illustrate these issues in the vignette below.

4.3. Trust and psychological safety in team as family: Vignette three

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session three: July 2014

I have returned to Brampton. After a phone call with Richard I have confirmed he will be at the meeting. I was concerned that he seemed to be losing interest in the project and it was having an effect on the team. I don't want to become the pseudo leader. In a group supervision session my colleagues were asking me why I was not coaching the manager as well. They may have a point.

Me: *Good morning everyone. As Richard missed our session reviewing the team effectiveness questionnaire, could someone start us off by summarising the insights and where you think we got to in our discussions?*

Diane: *Well, we spoke about the need to develop more of a team identity with a clear purpose and a vision for what we are trying to achieve, I circulated some ideas... I'm not sure if people have had a chance to take a look?*

There is a shuffling of papers and I fail to get anyone to make eye contact.

Jess: *We talked about developing some processes and systems to work as a team. I think Fin has circulated something about that as well.*

Fin nods.

Jess: *Are we ok with the suggestions?*

They all nod. Richard refers to the relevant notes. There is a sluggishness in the room. I sense the team holding back, watching and waiting.

Me: *I sense a reluctance to talk about some of the issues and challenges we touched on last time. I think it would be helpful if you would outline some of the concerns?*

Veronica: *We talked about what it means to work together differently. We need to be able to trust each other if we are going to cooperate.*

Richard: *Do we not trust each other?*

Dan: *I'm not sure it's a matter of trust, just feeling sure of what's expected, in relation to our own KPIs and how we do things as a team.*

Diane: *Can I say that I think we could move forward if we agreed the vision and purpose for the team.*

Veronica: *I don't disagree, but I think, Richard, it's also about trusting the organisation. We have been through a lot of upheaval with the 'Transition Plan' and 'SOP.' I'm not sure how confident we feel that what we agree won't be overturned at the next Executive Away day. I don't mean to be negative but...*

Richard: *I know dealing with the organisational changes has been tough, but I think you all have far more influence than you think you have.*

Veronica nods but looks unconvinced. She turns back to her paperwork.

Clive: *I've heard Diane say we should look at team purpose and vision. I think that's probably where we need to start. If Richard is right, and we do have influence, then we still need a vision.*

I'm deliberating about what to say. We have touched on matters of trust and then seem to have stepped away from the conversation. I can see how working on Vision and Mission may move us towards the harder conversation. I still sense something is not being said. They are careful around Richard. I don't get the sense that Diane is entirely trusted and, by implication, perhaps they don't trust me either.

Me: *What do others think about working on the purpose and vision? Last time I remember Paul used the analogy of a football team which seemed to generate some ideas: The idea that you are playing for your clubs in the departments and the national team when you work together in this team. Can we think about what this team wants to achieve?*

Paul: *Yeah...something better than getting knocked out in the qualifying rounds!*

As usual Paul made them all smile and released the tension. There seemed to be an acceptance to work on the task so I pressed on.

Me: *It might be helpful if we work in small groups again. Let's take the work Diane has circulated and discuss in threes... then we can bring our ideas together...*

4.3.1. Trust and psychological safety in team as family: Team-based research

In the vignette above we are touching on aspects of trust and then withdrawing from the conversation. As the coach I'm trying to assess where the lack of trust lies. It seems as if the conversation is more stilted in Richard's presence. Trust has been conceptualised as a multifaceted entity comprising cognitive evaluations of the dependency, reliability and competence of others combined with emotional elements evoked by the care and concern shown by others over a period of time (McAllister, 1995). A recent meta-analysis relating to intra-team trust across 112 independent studies explored the impact of trust upon team performance (de Jong, Dirks and Gillespie, 2016). The findings

tentatively suggested that cognitive trust might be most significant when teams had highly interdependent tasks or comprised a high diversity of skills that were required to combine to achieve team goals. Whereas findings suggested that affective trust may have greater impact in teams who worked together over longer time periods where the cumulative effects of care and concern for each other created a willingness to collaborate.

In the vignette Veronica alludes to trust within the organisation based upon historical events. She appears unconvinced by Richard's assertion that the team managers have organisational autonomy, but does not challenge him. Perhaps she has perceived negative consequences as a result of sharing personal perspectives in the past. This would indicate that affective trust was missing if she does not feel there was sufficient concern for her emotional welfare. In addition, as the coach I am finding Richard hard to get to know and difficult to read and perhaps the team also have this experience. If the team members do not know Richard's motives or what he might do in a given situation, they do not know if they can trust him to support them if they speak out or take a risk.

Edmondson coined the phrase '*psychological safety*' to describe '*a team climate characterized by interpersonal trust and mutual respect in which people are comfortable being themselves*' (Edmondson, 1999: 354). This climate enables team members to feel safe to take personal risks such as admitting to mistakes, revealing gaps in knowledge or participating in task-related conflict with others. Participants in a psychologically safe environment have a shared understanding and perception of the level of safety within the group based on previous experiences and '*a sense of confidence that the team will not embarrass, reject or punish someone for speaking up*' (Edmondson, 1999: 354).

Trust and safety to speak up was a consistent feature of my fieldwork. Participants demonstrated uncertainties at times about how much to reveal and appeared to be aware that trust was a prerequisite for open, honest dialogue, as illustrated in the examples from my fieldwork below.

'I have a lot of questions. I don't know if it's helpful to share my uncertainties.' (Jorge's reflective diary, fieldwork site two)

'I liked the group members. I can have an honest conversation without being made to feel inferior.' (Mike's reflective diary, fieldwork site one)

'I noticed the team shift in confidence with each other, revealing things.' (Lola, professional coach dialogues, fieldwork site three)

Remaining vigilant to Hackman and Wageman's (2005) concerns that relational work can be unreliable in translating into performance outcomes, I returned to the team effectiveness literature to explore how affective states such as trust and safety may contribute to team performance. One area where trust and safety may be important is in contributing to team cohesion. Cohesion is the degree to which team members have a shared bond or attraction that compels them to stay (or metaphorically 'stick') together (Casey-Campbell and Martens, 2009). It is thought to be of particular value to teams that are required to work collaboratively together over time, as the cohesion will serve as a motivational factor to survive and work through difficulties and to collaborate more effectively together (Beal, Cohen, Burke and McLendon, 2003).

Whilst a number of attempts have been made to explore individual factors that constitute cohesion, I have taken the multi-level conception of cohesion that appears most comprehensive in that it incorporates elements such as; a shared commitment for the ideology, the tasks, and the relationships; a sense of belonging between people who make up the team; and a sense of pride in being part of the team (Salas, Grossman, Hughes and Coultas, 2015).

In my fieldwork with both operational teams I observed how speaking up and sharing previously undisclosed thoughts and feelings appeared to have a positive effect on the team members wanting to continue to work together. For example, participants observed the impact in their reflective diary entries.

'I appreciated everyone's honesty, openness to share, willingness to discuss and debate, listening to each other, acknowledging and accepting everyone's views, thoughts and the huge wealth of experience.' (Barbara's reflective diary, fieldwork site one)

'We seem to have a shared understanding of some of the issues we are facing... The space created to air our individual thoughts/concerns - for me that is quite powerful - to place trust in colleagues allowing this to happen.' (Martha's reflective diary, fieldwork site two)

It appears that by making those elements of an individual's values and beliefs more apparent, the team members could identify with each other and the work of the group. When participants felt their views would be respected, they developed the confidence to offer further ideas and tentative thoughts. As I analysed my fieldwork I noticed a number of examples where participants offer tentative thoughts that previously they may have held back for fear of ridicule or reprisals. These contributions included:

'This sounds silly but...'

'I'm just talking out loud now...'

'I don't know if it's relevant...'

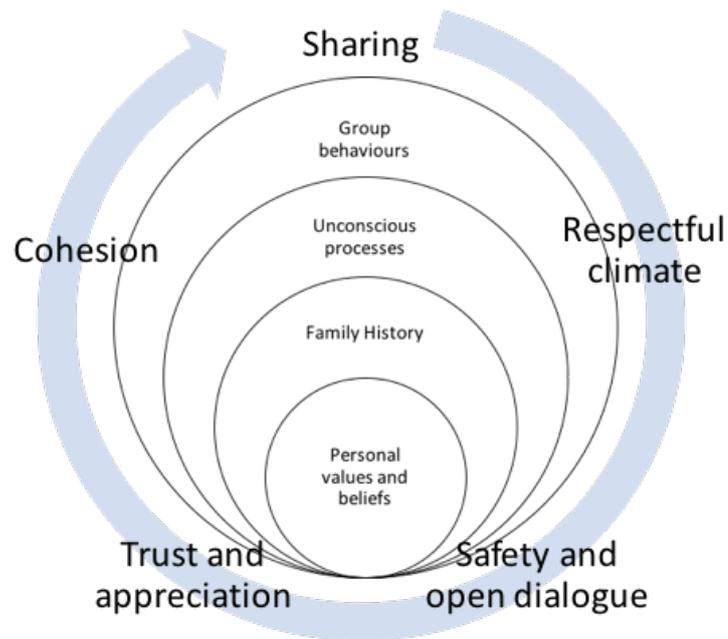
'I don't want to disagree but I feel it slightly differently.'

(1st level of analysis – what am I noticing? Fieldwork site one)

So far in this chapter I have explored the metaphor of team as family, focusing on psychodynamic theories of group behaviour to shed light on the inter-relational dynamics that appeared evident in my team coaching practice. I have also explored how theories pertaining to concepts of trust, psychological safety and cohesion may be developed in a positive relational climate opening the possibility for the strands of the family dynamic to be gently exposed and further trust and appreciation to develop. I have summarised the ideas in Figure 4.2., visualising the processes of sharing as unpeeling the layers from an onion; revealing information that can lead to deeper trust, appreciation and cohesion. In the section that follows I draw upon family therapy to explore techniques I might apply in a team coaching context to create a supportive climate that enables constructive dialogue and change.

Figure 4.2. Developing trust and cohesion in a positive relational climate

(Developed from Edmondson, 1999; McAllister, 1995; Salas, Grossman, Hughes and Coultas, 2015)



In the vignette below, I illustrate an example of sharing personal information in a respectful climate to begin to reveal information about team members that can foster trust and appreciation.

4.4. Coaching with the metaphor of team as family: Vignette four

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session four: September 2014

Diane has booked a meeting room in a local hotel and extended the session for half a day. There is nervous laughter, betraying a little anxiety at what we are about to do. I have asked the team members to prepare to talk from a personal perspective. How I came to be working at Brampton? What values and experiences I draw from when I manage a team? What does coaching mean to me and what will it mean for people in my department? What I hope for from this management team?

Me: *Is everyone ready? I smile at them reassuringly.*

Me: Today is a very important day in the development of this team. We have spoken many times about trust and about a shared vision. It's my observation that you would find it extremely useful if you knew more about where each of you is coming from - about each person's beliefs and values, and some of the underlying ideas you may have about management, coaching and people in general. I recognise that, for some people, this session will be a challenge, particularly if you are less comfortable with talking about yourself. But it is vital to building strong relationships of trust and respect between you. Today is a reflective day. To help that process I would like each of you to note down your thoughts as each person speaks, perhaps thinking about: What resonates for me? What do I appreciate about what the person has said? What more do I want to know? Each team member will take their turn. Then I will ask you to share one or two reflections.

Paul, always comfortable to express a view, volunteers to go first.

Paul: Ronnie knows this because she and I were at junior school together. But when I was 11 years old I failed my 11 plus. I was devastated. For a long time afterwards I was angry and stopped trying. I left school with hardly any qualifications. I started here at Brampton when I was 16 years old as an apprentice in the workshop and... My first boss was called Reg Pickles... He took me under his wing... (he catches his breath and swallows the lump that has appeared in his throat)... he saw the potential in me – sent me to night classes – I took an HND and I started working on site with the guys. I found I was good at it, getting the lads to do things. I liked the fact that you could see what needed to be done and just got stuff organised to do it. So, yeah... (he looks down at his notes). Yes, so when I became a manager, I suppose I wanted to be like Reg.

Everyone is sitting on the edge of their seats. Their faces rapt with attention. Paul is starting to look vulnerable, like he is fearing he has shared too much. I step in to reassure and encourage him.

Me: Thanks for sharing your story Paul, that's exactly the kind of insight I was looking for. Would you tell us a little bit about what you take from Reg's management approach?

Paul: Well, he believed in me. He gave me a chance to try things. He was direct though, he would just tell you straight if you went wrong. I liked that. No messing about. But I knew he cared. Now I try to emulate that. I get to know the lads; I keep an eye on them.

Me: Ok and thinking about this from a coaching perspective, and what it means?

Paul: *I see their strengths and weaknesses; I try to work with that – to give them opportunities, nudge them when I think they have more to give. Then there's Dave and Chris; hard as nails - get things done, firm and fair but perhaps lacking a bit of...subtlety.*

There is laughter in the room, and it breaks the tension. Wow! I'm thinking, that's a way to start!

Paul: *I admit I still have a bit of an inferiority complex about the 11 plus. I get defensive sometimes, I know that, but I would like to keep it real, a mix of experience as well as theory and training. It's about getting people to want to get the job done. I don't want to lose sight of that.*

Me: *Thank you, Paul, for kicking us off, I appreciate you for being so open. You gave us some food for thought. Who would like to share their reflections...*

Clive: *I just wanted to say thank you to Paul for sharing that. I realised that even when you work together for years you don't necessarily know people. I mean, understand how they really think.*

Me: *Yes, the understanding is helpful isn't it, who else has a reflection?*

Dan: *Well I was thinking about Paul talking about caring for the guys and seeing their potential. I have been thinking about coaching as skills to do the job.*

Me: *Good, that's helpful to start to unpick the distinctions in our thinking. Dan, do you want to tell us your story?*

I feel something shifting from the moment Paul starts speaking; a deeper understanding between them. The potential for trust.

To be continued...

In conversation with the professional coaches, we shared examples of the circumstances in which teams call on us for support. We agreed the most likely scenarios were: When they are at the start of something new; when they are stuck or in crisis; when they want to rise to the next level or simply when they want to make a change. All of the scenarios involve moving into the unknown or exploring issues that have caused difficulty in the past. Both contexts can cause anxiety for the participants, not least because it may

involve articulating difficult, hard to express or conflicting ideas. At these times, team members want to know that the coach will maintain a safe environment (Edmondson, 1999).

'I think what I do is create a climate.' (Felicity, professional coach dialogues, fieldwork site three)

'My purpose is to develop a deeper and higher quality level of trust.' (Tom, professional coach correspondence, fieldwork site three)

Therefore, the remainder of the chapter explores team coaching approaches that may enable a coach to build productive relationships, trust and safety, whilst supporting a process of change.

4.5. Coaching with the metaphor of team as family: A social constructionist approach.

Having observed the team as analogous to a family unit, I turned to family therapeutic approaches to find out what I could translate to the organisational setting. In the section that follows, I describe insights from a group of scholars who have named their approach 'constructive therapies' (Hoyt, 1998), drawing upon the notions of social constructionism which offers an alternative perspective to the psychodynamic theories which I find difficult to draw upon in-the-moment.

The framework is described as constructive in that the theoretical paradigm is drawing from social constructionism (Gergen, 1999) where the focus of the therapeutic stance is to co-construct meaning through the relationship between therapist and clients and to explore in a reflexive way the narratives that help shape a client's understanding of their world, in relationship with others. Secondly, the approach is described as constructive in practice in that it *'is optimistic, collaborative and competency based'* (Lowe, 2004: 10) emphasising the skills and capabilities of the clients to resolve their own problems. The constructive framework draws upon two therapeutic approaches that are commonly applied in dyadic coaching contexts: Solution-focused (SF) brief therapy (De Shazer, 1985) and narrative therapy (White

and Epston, 1990). I have found both the narrative and SF approaches to be typically well received by professional clients.

I was attracted to the constructive framework (Lowe, 2004) for a number of reasons. First, it resonates with positive psychology which celebrates strengths and promotes optimism (Seligman, 2002) and, second, it places emphasis on appreciating progress and building upon what is working as in appreciative inquiry methods (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987). Third, it does not rely on the coach to be the expert in analysing group dynamics, as participants make sense of their own experiences in relation to others through telling their stories. Fourth, the collaborative focus aligns with my humanistic ideas about the client's capacity for change. Fifth, the constructive framework is '*simple without being simplistic*' (Lowe, 2004: 28) which responds to my plea for approaches that are both simple enough to remember within the flow of practice and comprehensive enough to offer a range of options.

4.5.1. A social constructionist approach - creating a safe environment

In all coaching, I draw upon the fundamental functions of 'holding' and 'containment' (Barnes, Ernst and Hyde, 1999: 21) such that coachees feel their anxiety and emotion is somewhat contained in the safe space the coach creates. In dyadic coaching I create the helping relationship through the necessary conditions (Rogers, 1959) including unconditional positive regard, empathy, and an authentic relationship aimed at fostering the self-determination of the client. However, I was unclear as to how to create these connections and rapport with each member of a team. Lowe (2014: 32) provides a useful illustration of how to create these relationships in a process he terms 'hosting,' likening the process to a dinner party host greeting and looking after his or her guests.

I have taken three significant insights from Lowe's work regarding how a coach may view their role in creating the collaborative relationship with the team and creating the coaching environment: The relational stance; the reflective climate; and a context of competence. I will address each aspect in turn.

First, Lowe advocates creating a relational stance of *'appreciative ally'* (Lowe, 2014: 35) to inform how we think and act towards each team member. This stance reinforces the collaborative relationship of equals rather than a client-expert relationship. Initially I was concerned that supporting person A could negatively influence my relationship with persons B and C. However, I discovered the opposite was true. During an early meeting at fieldwork site one, I was concerned that one participant was very quiet in the session and I was unclear how she was feeling. In her reflective feedback she noted:

'There was a valuable and lengthy discussion before ground rules could be established. I thought that it showed great wisdom on the part of the facilitator that this was not stifled.' (Sheila's reflective diary, fieldwork site one)

In this example the participant draws conclusions about me on the basis of observing my behaviour rather than a direct interaction with her. I have come to appreciate that my aim is to demonstrate, over time, that I can support everyone in the team and, meanwhile, individuals come to anticipate my approach and whether they can trust me from observing my interactions with others. The appreciative ally is not a neutral stance as would be encouraged in some therapeutic approaches. I agree with Lowe (2014: 60) that *'it is preferable to take everyone's side than no one's side.'*

Second, Lowe (2014: 36) describes creating a reflective climate of *'tranquillity,'* which reduces defensive behaviours and opens up the possibility for listening, curiosity and playfulness which chime with the prerequisites for dialogue expressed by Senge (1990) and Sparrow and Heel (2006), in particular, the possibility for hearing something different, suspending judgement and contemplating new meanings (Potapchuck, 2004). This stance is in contrast to a reactive and defensive stance, which may be the experience on first encountering a troubled or challenged team.

Third, aligned with the SF attitude, Lowe (2014: 46) describes the creation of a *'context of competence,'* where one seeks to emphasise the resourcefulness of the clients which resonates with the work on relational trust; in building

appreciation for the contributions of others. Competence elicitation may be achieved in the process of informal 'getting to know you dialogue' such as extracting information from someone's story of their past history or personal interests, or through more formal means. Where possible, I now encourage teams to take at least one session to share personal and professional information with each other, presenting their experiences and expertise and how they see their contribution to the team. Often I encourage participants to use props and photographs to bring their personality and values alive, making them more apparent. What is compelling about the process is the reinforcing message of the positive contribution from each person, which contrasts with more negative stories that may have become dominant (Anderson and Levin, 1998). This approach is reminiscent of strengths-based coaching in dyadic contexts (Boniwell, Kauffman and Silberman, 2014).

Again, my appreciative behaviours towards individual team members were noticed and commented on by others in a positive way. For example, in session 4 n fieldwork site two, the team members were discussing their personal approaches to working with their students. I noticed in my reflective writing how the individuals all appeared to have very different ways of communicating:

'Sarah is making literal observations about her practice, Rose is drawing from a deeper well of theoretical knowledge and Jorge says little and implies a lot.' (my reflective writing from fieldwork site two)

I challenged Jorge to unpack what he was alluding to and asserted that he had touched on a number of valuable points. I immediately regretted the phrasing of the intervention, worrying that I was placing special value upon what Jorge had to say and feared it may alienate the others. However, in the feedback afterwards Rose noted that:

'We are getting closer to a more developmental type of dialogue, especially when (with Jo's encouragement) we did a bit more

digging in to each other's philosophies. I need to work at listening better to Jorge so I can understand his personal perspectives more clearly.' (Rose's reflective diary, fieldwork site two)

I speculated immediately afterwards that perhaps I could have achieved the same result by asking the team what sense they were making of what Jorge had to say. However, this is more in line with retaining a neutral stance. By overtly appreciating the competence in Jorge's statements I challenged Rose to reconsider how she listened to and appreciated his contributions, this appeared to have a positive effect.

Bringing the three elements together, Lowe demonstrates how, in a conversational style with each member of a family group, he begins to create the environment and relationships required for the more challenging work to come. Each aspect reinforces the other, therefore, for example, recognising that some team members may come to the coaching feeling vulnerable, disengaged or victimised, this process begins to establish that each team member will be treated in the same respectful, appreciative way in a climate of positive and thoughtful reflection.

4.5.2. A social constructionist approach - negotiating a process of inquiry

Having established the foundations of the coaching relationship the coaching work of moving towards a process of change and development may begin. I consider the contributions of the SF and narrative approaches inherent in this constructive process. Utilising a SF approach

places primary emphasis on assisting the client to define a desired future state and to construct a pathway in both thinking and action that assists the client in achieving that state. (Cavanagh and Grant, 2014: 51).

The approach is established for coaches working 1:1 with clients in a variety of contexts and is aligned to a constructionist approach given that client and

coach construct meanings through dialogue. Whilst team coaches in coaching literature have not explicitly articulated application of the SF approach it appears to have relevance in this context.

A narrative approach draws upon the idea that people make sense of their lives through telling stories (Polkinghorne, 2004). Narratives are often autobiographical, they are descriptive and reflective and may externalise inner feelings and interpretations that the person may have about their life events and how these shape their world view (Angus, Lewin, Bouffard and Rotondi-Trevisan, 2004). In dyadic coaching, this approach establishes a relationship with the 'whole person' before I move on to professional concerns. As in the hosting process described above, I find encouraging the telling of stories brings thoughts, feelings and interpretations into the open forum of the team, enabling team members to more fully understand and appreciate each other's views.

The initial step for all SF coaches is to create a goal for the coaching, usually articulated as a desired future state characterised by the use of the 'Miracle Question' (de Shazer, 1991) where the group are asked to imagine how things would be different if a miracle had occurred and they were already living in the desired future. In my functional team as machine paradigm I would couch these questions as goal-based questions. However, I observed that when teams saw goals as responses to problems they often became bogged down in describing the problems. Shifting the language to a future-focused world of possibilities gives rise to the potential for change (Anderson and Levin, 1998).

A practical challenge I faced was that each individual wants to 'have their say' – to express their unique relationship with the situation, leading to long, complex conversations. I found myself attempting to pull common themes and intersecting stories from the muddle. In creating my character maps as described in Chapter 2, I characterised my work within these conversations as *'weaving ideas,' 'creating a tapestry,' 'being a trapeze artist catching hold of ideas,' 'a scaffolder,' 'a diplomat,' 'a change agent,' 'a facilitator' and 'positive psychologist' or 'cheerleader.'*

As I searched for words to characterise the roles I was playing I felt, at times, as if I were grasping at meaning, trying to see through the messiness of practice to make sense of the activities at play. I found a significant degree of elucidation and alignment of my characterisations in the process interventions described by Lowe (2014: 75), as reproduced in Table 4.2. below.

Table 4.2 Process interventions to enable collaborative inquiry in groups
(Adapted from Lowe, 2014: 75)

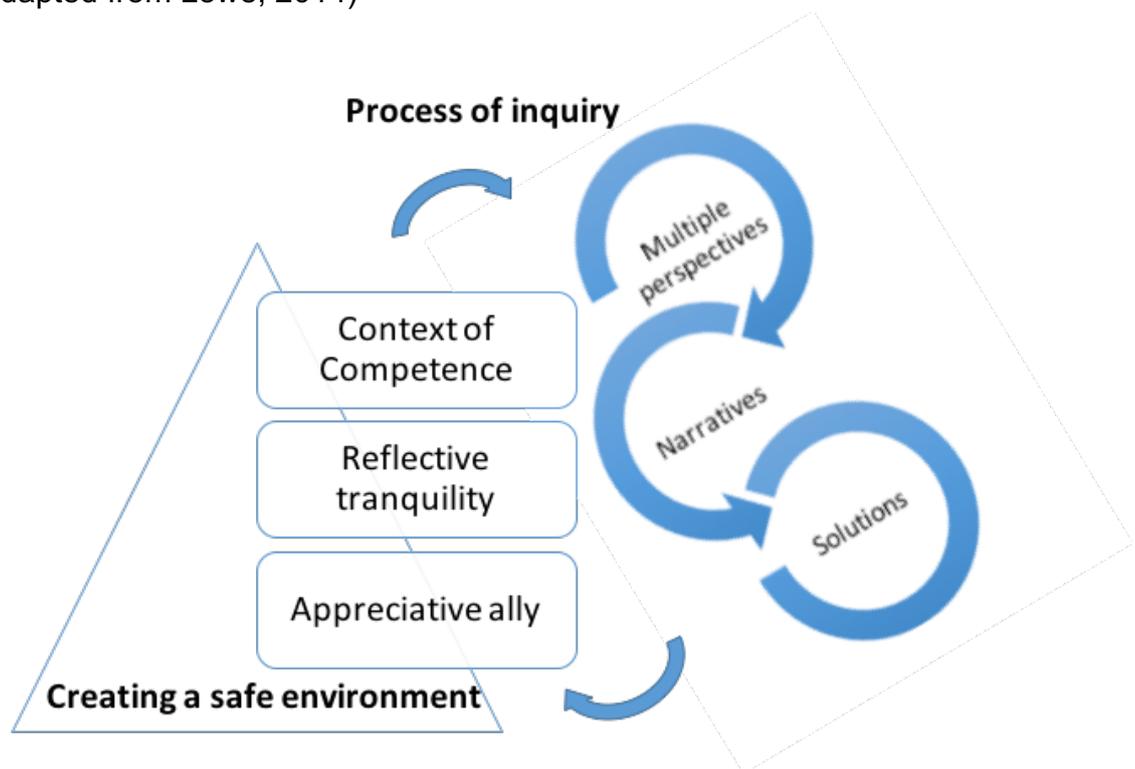
Process Intervention	Description of process intervention (In brackets I suggest where my characterised roles and interventions may be similar to those of Lowe)
Channelling	Diverting the focus and energy of the conversation from present or past experience to future hopes and goals. <i>(Positive psychologist)</i>
Filtering	Reflecting, translating or adding to client comments about other participants in ways to encourage more reflective postures among listeners. <i>(Diplomat)</i>
Specifying	Focussing the discussion of desired change to encourage 'well-formed' goals. <i>(Scaffolder)</i>
Theming	Widening the lens to explore the thematic significance of desired change. <i>(Change agent)</i>
Interrelating	Inviting clients to consider and express desired change in relational or interactional terms. <i>(Diplomat)</i>
Mutualising	Identifying commonalities or shared stories in people's experiences and hopes. <i>(Weaving ideas)</i>
Tracking and Linking	Monitoring and connecting each person's hopes and goals in an inclusive way. <i>(Trapeze artist or creating a tapestry)</i>
Prioritising	Clarifying which issues and requests need most immediate attention, and identifying a starting point for change. <i>(Facilitating)</i>

What seems apparent is that my instinctive practice included a number of the conversational strategies described above but I did not have the language or conceptual clarity to express them. The research process has enabled the 'noticing,' 'bracketing' and 'labelling' of experience (Wieck, Sutcliffe and

Obstfeld, 2005: 411), rendering it explicit and bringing it to conscious awareness. Adopting the conversational strategies enabled me to develop a process of inquiry that respected multiple perspectives through a narrative approach to develop solutions that all team members could relate to. The process of inquiry was only possible when I had created a safe environment through the hosting elements of adopting a relational stance of appreciative ally, encouraging a context of competence and role-modelling a climate of reflective tranquillity.

Combining the environmental elements with the process of inquiry, I begin to create a more robust conceptual framework of how I may operate in the flow of practice. I have created a graphical representation of the coaching approach based on Lowe, (2014) in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3 Coaching in a constructive framework
(Adapted from Lowe, 2014)



In the vignette that follows I illustrate the ideas of how narratives reveal personal perspectives and how creating a constructive coaching environment opens up the possibility for a solution-focused dialogue based on trust and respect.

4.6. Coaching in a constructive framework: Vignette five

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session four: September 2014. The session to share professional background, values and beliefs continues.

Diane: *Jo, I wanted to say, I am really appreciating the honesty from people. Can I go next?*

Me: *Yes of course, please do.*

Diane: *Well, as you all know I only came to Brampton in 2012 and it has been so busy that we have hardly got to know one another. I know some of you have worked together much longer. So I have brought a couple of photos.*

Diane shares a photograph of herself as a little girl.

Diane: *This is me when I was six on a seaside holiday with my parents and my little brother. We had been flying a kite and rock pooling. You can see me looking particularly pleased with myself that I was able to do these things all by myself. I can still remember being six and feeling like I knew everything there was to know about in my little world and that everything was perfect.*

Diane's next photograph is of her graduation. A serious-looking young woman stares out of the photograph.

Diane: *This is me at my graduation. You can obviously see that. What you can't see is the fact that only my brother and dad are there that day. And even though I had a First, I felt so sad that my mother was not there to see me collect it. My mother...well she died when I was fourteen... (Diane swallows hard and pauses, blinking back tears.) It was 20 years ago but it still upsets me when I think about it. My mother's death hit the whole family really hard.*

Diane takes a moment to compose herself. Shirley, who is sitting next to her, briefly places a comforting hand on her arm. The others wait quietly. I smile and nod at Diane reassuringly. I hold the emotional space and the team stay with me.

Diane: *Anyway, the point about the photos is that, looking back, I went from being a carefree little girl to... well, I threw myself in to my studies. After graduation I started my career in retail, then human resource management, again, a bit of a workaholic. Then five years ago I took time out to complete an MBA. I met so many fantastic people and as part of the course we were encouraged to work on what*

drives and inspires us. I ended up unravelling a bit. I realised I was working hard but had no purpose in life. I wasn't working towards anything that really mattered to me. It brought me back to my teenage years after my mum died. I realised how important the local youth group had been, and the teachers at school in keeping me focused on something, even whilst I was numb on the inside. It made me realise the importance of community services and how easy it is for events in people lives to derail them. I wanted to work in local government, in community services, to be involved in some small way in supporting others...

The room is silent, everyone focused on Diane. I glance at Veronica, she is listening intently, her eyes never leaving Diane's face as she speaks. I sense a connection.

Diane: So, I'm telling you all of this because I am coming to recognise, I'm still very much a work in progress. I am trying to work out who I am. I was reflecting on the past 18 months and I wonder if in some ways my determination to succeed in a new environment, that is so important to me, may have made me a little too driven, too quick to jump to actions, and not take the time to really get to know what would work for everyone. I think I would like the work of creating this new team to be an opportunity to rewind the clock and to approach some things differently.

We all take a collective breath. I look around the room for reactions.

Me: What do you appreciate about what Diane has just said?

Veronica: Can I say something?

I nod encouragingly

Veronica: Diane, I want to say how much of what you said resonated with me. My mum died when I was in my early 20s. I really know where you are coming from, throwing yourself into work. And I think we should apologise. You are right, some of us have known each other forever; I've known Paul since school, I'm married to his brother, I've worked with Clive and Dan for 10 years. We all know how each other tick. We didn't make much effort to bring in new people. You, Fin, Shirley, Jess all joined in the last two years. It must be harder for you.

Diane raises a weak smile of appreciation.

Shirley: I feel we have turned a corner today. I have worked in teams where I knew everyone in the past, but was I just accepting I was new so it would take time. But this process is really speeding things

up. I could have worked here another five years and not known what I have learned today. I think there are lots of other topics where we could share knowledge and experience about that would help us all to do our jobs better.

***Fin:** Yes, I agree, I'm learning a lot just listening to how you all think about your roles and what's important. It's making me realise it's not just about what you learn in books.*

***Me:** So, I don't want to interrupt our flow, but shall we note an action step to look at other aspects of knowledge and information we might want to share in future sessions and Veronica's suggestion about how we bring new people on board?*

To be continued...

4.7. Coaching with the metaphor of family for planning and supervision

In the vignette above, I demonstrate the power of creating space for sharing personal narrative within team coaching (Polkinghorne, 2004), and how a positive and appreciative climate encourages a different type of conversation. Sharing perspectives opens up the possibility for seeing different ways of being and relating as the team socially construct their understanding of their experiences (Gergen, 1999).

The metaphor of team as family provides multiple ways of reflecting on and planning team coaching assignments. In particular, the psychodynamic theories help to make sense of complex group dynamics to reflect on what might be happening between the team members or in the group behaviour. There is a potential conflict in considering both psychodynamic theories, which are associated with positivist thinking, and social constructionism within the metaphor of team as family. Dean (2002) argues for a contemporary view of psychodynamic theory that respects the interpretation of the client as part of the process and recognises the role of a developmental relationship between coach and client. Dean encourages practitioners who may align themselves with a postmodernist socially-constructed standpoint not to reject what psychodynamic theories have to offer and suggests we consider these concepts as one of a multitude of possible explanations of what might be going on in a case, particularly when engaging in reflection after the event.

Dean's perspective reinforced my natural inclination to incorporate the concepts of psychodynamic theory as part of my own reflective practice whilst operating with clients in the flow of practice from a social constructionist perspective. Placing the two theoretical frameworks in this relative hierarchy resolved my concerns that organisational coaches were obliged to develop a sophisticated degree of competence in psychodynamic theory. I would contend that they do not, but accept the ideas have much to contribute and are particularly helpful in reflection; enabling sense making and creating insights for planning future inquiry with the team.

Working with Lowe's (2004) constructive framework has re-energised my interest in SF coaching, building upon concepts of positive psychology (Seligman, 2002; Boniwell, Kauffman and Silberman, 2014) and appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987). As a natural problem solver, I recognised my previous practice was likely to promote gap analysis and problem solving approaches. As a result of my research I now take the time to think how I can approach a coaching session, such that I emphasise appreciation of competence, possibilities and progress.

4.8. Coaching with the metaphor of family for creating a team coach curriculum

I can see significant applicability in drawing upon the team as family metaphor within my teaching roles as this perspective introduces the developing coach to some important concepts relating to affective and motivational states, which contribute to team effectiveness, and suggests ways to develop them. In addition, the coach is introduced to psychodynamic theory in a group context providing a language to make sense of what may be going on within a team. The family metaphor introduces the dyadic coach to significant streams of knowledge and theory that help to make sense of coaching within a team context whilst building on likely sources of knowledge in SF and narrative approaches.

4.9. Coaching with the metaphor of family compared with other team interventions

Working with the metaphor of team as family has resonance with team process consultation described by Schein (1968, 1987, 1999) who articulates his work primarily as a helping relationship where the consultant supports the client in learning how to diagnose problems and design interventions whilst retaining ownership and responsibility. It is similar in that Schein also: Draws upon psychodynamic theory to make sense of individual behaviours and entrenched patterns of behaviours within group settings; and recognises the power of the benefits of working on processes exhibited in-the-moment, similar to family and group therapists. Schein also talks about creating the conditions for learning and helping clients to remain responsible and action oriented (Schein, 1999).

Whilst I relate to these principles, I rejected the language of process consultation which presents consultants as experts in organisational systems, observing task processes and diagnosing problems evoking a relationship of unequal power that is at odds with my coaching philosophy. For a long period of this research journey I have been curious as to why I failed to relate to Schein's work, despite its inherent strengths and similarities with techniques of team coaching along with an uneasy suspicion that my methods had much in common. Was it simply a reaction to the language?

Revisiting Schein's work through a postmodernist social constructionist lens, I recognise the premise contravenes my beliefs about coaching in two ways. Firstly, it assumes there is 'a problem' that can be identified and isolated and that this problem is at the centre of the intervention, and secondly, that the role of the consultant is to hone the client's skills in diagnosis and intervention. 'The central premise of PC (process consultation) is that *the client owns the problem and continues to own it* throughout the consultation process' (Schein, 1999: 29) (italics in original). Without stating it, to me Schein appears to be coming from an objectivist epistemology that implies the unique problem is there to be found and that the team will find it by adopting the consultant's analysis techniques.

Conversely, taking a constructionist approach offers the possibility for there to be multiple interpretations about what may be going on which are co-constructed through the process, in this case the coach's expertise is minimised and possibilities for interpretation enhanced. Additionally, the language shifts from the language of problems towards describing how the team may act and think differently to take a solution-focused approach towards change, opening up multiple possibilities for future action.

As I described in Chapter 3, empowering the team members remains central to my coaching philosophy and therefore any technical or theoretical input remains as one of many potential perspectives and explanations about what might be going on. Recognising this shift in thinking reiterates the point that whilst team coaching may share theories and techniques with other team-based interventions, it is the ongoing developmental alliance and the philosophy of an equal collaborative relationship that distinguishes our approaches.

4.10. Reflecting on the benefits and drawbacks of the team as family metaphor

Coaching from the metaphor of team as family enabled four coaching outcomes: Appreciating the significance of individuals; creating a safe environment for dialogue; creating the opportunity to untangle unhelpful group processes; and building relational strength via trust and cohesion between team members.

Appreciating the significance of individuals has been a useful and empowering insight as it enables me to connect my dyadic coaching skills to the team context. In practice, we are often engaged in a 1:1 exchange with participants in the service of the team objectives. Developing a more nuanced language of conversational and relational strategies has helped me to bring implicit knowing into conscious awareness to manage these exchanges more effectively. A significant insight was to recognise the importance of the group

matrix and how each individual may share their unique view of the world to connect with others and create a sense of shared identity.

Thinking about the team as a family rather than a machine reinforces the vulnerable human element of the team members and emphasises the need for creating a safe environment for dialogue. In my earlier practice I was familiar with what a quality dialogue might look like - suspending judgement and seeking others' perspectives, but this metaphorical lens reinforces what the dialogue might be about: To create a space where different information is shared, trust is built and unconscious biases and behaviours are brought out into awareness. I am also more aware of how role modelling the demonstration of mutual support and appreciation of contributions during dialogue can build trusting relationships. Ultimately the family metaphor reinforces the strength in having a team that can operate at a deeper level than a functional, behavioural approach would invoke, by developing deep appreciative and trusting relationships that are resilient and long lasting.

In Chapter 3 I introduced the team effectiveness survey to evaluate the team functioning. This chapter contributes indicators of effectiveness for the relational aspects of the team as family. The questions are based upon the concepts of trust, psychological safety and cohesion described above and recognise the need for open dialogue in a respectful climate. The questions for team as family are outlined in Table 4.3.

However, there are drawbacks to remaining locked within this metaphorical perspective. First, concentrating entirely on relational concerns may cause us to lose sight of the task and performance outcomes required of the team. It is also worth remembering that at times a behavioural and process-based approach can move the team onwards without resolving all relational issues first, for example, by agreeing on behavioural norms or establishing a decision-making protocol. Second, the metaphor of team as family tends to focus coaching conversations inwardly on the team itself and excludes the environmental factors. A team exists within a wider system and needs to be able to work effectively beyond its own boundaries. In the next chapter I

consider the environment in which this family is based, considering the team through the metaphor of a living system, learning to survive and adapt in a changing world.

Table 4.3 Key indicators of effectiveness: Team as family

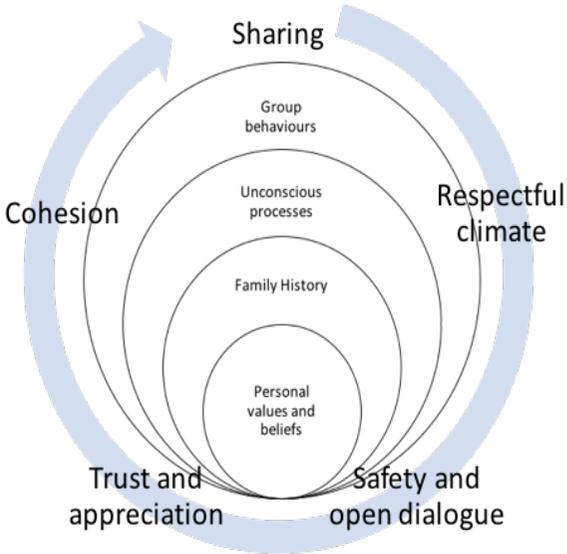
Adapted from Casey-Campbell and Martens (2009), Edmondson (1999), Salas, Grossman, Hughes and Coultas (2015)

Key indicators of effectiveness: Team as family	Score /10
We have a shared commitment to the purpose and values of this team.	
There is interpersonal trust and mutual respect between team members. We operate in a climate of openness and appreciation.	
We share individual member values and beliefs and appreciate how they connect with the team’s ideology.	
There is a sense of belonging and pride in being a member of this team.	
We address issues of conflict and disagreement constructively and with respect for different perspectives.	

4.11. Summary of the chapter

In this chapter I have explored the metaphor of team as family by considering the fieldwork and the underpinning theory that contributes to this perspective. I have considered how this metaphor allows us to notice what is going on from a psychodynamic and relational perspective and suggest coaching approaches and desired outcomes. The ideas are collated in Table 4.4. below.

Table 4.4 Summary of team as family metaphor

Metaphor	Coaching Focus	Coaching questions	Coaching approaches	Coaching outcomes
Team as Family		<p>What are the experiences, values and beliefs of team members?</p> <p>What is the shared team story?</p> <p>Is there trust between team members?</p> <p>Is there a climate of safety to speak up and be ourselves?</p> <p>Is there team cohesion?</p> <p>Do they want to remain a team?</p>	<p>Hosting team members as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciative ally Climate of competence Reflexive tranquillity <p>Coaching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple perspectives Narrative approach Solution focus Psychodynamic lens Social constructionism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciate individuals Create a safe environment Untangle unhelpful group processes Build relational strength

Chapter Five: Team as Living System Metaphor

5.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the metaphor of the team as a living system to provide a third perspective for making sense of what might be happening in a team coaching context. It brings to awareness the nested, dynamic nature of teams within a wider organisational structure and recognises that the coaching assignment may need to take account of issues beyond the team's boundary. Organisational teams exist to serve a wider organisational purpose and to deliver outcomes that may be expected from internal and external stakeholders. First, I develop the living system metaphor drawing upon my fieldwork and appropriate theory. Then I explore how using this metaphor can enable teams to work with their environment, drawing upon action learning coaching and solution-focussed coaching as well as applying ideas from team learning research. I consider how coaching from the perspective of the living system metaphor contributes to my practice in-the-moment, during preparation and supervision and when working with developing coaches. Finally, I consider how team coaching is distinctive from other team coaching interventions, and reflect upon the benefits and drawbacks of this approach, reflecting on my learning.

To set the scene for this chapter, the vignette that follows illustrates how Richard's role works on the boundary between the external stakeholders and his management team, creating ripples of uncertainty from the changing world directly back to the team and illustrating how teams have to work within a dynamic context.

5.1. Team as living system metaphor: Vignette one

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session four: September 2014 Continued from Chapter 5.

The session to share professional background, values and beliefs continues. It is two hours into the session before Richard offers to share his story.

Richard: *You may have gathered I am not particularly comfortable with talking about myself. But you have all been so open that I am going to give it my best shot. I came to Brampton six years ago working within Financial Systems. Before that I worked in Financial services for 15 years, again within management information and financial systems. Suffice to say I am very comfortable with data on a spreadsheet. I know this sounds really lame but I can get quite excited about giving management the information they need to make important strategic decisions. And I suspect*

it was that ability to combine information with strategic thinking that enabled me to progress to a senior role. However, as I'm sure all of you know, I'm not the world's best people person. My wife tells me I have to think my way to feelings.

There is a ripple of laughter.

Richard: *I really wanted to work here at Brampton, my family has lived here since my grandad moved here over 100 years ago. The place matters to me and I want us to be a successful local authority and a successful thriving community where people want to live and work – well you all know we have some challenges there.*

I feel the connection in the room, the energy, the deepening understanding. I'm beginning to make sense of the unpredictable behaviour.

Me: *Richard; this is really helpful. Tell us how this background translates to your understanding of management and our organisational culture work.*

Richard: *The way I see it, my role is to be externally facing. I am attempting to help move the council to a place of resilience and strength and that has meant some significant cuts in people and services and significant reconfiguring of how we go about our work. That change is difficult; I know that much.*

There are nods of acceptance.

Richard: *But I see a very capable group here. You manage the operation and the staff far better than I can. I cannot claim to have a great understanding of coaching and what we need to do. But I have seen enough and learned from people around this table to know that getting the best from people and showing we care about them is a good thing... his voice trails off.*

Me: *What do you want for this management team?*

Richard: *I want you to know that you have my respect and appreciation even if I don't remember to say it very often. I want you to develop a sense of autonomy, this is your division, your organisation. I want to know that we can have honest conversations about the challenges because I **will** bring you challenges. We are working in a very tough climate and I don't see that changing...*

5.2. Developing the living system metaphor: General systems theory

In this section I shall develop the team as living system metaphor, drawing upon General System Theory (GST), team coaching literature, team effectiveness literature and my own fieldwork. GST promotes the idea of social systems as dynamic, inter-related wholes with permeable boundaries just like a living organism (Bertalanffy, 1972). The metaphor appeals to me as it resonates with my background in science, particularly the study of biology where I already have a conceptual understanding of the terms used. The systems perspective focus is on the external contextual circumstances of the team rather than internal functioning or interpersonal relations. In my fieldwork with the professional coaches the dialogue often alluded to this systemic context:

‘Sometimes you have to be aware that the team is having a problem, but the team is not the problem.’ (Beverley, coach dialogues, fieldwork site three)

We all understood Beverley’s statement to mean that events happening outside the control or membership of the team in the wider system may affect what they can achieve together and it is a coach’s role to help her clients navigate systemic challenges (Hauser, 2014). We do not observe a physical boundary but we recognise the exchange of information or ideas permeating across the invisible boundaries of a team just as water and nutrients may pass across a cell wall in a living plant or animal. The core concepts of GST are described in Table 5.1. along with examples of the theory applied to team coaching contexts.

5.2.1. Developing the living system metaphor: Coaching research linked to general system theory

Thornton (2016) draws on a number of elements of GST in describing the team coaching context. First, she depicts the client team within a series of concentric rings, reminiscent of planets circling a solar system with the team at the centre and surrounded by levels of complexity; the department, the division, the organisation, the market, customers and so on. This view of the team reminds us of other teams and structural entities within the team’s environment referred to as *open system*, *subsystems* and *hierarchies* in Table 5.1. Often the team is required to build a relationship with these entities based on negotiating exchange of information, services

or resources and is monitored via some kind of feedback process that tells the team how well it is meeting stakeholder needs, and how well the team's needs are being met. This relates to the concepts of *input-transformation-output*, *boundaries*, and *feedback loops* referred to in Table 5.1.

Thornton (2016: 94) also views the systems perspective via the analogy of a 'map,' with various subcomponents of the system depicted as zones. The analogy allows us to draw real and imagined boundaries around sections of the map to indicate alliances, or shared concerns, or simply to illustrate who is involved in the scope of work underway within a coaching assignment. This image of the team context was regularly reflected in the professional coach dialogues in fieldwork site three indicating that negotiating the boundaries of the coaching contract or recognising issues beyond the boundary of the team were of significant and regular concern to the team coaches. The concepts of *boundaries* and *multiple goal seeking* are described in Table 5.1.

'There is an issue of the boundary – where the contract lies – particularly when issues in the team are affected by outside factors.'
(Tina, coach dialogues, fieldwork site three)

Within the zonal map, Thornton (2016: 94) depicts the environment in which the zones are set as a site for 'ecological issues' indicating that the culture or climate in which a team resides is also an aspect of consideration.

'The individuals bring strands of organisational culture into the room.'
(Dev, coach dialogues, fieldwork site three)

Table 5.1 Key concepts of General Systems Theory developed from Kast and Rosenzweig (1972: 450)

Concept	Description	Examples in team coaching contexts
Subsystems or components	A system is composed of interrelated parts.	Team members collaborate to achieve results and connect with other parts of the organisation.
Holism	The system is in itself an entity, not just the sum of its parts.	The organisation can be observed as an entire entity. A system.
Open systems view	Open systems exchange information, energy or material with their environment.	Teams are embedded in larger social systems (Cohen and Bailey, 1997: 241).
Input-transformation-output model	The open system exists in a dynamic relationship with its environment. It receives various inputs, transforms them in some way and exports outputs.	As described in Chapter 4, teams are described as operating an input-process-output model (Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp and Gilson, 2008: 413).
Boundaries	Open systems are said to have permeable boundaries in that information or materials can cross these boundaries.	The team interacts with other teams and external stakeholders to receive or provide information or resources.
Dynamic equilibrium and feedback loops	As there is a flow of materials across the boundaries of the open system, the system relies on feedback loops to measure outputs and monitor inputs. For example, in the simple case of a warehouse, a stock monitoring system provides a feedback loop.	A team monitors how well it is doing by measuring performance outcomes and monitoring progress towards goals. Hawkins (2011) emphasises engagement with the wider system in his systemic coaching model.
Hierarchy	System thinking assumes levels of hierarchy within a system.	A team is made up of individuals and exists in an organisation that exists within an industry, that resides in a country, that adheres to a regulatory framework etc. (Hawkins, 2011; Thornton, 2016).
Multiple goal seeking	Living systems have multiple goals: typically to survive and to propagate the species. In organisational systems, multiple goals are generated in a similar way, often creating tensions such as between maintaining status quo and growth.	A coaching assignment may involve helping the team to negotiate between seemingly conflicting goals such as cost and quality, innovation and mitigating risks (Thornton, 2016).
Equifinality	This concept suggests that living and social systems can achieve the same goals via different routes depending on their inputs and internal processing, which implies flexibility and adaptability.	A coaching assignment is likely to involve helping the team generate multiple solutions to navigate organisational challenges or find new ways to accomplish outcomes.

This view of teams as systemic is reinforced by Hawkins (2011: 12) who highlights the 'interconnected' nature of people in an organisational system and the requirement to *negotiate* the team's role within its community. This idea relates to the concepts of *holism*, *open system view* and *subsystems* described in Table 5.1. The idea of negotiation resonated with concepts of interpretation suggested by the professional coaches who talked about the team making sense of how they could add value, given the context.

'Teams have to interpret what they are there to do.'
(Hilary, coach dialogues, fieldwork site three)

In addition to GST, Thornton draws upon ideas of complexity and chaos to explain how teams within organisations are also part of wider change, rather like the processes of the evaporation of water from the oceans and of the subsequent condensation that result in clouds and rainfall within a weather system that flows and changes over time in continuous dynamic movement. Small changes in temperature and pressure in one region can result in fluctuations in the weather system as it builds and travels across the globe. This analogy comes alive when the unexpected happens in an organisation; a change of direction, an unexpected sell-off or closure or when a new initiative induces a chain of unanticipated consequences. At times, the team may feel part of a global environment over which they have little control such as global changes to financial markets.

Thornton's solar system, map and weather system analogies resonated with my notion of the living system metaphor, however it did not represent a complete portrayal of the elements within this metaphor based on my fieldwork experience. I also visualise the team as part of a wider ecosystem recognising the need for the team to adapt to its surroundings, to learn how to survive and to evolve over time. Finally, developing my team as family metaphor, I depict the team as a household within a community, with family concerns of daily life, a sense of itself in relation to others, and with an identity, reputation and a role in the wider community. In Table 5.2. I have collated my ideas with Thornton's to create a conceptual picture of my living system metaphor and its relevance to team coaching.

I use the generic name of *living system* to condense the ideas relating to the team's environment into five key insights about the system metaphor: A team is in relationship with key stakeholders; the team recognises and works across boundaries; the team learns to grow and adapt to changing circumstances over time; the team's reputation and identity within a community leads to an ability to influence their environment; and the team recognises the complexity of a dynamic ever-changing world.

Table 5.2. Conceptual themes within the metaphor of team as living system

(Developed from Kast and Rosenzweig, 1972 and Thornton, 2016)

System metaphors	Key insights relevant to a team's system
The team is a planet in a solar system	<u>Relationships</u> between the entities and the team are affected by power and distance. Team negotiates expectations with other bodies (stakeholders).
The team is a section of a zonal map	The position of the team is sited relative to other teams. Team's work relates to wider organisational role. <u>Boundaries</u> can be drawn to describe scope of work, size of team. Team works across boundaries.
The team is a living creature within an ecosystem	The team's health and <u>survival</u> require it to <u>adapt</u> through continuous learning through feedback and experimentation within the environment.
The team is a family household with a community	The team's role and influence in their community is affected by their own sense of <u>purpose</u> and <u>identity</u> , their <u>reputation</u> , engagement and <u>influence</u> within the community.
The team is a rain drop within a weather system	The team is part of a <u>complex, dynamic</u> system that at times can feel unpredictable, paradoxical and chaotic.

5.2.2. Developing the living system metaphor: Integrating team cognitive, affective and motivational factors from team effectiveness research

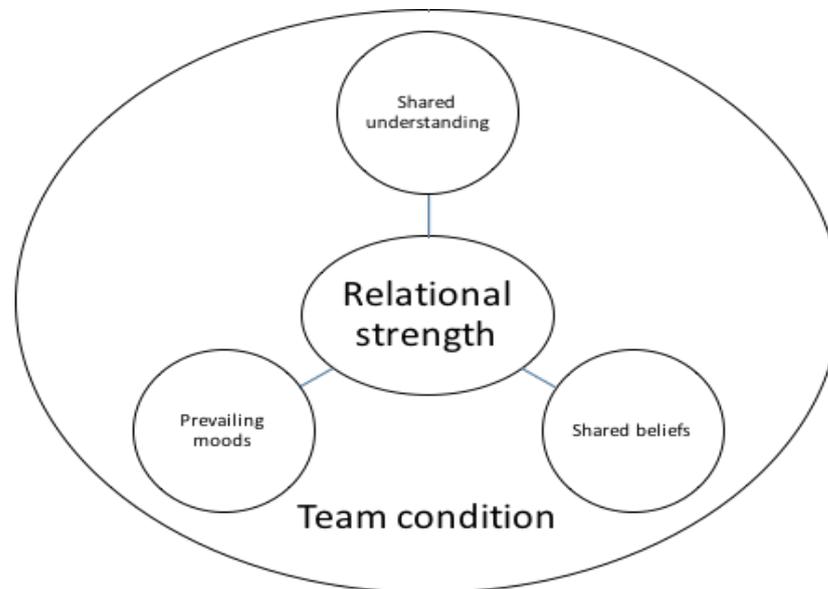
In addition to the environmental perspectives, I consider how these external elements affect the *condition* of the team itself. The team exists in a place in time within the system, with a history and an anticipated future, and the external

environment permeates the team, imbuing the team members with thoughts, feelings and beliefs about this context. I am using the word 'condition' in preference to using the word 'climate' as team climate has come to be associated with a specific meaning within team effectiveness literature and refers to *'the norms, attitudes and expectations that individuals perceive to operate in a specific social context'* (Pirola-Merlo, Hartel, Mann and Hirst, 2002: 564). Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006) describe team climate as a cognitive feature that enables team members to describe and interpret the important strategic imperatives operating within their team and environment. I shall return to team climate shortly. Condition is more than climate. Following Flaherty (2005: 27), who considers the importance of a coachee's 'mood' in assessing their openness to coaching, I am using the word 'condition' to be a sense of the mood or health of the team given their understanding of the climate, their sense of self in time and place, and their beliefs about their capacity to engage with this complex wider world.

In Chapter 4 I discussed the relational strengths of a team, exploring trust, psychological safety and cohesion. Creating strong relationships enabled open dialogue and sharing of perspectives which created the possibility for a team to work towards positive change. My conceptualisation of team condition builds upon these fundamental relational factors to include the team's understanding of, and attitudes towards, its context and hence its capacity to adapt and thrive. The concepts that constitute my conceptualisation of team condition are based on the work of Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006) who summarise the cognitive, motivational and affective concepts that are thought to mediate team performance, based on a substantial review of empirical literature. I have called cognitive concepts *shared understanding*, motivational concepts *shared beliefs* and affective concepts the *prevailing moods*. The concepts of team condition are summarised in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1. Conceptualisation of team condition

(Adapted from Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006)



Shared understanding is a cognitive concept where I have combined the concepts of team climate as described earlier with the concept of team mental models defined as *'the shared organized understanding and mental representations of knowledge or beliefs'* (Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006: 90). In other words, shared understanding is the collective knowledge that the team holds about their context, their mission, vision and goals, knowledge about how they collaborate together and the technical and practical know-how to achieve tasks. Shared beliefs incorporate the motivational factors of team potency and team efficacy. Team potency refers to a team's *'general sense of its capabilities'* in a range of situations (Mathieu et al., 2008: 426) whereas efficacy is described as *'a shared belief in a group's collective capability to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given levels of goal attainment'* (Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006: 90). Shared beliefs concern the team's likelihood to continue to work towards their goals because, as with self-efficacy, it is thought that individuals continue to sustain effort for longer if they believe they can succeed. Finally, mood is an affective concept including the feelings and emotions displayed by team members which are often *'dispersed'* throughout the team (Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006: 92) as emotions and moods pass between individuals from inside or outside of the team. The prevailing mood can change depending upon contextual

factors and events, an infectious mood of an individual, or perhaps by an influential person in the team such as the team leader consciously attempting to evoke a different mood. The team condition as a whole may also change over time depending upon external factors and the team's understanding and beliefs about its ability to respond effectively to changes in its environment.

In the vignette that follows, I continue the story of coaching at Brampton Local Authority to illustrate an example of the dynamic changing environment typical in my experience of working with organisational teams.

5.2.3. Developing the living system metaphor: Vignette two

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

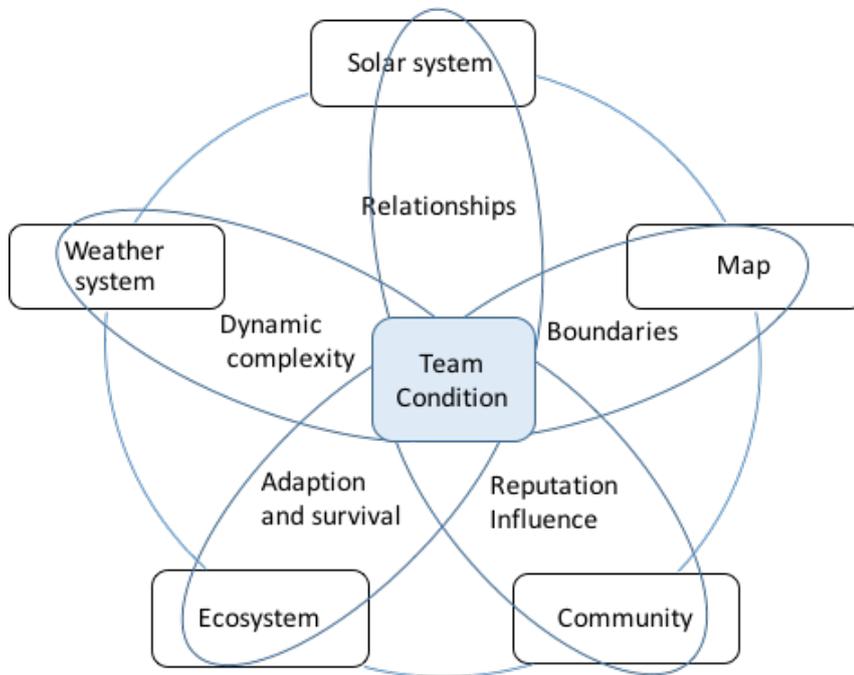
Late September 2014: telephone call with Richard Wainwright

Richard: Hi Jo, thanks for making time for the call. I wanted to bring you up to speed. I need to let you know that we have made further redundancy notices. We are going through a consultation at the moment about how this will progress but I expect another 70 people to go in the next six months. Hopefully mostly voluntary but then there is a lot of internal reorganisation to get through. It's going to be a turbulent time. Diane and I are still wanting to use the coaching initiative to help us get through this. I wonder if you can help us. Could the next team meeting help us to refocus and clarify a clear strategic mission?

Placing team condition at the heart of the system and surrounding it by the contributing environmental factors, I have created a depiction of the metaphor of team as living system in Figure 5.2. The system elements can all be considered as dynamic; changing through time. In the remainder of the chapter I develop these themes in turn to explore how a team coach may observe a team or plan coaching interventions that are informed by the team as living system metaphor. I start by considering the commencement of a coaching assignment and how I might learn about the condition of the team itself then progress to external relationships, boundaries and reputation, leading to strategic considerations of the team's clarity about mission and vision. Then I move on to consider the team's capacity for adaption and change, particularly in a complex and changing environment. This leads to a discussion about team learning and developing the team's capacity for growth and innovation.

Figure 5.2. The metaphor of team as living system

(Adapted from Thornton, 2016; Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006)



5.3. Coaching with the metaphor of team as living system: Supporting positive team condition

On first entering a team assignment the coach is interested in observing clues about the team's condition, that is, the sense they are making of their own context and their role and identity within it. I am interested in what is going on for them right now; their attitudes and beliefs, what has preceded this moment and perhaps precipitated the coaching brief, and what they expect to happen next. As I discussed in Chapter 1, Hackman and Wageman (2005: 275) recognise that a team's '*readiness for coaching*' is dependent upon their perceptions of their priorities at a given point in any cycle of activities. In particular with fieldwork site two, the operational issues remained paramount throughout the coaching and prevented the team from fully engaging in a more reflective process for much of the time. Both Hawkins (2011) and Thornton (2016) describe some kind of individual fact finding process with each team member at the beginning of their coaching assignments to discover what is going on for the team and what events may have initiated the request for coaching.

At the start of my coaching journey I had resisted this type of discovery process as it evoked ideas of investigation and diagnosis resonant of Schein's (1999) process consultation and I rejected assessing the team from an expert's perspective: An assessment could create the expectation of a diagnosis. I was concerned not to intervene unnecessarily, with a view to respecting the teams' capabilities to help themselves. However, having experienced the events with fieldwork site one where the team members were in disagreement about the set-up and assumptions for the team created by management, I wonder if I could have resolved these issues sooner had I met team members individually at the start. As a result of this learning I have now adopted some of Hawkins' (2011) exploratory questions into my preparation work with teams and suggest it to clients as part of an informal induction and relationship building phase with all team members. For example:

Why do you want help with team development now? Tell me some of the history that has led up to it? (Example exploratory question, Hawkins, 2011: 68)

Working with my concept of team condition comprising shared understanding, shared beliefs and prevailing moods, I observed these facets in the team recordings through the language and behaviours of team members and noticed how I responded. I was struck by my instinctive reaction to move the team members towards greater shared understanding, positive moods and constructive beliefs about their collective efficacy with the aim of building collective and sustainable capability (Clutterbuck, 2014), whilst maintaining a collaborative developmental alliance within the coaching relationship.

In Kozlowski and Ilgen's (2006) review of attributes that may influence team condition there was lack of clarity from empirical research about how to influence and support these attributes within the team. Researchers suggest team leaders could play a role and that face-to-face interaction between team members was important but the details about how these activities supported the attributes was not specified. My fieldwork notes and analysis revealed I had approached developing these attributes in a number of ways such as: encouraging

participants to reveal thinking and assumptions; challenging unhelpful perspectives; highlighting examples of competence; and role modelling an optimistic outlook. Such coaching techniques are common in my dyadic coaching practice and would be described as narrative (Drake, 2014), cognitive (Palmer and Szymanska, 2007) or SF (Cavanagh and Grant, 2014) approaches. A full list of examples of coaching approaches from my analysis is included in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3. Summary of coach behaviours in support of a positive team condition

<p>Team condition (developed from Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006)</p>	<p>Examples of my coach actions from fieldwork sites one and two with examples from field notes, participant diaries and my analysis and comments from professional coaches (fieldwork site three)</p>
<p>Shared understanding: Shared mental models, shared understanding of climate</p>	<p>Encouraging participants to make their perspectives more transparent so others could appreciate the thinking and beliefs. Summarising common themes.</p> <p><i>‘We had a great discussion about naming concepts and how something that is implicit can be examined and explored and developed once we name it, articulate it and share it with others.’</i> (1st level of analysis – what am I noticing, fieldwork site one)</p> <p><i>‘I think what struck me was that we had similar understanding but used different language to convey the message.’</i> (Gavin, reflective diaries, fieldwork site two)</p>
<p>Shared beliefs: Team efficacy and team potency</p>	<p>Reinforce any perceptions of efficacy and express confidence in coachee capabilities. Highlight examples of capability and impact from their stories. Observe unrecognised strengths.</p> <p><i>‘I expressed the view that they had created a powerful list.’</i> (Reflective diary, fieldwork site one)</p> <p><i>‘I encouraged them to start small and work out from there. They agreed to build on initiatives already underway.’</i> (1st level of analysis – what am I noticing, fieldwork site one)</p> <p><i>‘Finally there is a moment of insight. I reiterate the connections I have heard them talk about.’</i> (Reflective diary, fieldwork site two)</p>
<p>Prevailing moods: Positive or negative feelings, moods, emotions. May involve team conflict</p>	<p>Reframing contextual influences to illuminate possibilities for action or highlighting strengths in the coachee. Role modelling a positive and optimistic outlook. Acknowledging the conflicting perspectives and their contribution.</p> <p><i>‘I tried to summarise the two perspectives and acknowledged that both could be valid and were legitimate points of view worthy of discussion.’</i> (Reflective diary, fieldwork site one)</p> <p><i>‘There was a growing sense, as they built on each other’s ideas, that something good could come from the process.’</i> (Reflective diary, fieldwork site one)</p> <p><i>‘Despite my frustrations in the session I remain positive... Great! I said, it sounds like we have some instinctive knowledge. But I wanted to challenge them, as, at this point, in my biased view, they knew nothing.’</i> (Creative writing to make sense of experience, field work site two)</p>

5.3.1. Coaching with the metaphor of team as living system: Relationships, boundaries and reputation

As I described in Chapter 1, through a retrospective analysis of my team coaching practice, I described the purpose of my coaching as a systemic intervention aligned to organisational functioning (Hamlin, Ellinger and Beattie, 2009). This translates into taking a strategic view of the organisation and the team's relationship with other organisational teams as well as external stakeholders. Hawkins (2011) takes a particular interest in leadership teams and their strategic role and so emphasises the strategic negotiation with stakeholders within his systemic team coaching model (2011: 85). Clarifying a team's purpose and agreeing performance outcomes with key stakeholders is perhaps one of the least contested purposes of team coaching along with clarifying goals and roles (Carr and Peters, 2013; Clutterbuck, 2014; Hackman and Wageman, 2005; Hawkins, 2011; Thornton, 2016).

In my fieldwork in sites one and two I noticed my interventions included clarifying the teams' understandings of their environment, particularly in relation to stakeholder expectations and to perceived constraints and barriers. This process of building a shared understanding and awareness of systemic issues was followed by a dialogue about where the team were prepared to take action. This type of coaching emulates the goal-focused approaches such as GROUP of Brown and Grant (2010), as described in Chapter 4: Team as Machine Metaphor. However, in this case the emphasis is on awareness of environment beyond the team's boundary. I incorporated solution-focused techniques of appreciating progress, recognising strengths and taking small steps along a path towards a desired future (Cavanagh and Grant, 2014).

In addition to establishing the team's understanding of the expectations coming from external environment, coaches have a role to play in encouraging the team to gain feedback on their performance and perceived reputation. Bringing this information back into the team serves as stimulus for continuous improvement and lets the team know if their own aspirations are reflected in how others see them (Hawkins, 2011). I will return to the requirement for external inquiry in the next section on team learning.

There are numerous exercises and techniques that can be brought into play to support a team in developing mission, vision and values (Hawkins, 2011; Carr and Peters, 2013). My practice involves the use of visual methods, such as Visual Explorer (ccl.org), often encouraging participants to present images or create posters and use metaphors to communicate ideas and develop collective understanding. Hawkins (2011: 201) describes a process he calls 'picture sculpt' which is a similar approach. Whilst these techniques were part of my practice before the start of the research, I am now much clearer that introducing any kind of facilitated process such as this would be part of a longer-term developmental process, would arise when the team recognised the need and would take place once we had established an appropriate team condition of trust. In the vignette that follows I demonstrate how I may use images to work with a team to map out the external terrain and negotiate their role within it.

5.3.2. Coaching with the metaphor of team as living system: Vignette three

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session five: October 2014

I arrive early for the session. I have asked to work in the big conference room so we can spread out. Fin meets me at reception and helps me prepare the room. We lay out 200 A4-sized images on tables around the room, and on the shelves and the window ledges. In fact, on every flat surface, even the floor. It's like an art installation. On three sides of the room I place three flip chart sheets on the wall.

Richard arrives early too.

Richard: *Hmm, this looks interesting, are you all set Jo?*

Me: *Yes, I think so thanks. What's the mood like, are they going to be up for this today?*

Richard: *I hope so. They are a resilient bunch and I think we have called it correctly to focus on looking forward.*

The team members arrive in twos and threes, and are naturally drawn to exploring the images. I have prepared a process to scaffold the session, with a view to enable constructive dialogue, to make sense of the context and to navigate a way forwards.

Me: *Welcome everyone. How are you feeling?*

We do a quick round of comments to check on everyone. They are bruised from the previous weeks but have come prepared to be positive and support each other. The team spirit we developed in that last session seems intact.

Me: *So to the process for today. You are going to work alone to begin with and then in threes. I want you to select three images - one that says something about how you see your world right now. Paint a picture of the environment with all of its challenges, opportunities, constraints and risks. Next I want you to select pictures that describe what you want this organisation to look like, let's say in two years' time. Now the third picture, think about your team purpose and aims to create a coaching culture. What should this team focus on to move from where we are now – to where you want to be? What's important for this team to create?*

The teams work together in threes, the energy levels are high, there is passion and laughter and dialogue as perspectives are shared. Each team makes three picture boards on the flipcharts. Then each trio tells their stories.

I ask the whole team to suggest themes. We move the images into clusters, we add key words, we begin to create a way forwards. It is not the whole picture but it's the start, it's a journey.

5.3.3. Coaching with the metaphor of team as living system: Team learning

Implicit in my conceptualisation of the living system metaphor is the team's ability to learn, adapt and change. Team learning is distinct from individual learning in that it implies some degree of collective or shared understanding that leads to improved team functioning (DeChurch and Mesmer-Magnus, 2010). Learning is described both as a set of processes and as an outcome by different researchers. For example, Edmondson describes:

An ongoing process of reflection and action characterized by asking questions, seeking feedback, experimenting, reflecting on results, and discussing errors or unexpected outcomes of actions (Edmondson, 1999: 353)

leading to an outcome, such as *'a change in the group's repertoire of potential behaviour'* (Wilson, Goodman and Cronin, 2007: 1043). Ideally, the changes in team behaviours and capacity are aimed at the team's *'shared vision'* (Sparrow and Heel, 2007: 153).

Team coaching scholars (Clutterbuck, 2014; Hackman and Wageman, 2005; Hawkins, 2011) also represent learning in terms of both process and outcomes but differ in how they express the objectives of the learning. Hackman and Wageman (2005: 273) focus learning on developing *'knowledge and skills'* to address a *'team's task performance'* which I would compare to a training intervention, whereas Clutterbuck (2014: 271) describes team coaching as a *'learning intervention to increase collective capability and performance'* which he aligns with the philosophies of developmental coaching, implying not only learning to deal with immediate concerns but also incorporating a sense of growth through *'changes in attitudes, values and understanding'* (Cox and Jackson, 2014: 216). This second developmental depiction of learning aligns with coaching from the metaphorical perspective of living system, given the need to adapt to changing environments over time (Rosen et al., 2011). Coaching is fundamentally about sustainable change (Bachkirova, Cox and Clutterbuck, 2014).

Much team learning research presents a functionalist perspective where learning is seen as the outcome of fundamental processes such as sharing, storage and retrieval of knowledge, routines or behaviour (Wilson, Goodman and Cronin, 2007; Van Woerkom and Croon, 2009). Others recognise that learning processes are unlikely to take place without enabling factors of the team condition such as trusting relationships and positive beliefs about team efficacy. For example, Silberstang and London (2009) noted that when a team member recognised a need to change something, they would only share this information if they believed fellow team members would take notice and that they had the capability to work together to make a difference.

Other studies have focused on the developmental stages of teams (Kasl, Marsick and Dechant, 1997; Runhaar et al., 2014; Sparrow and Heel, 2006) suggesting that teams would not engage in functional team learning until they believe that

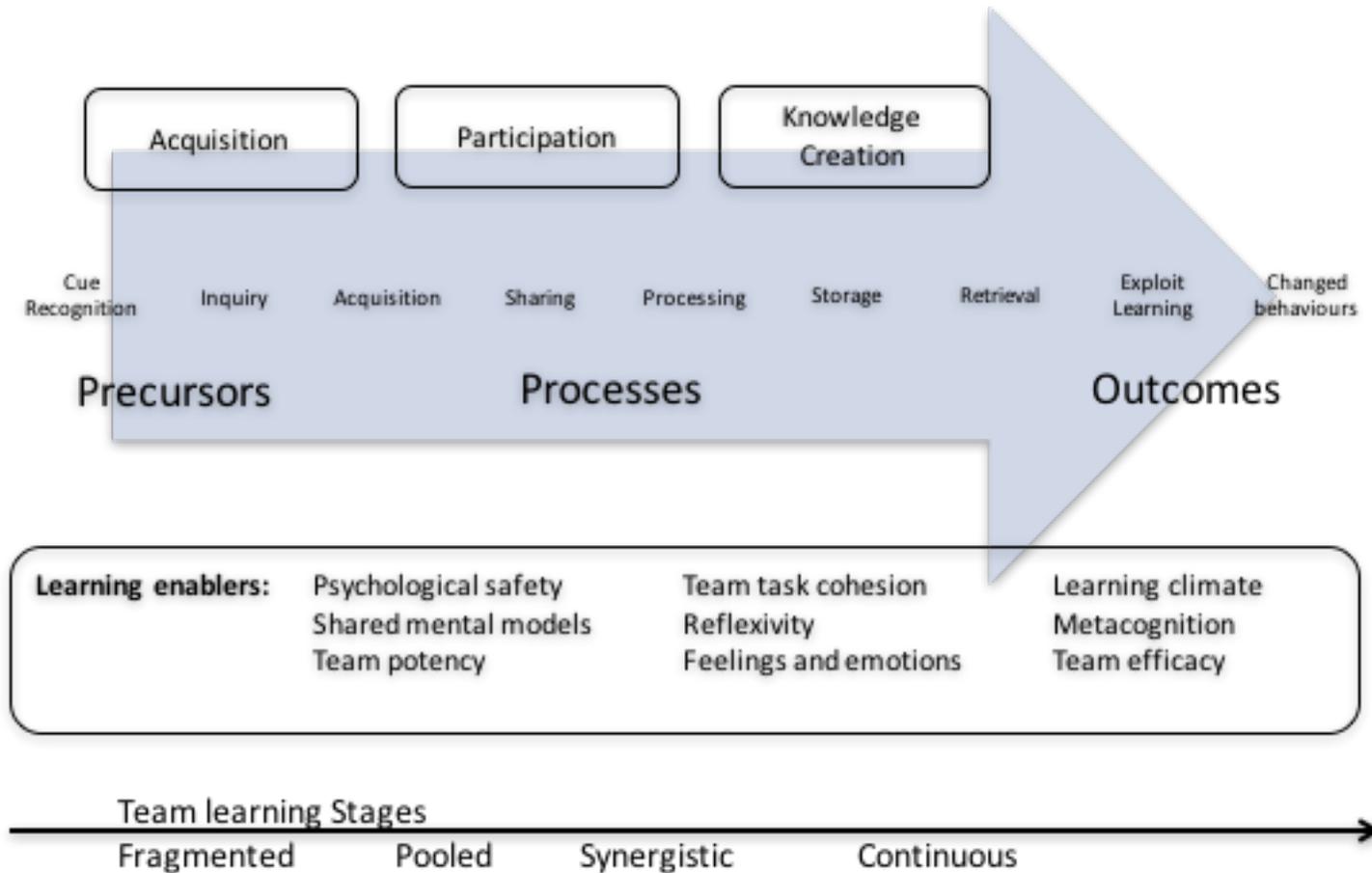
shared goals can be best achieved through a collaborative approach. Initially, information sharing could be fragmented and intermittent until the team members recognise synergies in their work and a need for shared understanding (Kasl et al., 1997). In other words, teams require a positive attitude towards the benefits of collaboration before significant learning activity occurs (Raes et al., 2015). This attitude may be supported if team members perceive there is a supportive learning climate (Maruping and Magni, 2012) where these behaviours are reinforced and rewarded.

According to the empirical research outlined above, team learning requires sophisticated processes of communication including; sharing conflicting beliefs, challenging assumptions, balancing advocacy with inquiry, and co-constructing new meanings or integrating perspectives (Sparrow and Heel, 2006; Van Woerkom and Croon, 2009). This dialogue may involve engaging in constructive conflict (Decuyper et al., 2010), requiring team members to hold the tension between conflicting beliefs or apparent paradoxes in order to develop new understandings. Effective learning also requires team reflexivity which Decuyper et al. (2010: 117) describe as *'a process of co-constructing, de-constructing and re-constructing shared mental models.'* McCarthy and Garavan (2008) argue that in a social learning context, team reflexivity needs to transcend reflection on the task or problem at hand to expose shared beliefs or routine ways of thinking that may affect their learning overall such as reacting defensively to mistakes or negative feedback. In other words, team reflexivity means reflecting on the quality of their learning and communication processes, not only the content. To make sense of this complex combination of processes and enabling conditions I created a concept map to visualise team learning processes and enablers. The concept map is shown in Figure 5.3.

In this concept map I present the functional team learning research described in the central arrow, alongside more relational research that explores the mediating concepts I have described within team condition; the cognitive, affective and motivational states that mediate team functioning. Along the lower portion of the diagram I reflect the empirical data that emerged from longitudinal fieldwork observations of Kasl et al., (1997) that suggests teams will only adopt a functional

approach when these mediating states are favourable, for example, when the team members perceive a benefit in collaborating, and experience a desire to learn together. The team learning research, which is resonant of the team as machine metaphor, could be helpful to some extent in taking a behavioural approach to learning. However, the team learning processes appear to require sophisticated interpersonal communication and higher order metacognition. It is my experience that few teams are able to develop the requisite shared understanding, positive prevailing mood and positive beliefs to create the supportive team condition required for learning, or have the requisite skills to adopt the communication practices and reflexive awareness required to learn. In the next section I explore how a team coach can use the insights from team learning research, whilst adopting a coaching approach, to promote the conditions for learning and encourage collaborative behaviours.

Figure 5.3. Conceptualising team learning: Precursors, processes and enablers



Developed from: Akgün, Lynn and Yilmaz (2006); Decuyper et al. (2010); Edmondson (2002); Kasl, Marsick and Dechant (1997); London and Sessa (2007); McCarthy and Garavan (2008); Rosen et al. (2011); Sparrow and Heel (2006); Silberstang and London (2009); van Offenbeek (2001); van Woerkom and Croon (2009); Wilson, Goodman and Cronin (2007)

5.3.3. i. Coaching with the metaphor of team as living system: Enabling team learning

In this section I describe how I have integrated my own fieldwork and insights from team learning research along with action learning coaching to propose coaching activities that enable team learning.

Whilst team coaching and team learning research is light on descriptions of how team learning capabilities are developed, action learning coaching, which appears as a distinct strand of research, does offer insights into how to enable a team to learn how-to-learn (O'Neil and Marsick, 2014). Developing the interpersonal and communication skills and problem solving behaviours required of action learning also appears to promote more general team effectiveness (Marquardt, Seng and Goodson, 2010). Action learning conversations encourage team members to explore problems by posing questions and sharing assumptions, encouraging a spirit of inquiry and reflexivity (Sofu, Yeo and VillaFañe, 2010). The coach helps to make the thinking processes of the team visible in order to raise awareness and establish team meta-cognition as described above. O'Neil and Marsick (2014) recognised the emotional aspects of learning, particularly when participants examine previously taken-for-granted assumptions, reinforcing the need for a supportive and trusting environment.

In the coaching vignette that follows, I return to Brampton for a sixth session. The vignette illustrates a team learning together.

5.3.3. i.i. Coaching with the metaphor of team as living system: Vignette four

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session six: January 2015

The team is meeting three months later, having commenced a second round of redundancies and reorganisation and having started to operationalise their team's purpose: To create a resilient, innovative and engaged organisation, inspired to serve the communities of Brampton. This session is designed to enable team members to develop a shared understanding of how they are doing and what more they can do to achieve their purpose.

Me: *Welcome back everyone! So how are things going?*

Veronica: Really great! We have developed a clear statement of what sort of organisation we want and the approach we are taking to the reorganisation. Richard has visited all of the departments and we have conducted meetings for all the staff to hear what is going on and the approach.

Richard: Yes, thanks to Veronica and Shirley for suggesting that to me, I have found it really useful to get a feel for how people are thinking and feeling.

Paul: I have had three of my younger managers attend the coaching training. They are starting to ask different questions; it has woken them up a bit, motivated them. I will admit we still have Dave and Chris leading the teams, and I'm not entirely sure how to bring them on board with the new culture.

Dan: Yeah: I have a few like that in finance as well. They understand training but I only have a couple who see a more collaborative developmental approach being appropriate.

Clive: Well, IT and data systems is the same, but I still think it's horses for courses. Do we need everyone to be coaches?

Diane: I believe our longer-term goals should be to move everyone towards more of a coaching approach, I recognise it takes time.

Me: Would it be helpful to explore this topic in more detail?

There are nods of agreement.

Veronica: My experience with the three coaches who went on the programme was different for each of them: One got it right away, one was quite nervous about trying a different approach and one was reluctant at first but when she saw how it made a difference to people facing redundancies she became an absolute advocate and it has really built her confidence too. Jess and I have discussed creating a coaching supervision network to support their development so they can learn from each other. I think that might help the ones that are struggling to get it.

Dan: So that would be like coaching the coaches?

Jess: Yes exactly.

Paul: *I still don't see Dave and Chris taking to it very well.*

Me: *Well maybe you have to manage a situation where the longer-term goal is for everyone to coach but for some people, you accept it may not be possible? What do others think?*

Veronica: *I think what we communicate is important, we cannot say that it's OK for some people to opt out. BUT I understand where Paul is coming from. I think we need to find ways to break the coaching skills down to simpler activities. All of them can learn to listen a bit more and sometimes ask the person what they are thinking they should do before diving in – even Chris and Dave. Do you think, Paul, you need to think about your own coaching capabilities? Are you coaching your staff?*

Paul looks at Veronica with a sheepish grin.

Paul: *Thanks for showing me up! You know I'm not coaching to your level!*

Veronica: *Oh come on you can take it.*

Me: *It's an interesting point Veronica makes. And thanks for owning up Paul. (I smile at him reassuringly.) I suspect you are not the only one. We all have different skills and experience, don't we? Shall we discuss this a little further? What does this team stand for in terms of developing a coaching ethos and what is your role in that? Let's hear a perspective from each of you and then we can generate some ideas about what to do.*

In the vignette above I have illustrated some of the activities of coaching to support a learning experience within a team. First, encouraging sharing of information and experiences, encouraging dialogue around perspectives and enabling an environment where conflicting perspectives and feedback can be shared. As we had already worked on strengthening the trust in relationships, the team members were able to challenge each other's ideas in a constructive way. As the coach, I continue to encourage new ideas whilst reassuring team members that their existing competence is respected and every person's view is relevant in helping to shape understanding.

Working from the core activities of learning in Figure 5.3 of knowledge acquisition, participation in learning processes and creating knowledge within an enabling

environment, I have proposed seven coaching activities to support team learning: Initiating inquiry; sharing knowledge and understanding; encouraging listening and sense making; encouraging the giving and receiving of feedback; embracing conflicting perspectives; noticing thinking and questioning assumptions; and co-creation of new perspectives. The coaching activities to enable learning are depicted in Figure 5.4. adapted from: Decuyper et al. (2010); Edmondson (1999, 2002); London and Sessa (2007); Marquardt, Seng and Goodson (2010); O’Neil and Marsick (2014); Sofo, Yeo and VillaFañe (2010); Sparrow and Heel (2007) and explained further with examples from fieldwork in Table 5.4.

Figure 5.4. Coaching activities to promote team learning

Adapted from: Decuyper et al. (2010); Edmondson (1999, 2002); London and Sessa (2007); Marquardt, Seng and Goodson (2010); O’Neil and Marsick (2014); Sofo, Yeo and VillaFañe (2010); Sparrow and Heel (2007)

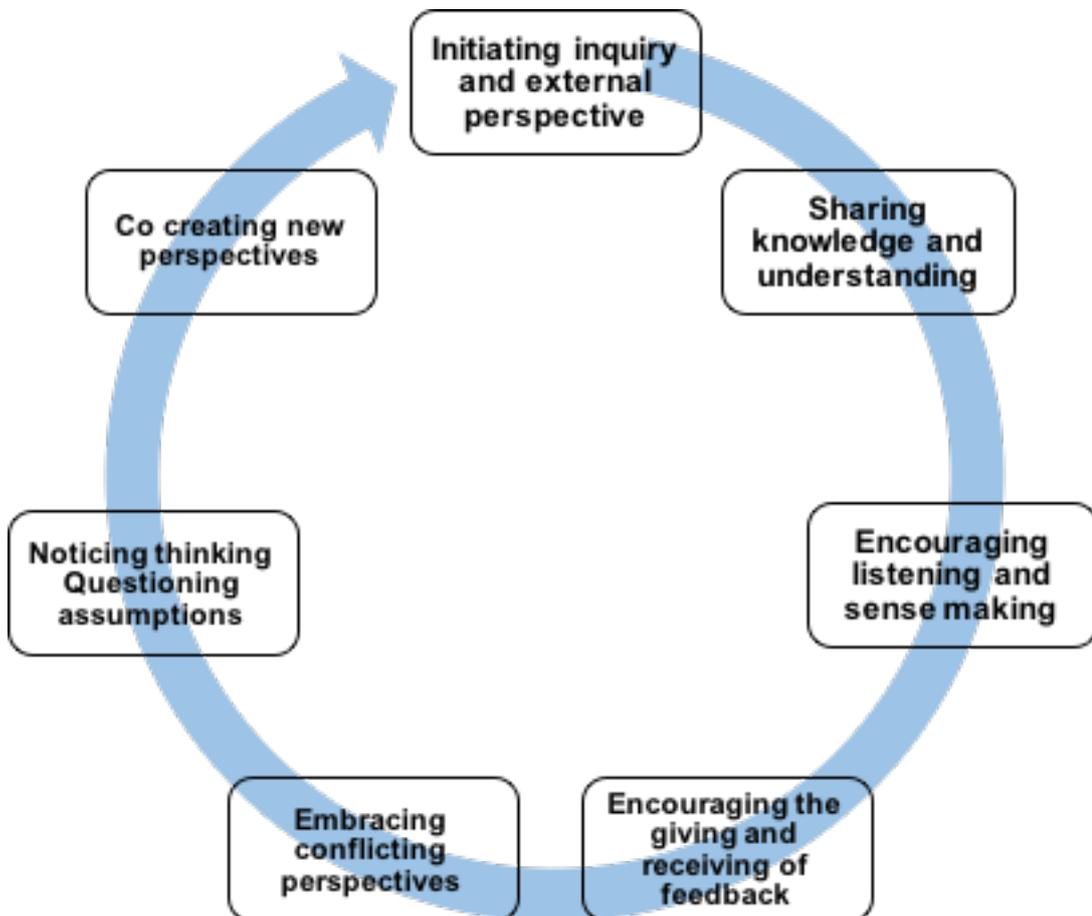


Table 5.4 Coach activities to promote learning when coaching with the metaphor of team as living system

Coach activities	Linkages to existing research	Examples from my fieldwork
Initiating inquiry and external focus	<p>Encouraging the team to seek opportunities to learn from other teams, customers, external networks, boundary - crossing (Decuyper et al., 2010).</p> <p>Noticing cues in the environment indicating a need for change (Silberstang and London, 2009).</p> <p>Asking questions to understand a problem or a situation (Marquardt, Seng and Goodson, 2010).</p>	<p><i>'I asked them if they have a clear vision for their work.'</i> (Reflective log, fieldwork site two)</p> <p><i>'We had a conversation about what they thought they might need to learn.'</i> (Field notes, fieldwork site two)</p> <p><i>'I ask how they will keep connected to the other team.'</i> (Field notes, fieldwork site one)</p>
Sharing knowledge and understanding	<p>Eliciting perceptions during dialogue (Sparrow and Heel, 2007).</p> <p>Encouraging depth and breadth of sharing individual knowledge, competencies, perspectives and experiences (Decuyper et al., 2010).</p>	<p><i>'I asked Mike to describe his picture of success qualitatively.'</i> (Field notes, fieldwork site one)</p> <p><i>'We have a shared understanding of where we are, where we could be and how we might get there.'</i> (Mike, reflective diary, fieldwork site one)</p>
Encouraging the giving and receiving of feedback	<p>Helping participants to give and receive feedback (O'Neil and Marsick, 2014; Sofo, Yeo and Villafañe, 2010).</p>	<p><i>'We need to share issues in a non-judgemental, non-evaluative way.'</i> (Sarah, reflective diary, fieldwork site two)</p> <p><i>'There was a willingness to listen to others' views and to critically review our work.'</i> (Stuart, reflective diary, fieldwork site two)</p>
Encouraging listening and sense making	<p>Initiating and reflecting to make sense of learning in the specific team context (Sofo, Yeo and Villafañe, 2010).</p> <p><i>'Listening for meaning'</i> (Sparrow and Heel, 2007: 152).</p>	<p><i>'Mike offers a tentative thought. I encourage them to explore it.'</i> (Reflective notes, fieldwork site one)</p> <p><i>'I appreciated it when (with Jo's encouragement) we dug a little deeper into individual philosophies.'</i> (Rose's reflective diary, fieldwork site two)</p>

	Seeking meaning through asking questions (Marquardt, Seng and Goodson, 2010).	
Embracing conflicting perspectives	<p>Being comfortable with speaking up and challenging each other's ideas (Edmondson, 1999, 2002).</p> <p>Holding the tension between current thinking and new ideas (Sparrow and Heel, 2007).</p> <p>Recognising that team members come from different perspectives and personalities. It is normal to have disagreements (Marquardt, Seng and Goodson, 2010).</p>	<p><i>'The discussion was open, respectful of different positions as well as challenging.'</i> (Jill's reflective diary, fieldwork site one)</p> <p><i>'I hold up a mirror and offer a different perspective.'</i> (Field notes, fieldwork site one)</p> <p><i>'I summarised the two perspectives and acknowledged that both could be valid.'</i> (Field notes, fieldwork site one)</p>
Noticing thinking and questioning assumptions	<p>Questioning goals and <i>'the rules of the game'</i> (Decuyper et al., 2010: 118).</p> <p>Encouraging critical reflection, challenging assumptions, beliefs etc (O' Neil and Marsick, 2014).</p>	<p><i>'I encouraged the discussion about taboos – what was not being said.'</i> (Reflective log, fieldwork site one)</p> <p><i>'You know I'm feeling a little bit confused and curious. It seems as if you are all able to agree you want to get better (at X) but also you seem reluctant to state it as a team objective.'</i> (Creative writing as a method of inquiry, fieldwork site one)</p>
Encouraging the co-creation of new perspectives	Developing new knowledge by building on and refining ideas from team members (Decuyper et al., 2010).	<p><i>'We worked together on how to move things forward... each member brought an idea or helped work through an issue.'</i> (Participant diary, fieldwork site one)</p> <p><i>'We went around in circles, opinions changed with each iteration. Non-linear, open to criticism.'</i> (Jorge's diary, fieldwork site two)</p>

5.3.4. Coaching with the metaphor of living system: Dynamic complexity

In this chapter I have considered how to make sense of what is going on when coaching a team with the metaphor of the living system. I end this analysis by focusing specifically on the dynamic and complex nature of the contexts in which teams may find themselves. Organisations often create goals with apparently competing aspects of organisational performance, such as requiring cost cutting and quality improvement or demanding innovation whilst requiring centralised control. Teams can feel paralysed by these dichotomies (Thornton, 2016). Moreover, initiatives can arise in a continuous flow of changes leading to feelings of overwhelm and burnout. The safe space of the team coaching dialogue serves to give voice to frustration and anxiety as described in Chapter 4: Team as Family, opening the dialogue for a more creative and solution-oriented discussion about possibilities. In this section, I will describe my coaching stance of acknowledging frustrations and focusing on possibilities.

In Chapter 3 I introduced Whitmore's (2002) GROW model and Brown and Grant's related GROUP model, developed for team coaching. Both models share the Goals, Reality and Options stages. In dyadic coaching I often find it fruitful to spend significant time in the Reality phase using cognitive approaches and challenging an individual's assumptions about the world. This process often results in new ways of perceiving reality and opens up the possibility for new ways of thinking and behaving. However, in team coaching, I found it was less productive to remain in the Reality phase. The team members instinctively used the team coaching settings to voice frustrations and we often became stuck in a debilitating paralysis as each team member added their own embellishments to the shared understanding of context and organisational constraints. In such cases, I found it much more useful to move to solution focus mode; to have the team remind themselves what is important about their mission and then review their options, however small. I intervened by encouraging the team to move from discussing Reality, as they saw it, towards considering Options.

Resonant of my solution-focused approach, Thornton (2016) expresses the view that it is helpful for the coach to work positively with the paradoxes in the

environment, such as cost versus quality, encouraging teams to see the strengths in wanting both elements and holding them in dynamic tension to create new ideas. 'The paradox is not 'resolved' but exploited' (Thornton, 2016: 97). The coach holds the team in the conversation long enough for ideas that meet both sides of the dichotomy to emerge. However, in practice I found Thornton's suggestion challenging when the team were determined to express how frustrated they were with what they saw as unreasonable paradoxical demands from their environment. They would not engage in a conversation about creating ideas at all. For example, I wrote in my reflective diary:

'The context is so important for them; they can't get past it. I'm struck by how much difficulty I am having getting them to step outside day to day experience. We keep coming back to it.' (Reflective diary, fieldwork site two)

A participant in the professional coach dialogues shared the fact that she always carried a handout of the popular Circle of Influence – Circle of Concern model (Covey, 1991), where the participants identify their worries and concerns from the external environment that they have no control over (Circle of Concern) and then identify the things within their own span of control (Circle of Influence) that they could impact. In my fieldwork I expressed empathy with feelings of frustration then offered the perspective that some issues were likely to remain as non-negotiable. These issues were allocated to *'the Circle of Concern'* domain. Once the team acknowledged this, they could see the value in moving to a positive dialogue around Circle of Influence, and responded to questions such as *'what can you do?'* A solution-focused approach encourages small steps within the team's ability to influence.

The emphasis shifts from power to influence. Every initiative is an experiment, the results of which can be used to refine the next move. (Thornton, 2016: 96)

Focusing the team's attention on what they do have influence over, and identifying experimental actions to influence the environment was far more energising than concentrating energy on external factors beyond their control. Often this would take the form of a narrative, with one team member sharing an

example of where some action had proven successful, allowing the rest of the team to build upon the idea. This process of acknowledging perspectives and encouraging possibilities is resonant of Lowe's (2004) constructive therapy discussed in Chapter 4: Team as Family and appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987).

I had not fully appreciated the powerful impact of a solution-focused approach when I started the fieldwork and was not aware of the emphasis of this approach within my practice. However, reflecting back on the interventions, I noticed I often combined positive attitudes and a solution focus to counteract the inevitable obstacles ubiquitous in organisational life. My fieldwork suggested that clients want a positive experience, do not expect the coach to solve or eliminate all of their problems, but appreciate working out a positive way forwards one step at a time.

'I thought the session was constructive, solution focused and looked to the future. I valued the positivity of my colleagues in focusing on solutions to problems as opposed to the issues per se.'

(Valerie's reflective diary, fieldwork site one)

5.4. Coaching with the metaphor of living system compared with other team interventions

Working with the metaphor of team as living system has resonance with team process consultation according to Schein (1968, 1987, 1999) who takes a systemic view and assumes that problems '*usually involve other people, have group or organisational components, involve cultural assumptions, political issues...*' (Schein, 1999: 32). Process consultation involves helping a client to gain awareness of what is going on in their system and encourages a spirit of inquiry and critical reflection. Schein talks about creating the conditions for learning and helping clients to remain responsible and action oriented (Schein, 1999). However, as outlined in the review of team consultation with respect to team as family, I recognised differences with my philosophy of coaching in that Schein presents a problem orientation. In contrast, I have come to appreciate the

power of a SF orientation supported by social constructionism, recognising problem solving is not straight forward when there may be multiple explanations as to what the problem is. A philosophy of social constructionism also enables me to retain a stance of collaborative inquiry with team members retaining power equality within the relationship.

5.5. Coaching with the metaphor of living system: Preparation and supervision

In the chapter so far I have largely focused upon how the systemic perspective is useful for coaching in-the-moment, offering coaches another way of perceiving their coaching context and gaining new insights. In addition, I have explored tools, techniques and approaches for coaches to help teams to make sense of their environment, to develop clarity of purpose and learn how to adapt and change.

In addition, the living system metaphor is useful for reflecting on and planning a coaching session. By their nature, organisational systems can be complex and it is unlikely we will notice everything that is going on in-the-moment. However, just as Hawkins and Shoet's (2000) seven-eyed model is used as a framework for supervision and is useful for taking stock of dyadic coaching assignments, I believe the living system metaphor, along with those of machine and family already discussed, provide different ways of reflecting on and understanding teams in context. The living system metaphor is a '*constellation(s) of metaphors*' (Morgan, 2016: 1035) incorporating solar system, map, weather system, ecosystem and community. I notice how different depictions of the metaphor reveal different elements of a team's context and some may resonate with different teams and their coaches at different times. For example, I found the team within a community had resonance in thinking about the language I might use with my local authority team in fieldwork site one. We talked about their motives for influencing their community and the role they wanted to play. I intend for the individual views of system to be used flexibly and interchangeably as well as utilising them altogether to generate a rich picture. I propose that the living system metaphor provides a creative start point for supervision of a team coach.

5.6. Coaching with the metaphor of living system: Creating a coach curriculum

The living system metaphor is essential for coaches moving from dyadic coaching into the team context. Coaches have been criticised (Brown and Grant, 2010) for not taking sufficient account of systemic issues within their assignments. This metaphor introduces the coach to a number of systemic perspectives and approaches which may be useful for developing coaching practice with individuals and teams. The general systems theory introduces coaches less familiar with large corporations to the concepts of organisational structure and invites them to think about the dynamic environment in which their coaching may take place.

The living system metaphor draws upon team learning theory and integrates functionalist concepts of learning with more relational approaches to coaching, drawing on action learning coaching. The coach encourages members of the team to listen to each other, make sense of different perspectives, question assumptions and embrace conflicting perspectives. These activities are part of a reflexive dialogue that is more complex in a team setting because of the number of people involved and the need to make the process more visible. In team coaching, the coach is actively encouraging the team members to notice and reflect back, thinking amongst team members, whereas in a dyadic context the coach would play this role without necessarily making it overt.

5.7. Reflecting on the benefits and drawbacks of the team as living system metaphor

Coaching with the metaphor of team as living system has enabled five coaching outcomes: Building positive team condition; developing strategic purpose and identity; enabling learning and change; enabling innovation to respond to complexity; and influencing the environment. Looking first at the team's condition, I have considered how developing shared understanding, positive beliefs and creating a mood of optimism can enable a team to adopt positive attitudes essential for resilience and creativity in a challenging environment. Considering the team within a community, a solar system and a map with boundaries provides

different visual shortcuts to consider a team which may help to formulate a useful question in the moment that raises awareness or encourages the team to look at an aspect of their performance. Building awareness of the team’s place within its environment can support dialogue relating to strategic purpose and identity. Considering the living system caused me to concentrate on learning as an essential skill of survival and to gain a deeper understanding of how these processes may occur and the role a coach can play, from initiating inquiry to challenging assumptions. Finally, I considered how a coach may work with the team’s ability to influence, taking a solution focus and generating creative ideas for dealing with challenging complexities and competing priorities.

As described in Chapters 3 and 4, I have added questions to the team pulse survey that emerge from the team as living system metaphor. The questions help the team to consider their attitudes and behaviours in relation to their external environment, and their ability to succeed in this environment. The questions are described in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5. Key indicators of effectiveness: Team as living system

(Adapted from Edmondson, 2002; Hawkins, 2011; Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006; Silberstang and London, 2009; Thornton, 2016)

Key indicators of effectiveness: Team as living system	Score/10
We make time to understand the external context of our team.	
We build positive relationships with external stakeholders and with other teams.	
We seek to continuously adapt, innovate and change to the needs of the environment.	
We are confident that our team can succeed in this environment.	
We are externally focused. For example, seeking feedback from stakeholders and learning from the best practices of others.	
We seek to influence our environment for the good of the whole system.	
We engage in continuous learning, and challenge our thinking by questioning assumptions. We encourage innovation and change.	

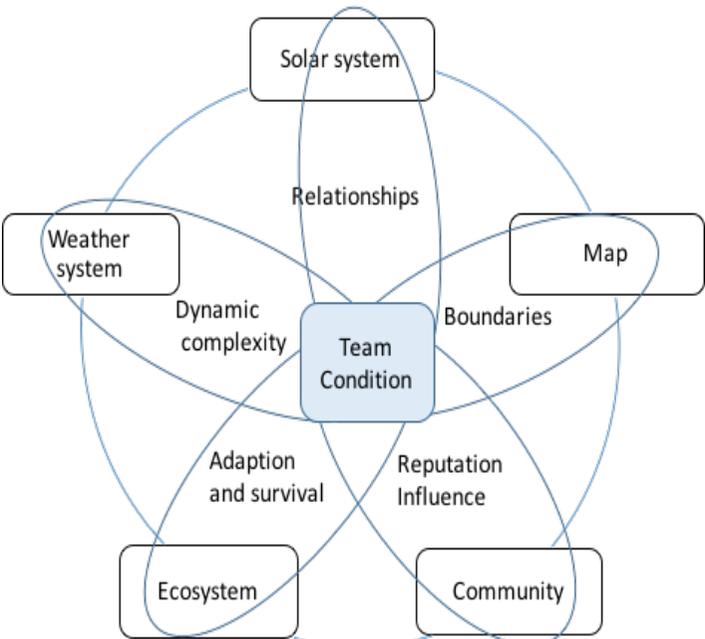
Coaching with the metaphor of living system is inevitably complex and could prove overwhelming to a team that did not have the essential foundations in place. As with the previous two metaphors, this metaphorical perspective should be used in conjunction with others but perhaps not until the basics of relational strength, trust and core processes have been established.

5.8. Summary of the chapter

In this chapter I have explored the metaphor of team as living system by considering the fieldwork and the underpinning theory that contributes to this perspective. I have considered how this metaphor allows us to notice what is going on by considering the team condition, the team context and the team's capacity for learning. I have explored a range of coaching approaches, considered the pros and cons of coaching from the metaphorical perspective of team as living system, and compared this approach with other team-based interventions. Finally, I have summarised the coaching focus and likely outcomes inherent in this metaphor. The ideas are collated in Table 5.6.

In each of the previous three chapters, I have offered metaphors as perspectives for observing a team and considered coaching approaches. In each case the metaphor directs us to observe a team in certain ways and potentially to ignore other ways of knowing and seeing. In the next chapter I consider my final metaphor, that of the coach and team in Wonderland, a metaphorical fantasy world that recognises we may never know exactly what is going on and that all of these perspectives offer partial interpretations. Therefore, we benefit from remaining curious and reflexive about what we might be choosing to pay attention to.

Table 5.6. Summary: Coaching with the metaphor of team as living system

Metaphor	Coaching Focus	Coaching questions	Coaching approaches	Coaching outcomes
Team as Living System		<p>What is the team condition?</p> <p>How do we understand our boundaries, relationships and reputation?</p> <p>How do we learn?</p> <p>What do we need to learn?</p> <p>What are the complexities, constraints and paradoxes in our system?</p>	<p>Visual</p> <p>Narrative</p> <p>Cognitive</p> <p>Solution focused</p> <p>Initiating inquiries</p> <p>Enabling dialogue for learning</p> <p>Promoting reflexivity</p> <p>Holding tension between paradoxes</p> <p>Recognising circle of influence and circle of concern</p>	<p>Building positive beliefs and emotions about team's capabilities in this context.</p> <p>Developing strategic purpose and identity</p> <p>Enabling learning and change</p> <p>Stimulating innovation to respond to complexity</p> <p>Influencing the environment</p>

Chapter 6: Team and Coach in Wonderland

6.0. Introduction

In the previous three chapters I have explored team coaching with three different metaphors; team as machine, team as family and team as living system. These metaphors provide a way of observing teams in action and a perspective to answer the question *what is going on?* when I am coaching a team. In other words, the metaphors offer ways of knowing to help inform the coach's choice of actions. This chapter considers a fourth metaphor; the team and coach in Wonderland, that questions the ability 'to know' and promotes the perspective of 'not-knowing' (Anderson and Levin, 2004: 46; Hawkins, 2011: 158). In creating this metaphor, I draw upon my fieldwork, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Carroll, 1865 and 1993) and a recent critique of Morgan's (1996) metaphors by McCabe (2016) who observes the inherently irrational nature of organisational life. I revisit scenarios from the previous three chapters to consider curiosity (Kashdan and Steger, 2007) in the coaching approach and how I work with curiosity in practice, combining narrative and social constructionism.

Throughout the chapter I draw upon aspects of Cox's (2013) experiential coaching cycle to make connections between dyadic and team coaching where the emphasis in both cases is on the coach's role in facilitating a reflective process. The previous three metaphors have focused attention on the team, this fourth metaphor directs attention to the coach as well as the team, recognising that at times there is doubt and uncertainty for both coach and team members, and that there is opportunity in remaining curious. I complete the chapter by claiming Wonderland as a distinctive perspective that is not presented in any coaching literature or team-based intervention and discuss its contribution to being a coach in-the-moment as well as during preparation, supervision and team coach development. Finally, I consider the benefits and drawbacks of the approach and reflect upon my own learning.

6.1. Motivations for developing the metaphor of Wonderland

In this section I describe the emergence of Wonderland as a metaphor within my research process. In Chapter 1 I described my motives for commencing this research project, listing amongst them my desire to address the vulnerability I felt when coaching a team. It appears common for coaches to experience moments of doubt during coaching assignments (de Haan, 2008) due to the emergent nature of the practice. De Haan's research related to dyadic coaching conversations but his findings of coach uncertainty resonate with my own experiences. I perceive my vulnerability arising from two key issues. First, I was sensing '*meanings and emotion in gestures, facial expression or the rhythm of action*' (Cunliffe and Coupland, 2011: 69) within the team itself, yet I was not always able to understand or explain what was going on. Second, I was entering a new situation where the team context was not always apparent to me or easy to read. At times, I was unsure of what to do, as I was unable to make sense of events unfolding around me or to decipher the implications of behaviours. As I described in Chapter 2, we make sense through narrative, using stories to organise our conceptual understanding (Colville, Brown and Pye, 2011), and an inability to make sense can feel uncomfortable or disorientating (Mezirow, 1990) creating a feeling of anxiety.

When I deconstructed the story of my coaching experience (Table 2.12., Chapter 2) I associated commencing a coaching assignment with following the White Rabbit into Wonderland (Carroll, 1865 and 1993) where nothing is quite as it seems. For example, the Queen of Hearts is both a playing card and a monarch, and a baby turns into a pig. I asked - can a coach ever know all that is going on within the organisational context or for each of the individuals? The deconstruction was in opposition to the dominant narratives embedded within coaching scholars' literature and within my own fieldwork stories where, at times, I identified the coach as a heroic character, such as the knight on the white charger coming to advise the struggling team. The language of planning interventions (Hackman and Wageman, 2005) following a coaching process (Carr and Peters, 2013) or even applying our '*experience-honed instincts*' (Thornton, 2016: 123) implies that the coach can assess a situation and know

what to do. However, viewing an organisation as Wonderland is *'to question and interrogate the rational order'* (McCabe, 2016: 947) and to recognise the paradoxical, unpredictable and at times nonsensical elements of organisational life.

Creating metaphors of machine, family and living system has addressed my vulnerability to some degree. Each metaphor offers a conceptual frame to make sense of experience, around which I may construct partial stories. Morgan (1986) presents the case that metaphor helps us to read an organisation and make sense of it. Meanwhile McCabe (2016: 946) challenges Morgan and uses the metaphor of Wonderland to *'draw attention to that which is ridiculous, irrational, disordered, unpredictable, uncertain, stupid, inane, nonsensical, contradictory or just plain silly in organizations.'* He challenges the assumption that we can provide rational explanations for all aspects of organisational life and asserts that the presence of multiple metaphorical perspectives in Morgan's (1986) work implies inherent contradictions and perhaps unpredictability. I am in agreement with McCabe (2016) that recognising our limitations within an unforeseeable context can be liberating as we no longer expect control or mastery in every situation. As such, the Wonderland metaphor released me from the constraint of expectations commensurate with the heroic identity. This insight alone reduced feelings of anxiety about the coaching role.

Thus, having established new ways of knowing through the metaphorical perspectives, and simultaneously accepting there will always be an element of not-knowing, I now turn my attention to the potential of embracing this state of uncertainty within the coaching process. In other words, I want to foster curiosity and remain open to the vulnerable moments that offer the opportunity for learning, for myself and the team.

... between tacit knowing and explicit knowledge is an area of 'muddy water' that creates a space in which possibilities for learning and constructing new understandings from our experience open up.
(Cunliffe, 2002: 42)

The opportunity for coach learning was reinforced during the professional coach dialogues in fieldwork site three.

'I think you have to have an openness to learning as the coach. To be vulnerable. To be willing to not be the expert. To be able to learn from the uncomfortable moments.' (Cheryl, coach dialogues, fieldwork site three)

Similarly, I noted examples where sharing curiosities with the teams enabled us to look at situations in new ways. In one session I observed that we appeared to be talking around the topic and at angles to the topic, revisiting the same point several times without resolution. I shared my frustration:

'You know, I'm feeling a little bit confused and curious. It seems as if you are all able to agree you want to get better at coaching but also you seem reluctant to state it as a team objective.' (Reflective writing - recalling events at fieldwork site two)

The intervention caused the team to revisit a flip chart they had completed earlier in the day, and there they had stated their intentions quite clearly.

'Objective: To help each other develop as coaches.'

Jorge remarked: 'Actually that makes more sense now. Maybe that's it!' (My participant observations, field notes, fieldwork site two)

In Chapter 1 I described how I believe that I enter every interaction with the mind-set of *being a coach* and wanted to establish in more depth what that meant for my practice. I now think of the Wonderland metaphor as fundamental to this mind-set as it is a reminder that in some ways I remain in a permanent state of not-knowing, living with vulnerability, and remaining open to the potential for curiosity as a gateway to learning. Similarly, I want to create a developmental alliance of curiosity between the team members, such that their capability for learning and awareness is expanded. In the next section I outline the Wonderland metaphor as a perspective for viewing what might be going on in a team coaching assignment from a stance of curiosity.

6.2. Developing the Wonderland metaphor

In this section I explicate the Wonderland metaphor, drawing upon excerpts from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Carroll, 1865, 1993) and illustrating with my own fieldwork and analysis. First I explore elements of Wonderland to make sense of what is going on in the team and then I look at the metaphor from the perspective of the coach. Wonderland offers allegories of organisational life that may resonate with organisational teams. McCabe (2016) identified ten themes in his interpretation. Whilst I shared the interpretations I found some were conceptually overlapping with each other. As such, I have integrated the ideas with my own to create six perspectives in which I see Wonderland offering a representation of my experiences with teams in the coaching context. These are; unpredictability, nonsense, partial accounts, absurdity, hierarchy and impossibilities. A brief explanation of each theme is shown in Table 6.1.

A more detailed analysis of each perspective and where McCabe's ideas overlapped, diverged or contributed to shaping, extending or articulating my thinking is developed further below.

Table 6.1 Wonderland – Examples of the irrational in organisations

Elements of my Wonderland metaphor	Linkages to McCabe’s (2016) Wonderland themes	Fieldwork examples
Unpredictability	Things we do not expect may happen (theme one). The future is not known (theme three), and Alice has to contend with unintended consequences (theme five).	I was asked by one of the existing team members if it was OK if the new person could join the coaching sessions, or if it would ‘ <i>mess up my research.</i> ’ (Field notes, fieldwork site two)
Nonsensical	The world does not always follow a familiar pattern (theme two of non-compliance). People sometimes say things that are not accurate, but sound logical at face value (theme six of nonsense).	Not knowing how to interpret what was going on embroiled me in an unsuitable arrangement that we had to renegotiate. (Field notes, fieldwork site one)
Absurdity	It is perhaps absurd to expect things to stay the same (theme two, irrational) or to be predictable (theme four, the future is unknown). People may behave in absurd ways, particularly if feeling socially obliged to act in a certain way.	A manager smiles through significant criticism from his team as if trying to maintain the illusion of polite discourse. (Field notes, fieldwork site one)
Partial accounts	Multiple accounts, incomplete versions of events, assumed knowledge and contradiction (theme seven), also aligns with (theme ten) confusion and misunderstanding.	‘I discerned the presence of an elephant...and realised it was me.’ (Participant reflective diary, fieldwork site three)
Hierarchy	Relative power and hierarchy do not always follow logical rules. Those with hierarchical power may not hold the influence in a team (theme eight when hierarchy is thrown on its head).	I am not always sure who has the power and influence amongst team members. (Fieldwork sites one and two)
Impossibilities	Those in positional power are known for asking for what seems impossible, such as conflicting or contradictory targets with impossible deadlines (theme eight).	In one session I feel helpless in the face of the endless recounting of their frustrations. (Reflective notes, fieldwork site one)

6.2.1. Developing the Wonderland metaphor: Analysis of elements of the irrational in organisations

Developed from McCabe (2016)



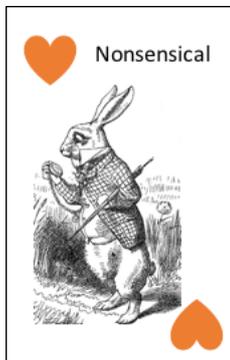
Firstly, Wonderland is an unpredictable place (McCabe's [2016] theme one) where the future is not known (McCabe's [2016] theme four) and Alice has to contend with unintended consequences (McCabe's [2016] theme five). For example, she sheds a pool of tears when she is nine feet tall, and then finds herself swimming in this same pool when she shrinks again. Often organisations make changes to procedures or policies only to discover the unintended consequences of their actions. McCabe (2016: 962) tells us to '*expect the unexpected*' rather than assume that we have perfect control over the outcomes of the interventions we might make, or that people and things will always behave in rational or predictable ways.

In both fieldwork settings the teams often surprised me by acting in ways which were contrary to what I thought we had agreed or interpreting my actions and those of other participants in ways that had not occurred to me. For example, as described in Chapter 2, in fieldwork site two there were a number of changes of personnel throughout the research period. As new members were planning to join the team, I was asked by one of the existing team members whether it was okay for the new people to join the coaching sessions, or if it would '*mess up my research.*' Whilst I was touched by their concerns over my needs as the researcher, I was surprised they would even consider the possibility of excluding a new team member for this reason. I reasserted my commitment to them as a team; that their needs were my priority, and assured them that any events that happened within the team were of interest for my

research.

After one of the new members joined the team I asked the team to summarise for the new member what we had discussed so far, to bring her up to date and enable her to participate. However, I was surprised by the response and recalled it in my reflective diary:

'I suggested that we update Rose on what we had covered so far. Jorge remarked he wasn't sure where we were at and Stuart remarked it would be easier to say where we weren't at. I was grateful when Martha outlined a summary that chimed with my memory of events.' (Reflective diary, fieldwork site two)



Secondly, Wonderland is nonsensical in that Alice cannot always explain what is going on as events do not appear to follow a pattern or rules she is familiar with (McCabe's [2016] theme six where nonsense is aligned with activities that are illogical). Alice falls down the rabbit hole slowly, as if gravity is operating differently (McCabe [2016] describes this as an example of non-compliance in his theme two). Furthermore, existing knowledge can appear ineffective and old information ceases to make sense in the new context. As managers are dealing with constantly changing situations that may be influenced by global events, it is not surprising that, at times, past knowledge or experience fail to supply answers to new circumstances. In the segment from my fieldwork analysis below I reflect on how not knowing had embroiled me in a situation I was unable to read.

'I mull on the role I have played in the languid pace... I was oblivious to key issues at the start. I encourage them to open up. I listen without judgement. I share the funny side. I was a pawn in the game as much as them.' (Writing as a method of inquiry, based on fieldwork site one)

McCabe's (2016) interpretation of nonsense also relates to characters speaking nonsense, such as the Lory who tells Alice *'I am older than you and must know better'* (Carroll, 1993: 13), and failing to elucidate why their claims should be accepted as 'truths.' (The Lory refuses to tell Alice his age.) In organisational life this resonates with claims made by colleagues, often those in positions of power or authority, who make unsubstantiated claims to further their own objectives, and staff fail to question them because, at face value, they seem logical. The coach can help the team become aware of when they are taking statements at face value without exploring further.



Thirdly, Wonderland is a place of absurdities. McCabe (2016) aligns the absurd within his theme two, considering the non-rational and the expectation that things will stay the same when what we experience is constant change, and hence the future is unpredictable. However, my depiction of absurdities relates more to the behaviours of the characters in a social setting. Characters act in ways which may appear humorous or ridiculous to others, perhaps attempting to enact societal norms. A mouse attempts to help Alice to 'dry out' after falling in her pool of tears and begins presenting a story dense with facts claiming *'This is the driest thing I know.'* When people enter new roles, they often adopt styles of behaviour because they assume it is expected of them, perhaps appearing unsophisticated or inauthentic in their acting out such a role. The Dodo rather pompously adopts very formal language to suggest an alternative remedy for drying out; that of a 'Caucus-race' which no one understands. After a silence Alice asks 'What is a Caucus-race?' because *'the Dodo had paused as if it thought that somebody ought to speak, and no one else seemed inclined to say anything'* (Carroll, 1993: 14). The incident resonates with those occasions when we feel socially obliged to fill the silence,

or to behave in a way that we think the circumstance demands. In an example from my field notes, a manager smiles through significant criticism from his team as if trying to maintain the illusion of polite discourse.

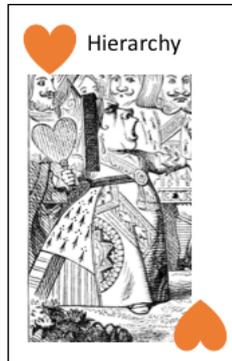
'I was curious that the manager looked uncomfortable but kept on smiling.' (Field notes, fieldwork site one)



Fourthly, I see Wonderland as an allegory for postmodernism: We hear partial stories from the Mock Turtle, the Gryphon and the mystery of 'who stole the tarts,' where the stories remain incomplete or get confused by multiple accounts, ultimately running into the telling of other stories; characters frequently misunderstand meanings, talk across each other or speak in riddles, as portrayed in the Mad Hatter's tea party. (McCabe's [2016] theme ten explores confusion and misunderstandings). The partial stories can indicate paradoxes where the organisation demands conflicting results simultaneously and, depending upon the position in the organisation and their role, each person may view these circumstances differently. McCabe's (2016) theme seven highlights the uncertainty created for employees in the face of such contradictory perspectives. For the coach, the stories appear fragmented, as some elements are left unsaid, either assumed as common knowledge, or considered too sensitive to raise publicly as they contravene the prevailing discourse. The coach cannot always tell when she is touching on sensitive topics until she sees a reaction to her questions or observations. In the excerpt below a participant from the team in fieldwork site one reflects upon her experience of listening to the dialogue after missing the first session. She realised after a time that the fragmented nature of the dialogue was partially due to the fact that the team had been talking about her in her absence and were now struggling to decide how to report on the content of the previous

session.

'We were v. slow and ponderous, not clear about what we need, want or expect. I discerned the presence of an elephant... and realised it was me.' (Margaret's reflective diary, fieldwork site one)



Fifthly, Wonderland depicts relative power and hierarchy in the guise of the Queen and King, the Duchess, judges, footmen, soldiers and even an executioner (McCabe's [2016] theme eight). Power is often turned on its head, such as when the cook throws pots and pans at the Duchess, or the Queen loses her power when Alice grows back to her full height and the Queen is, again, just a playing card. In the coaching assignment, the coach may be introduced to the formal hierarchy but then is curious about where influence lies, who is responding to whom in practice. As I described in Chapter 2, the management team in fieldwork site one had been split into two teams. In the example from my reflective diary below, I am uncertain who has power and influence in the two teams, I get a sense that Valerie is manipulating me but cannot say why. Valerie is raising a concern that had already been voiced in team B previously by a close colleague but does not refer to this, she just presents it as a new concern that she believes in.

'I wonder if Valerie is raising a genuine concern or if this was coming from team B. I felt a plan was being executed.' (Reflective diary, fieldwork site one)

Later, in my analysis of this incident, I go back to the events and try to make sense of them. I found out from Valerie's reflective diary that she was trying to raise a concern on behalf of colleagues in both teams and thought she was lessening the risk for them by being the one to raise it. She was disappointed when no one supported her and then later acknowledged that staff may not

have felt sufficiently safe to join in with the challenge. In my sense-making analysis later I wrote:

'When Valerie suggests some people may not feel able to be honest, others don't really back her. Some topics appear safe to challenge, others remain unspoken.' (1st level of analysis – what am I noticing?)

I decided that Valerie had genuinely attempted to facilitate a discussion about a sensitive topic, whereas at first I had questioned if she and a colleague had been attempting to exert their power to undermine the team coaching initiative. This example of team members exerting power was a rare concern. A more common concern was that team members were assuming I, as the coach, held the power and that they expected me to take control. This was evident in fieldwork site two when, in meeting two, I asked the team members what they thought we should focus on in the coaching session.

'Silence. Stuart looks sheepish and starts mumbling about having been busy so had not prepared an agenda, Jorge admits they had assumed I would bring an agenda, as it was my session.' (Writing as a method of inquiry, fieldwork site two)



McCabe (2016) (theme eight) aligns hierarchy with asking for the impossible and this aligns with my sixth theme. In Wonderland the impossible is often demanded by the Queen, such as expecting Alice to play croquet with a flamingo or asking the executioner to cut off the head of the disembodied Cheshire cat, when there was no body to cut it off from. In my practice I experienced moments where the teams expressed frustration at being asked for what seemed to be impossible, ridiculous or contradictory because senior leaders were working to a different agenda or failed to recognise the

implications of their requests. In one session I feel helpless in the face of the endless recounting of their frustrations.

'Round and round we go... I'm silent for a long time. Deliberating. How can I help them now?' (Writing as a method of inquiry, fieldwork site one)

I have excluded one of McCabe's (2016) themes from my analysis. McCabe's theme nine explores lies, misconduct and disobedience in Wonderland. This theme did not appear in fieldwork observations and therefore does not contribute to my Wonderland metaphor. Whilst I acknowledge that failing to follow rules or procedures is certainly a feature of organisational life, I observed the opposite within the coaching context. My sense was that teams were largely 'on their best behaviours' when the coach was in the room and sought to demonstrate compliance with agreed behavioural norms, perhaps even to impress me with their collaborative behaviours. As I listened back to the recordings of the sessions I wrote:

'It feels as if they are on their best behaviour, or at least that habitual patterns of behaviour are broken. They have to wonder about how to behave when I am there, which means they have to consciously choose a way of being.' (1st level of analysis – what is going on, fieldwork site one)

I could perhaps link the ideas of behaviour with my theme of unpredictability, in that team member's behaviours do not necessarily follow predictable patterns. I was conscious that being '*on their best behaviour*' was not necessarily ideal for team collaboration as I suspected it came from a position of compliance rather than a sense of true alignment. As such I remained curious about the behaviour and in some cases challenged unanimous agreement to coax participants to offer contradictory views. The only behaviour I observed that somewhat coincides with the perspective of misbehaviour was an incident at the end of my work with fieldwork team one, where the manager expected them to create a self-sustaining team, whilst their decision was to disband the team. However, I interpreted their behaviour as exerting personal power and negotiating how they would work together on their

own terms. It was a refusal to comply, certainly, but I would not label it disobedience.

Thus far I have outlined the unpredictability, nonsense, partial accounts, absurdity, hierarchy and impossibilities inherent in my Wonderland metaphor which offers observations about the team and its context. The intention in this chapter is not necessarily to resolve these irrational phenomena, but simply to acknowledge them and accept the inherent inability to make sense of everything I experience. As described in Chapter 6: Team as Living System, the team experiences its environment as complex and dynamic. This non-rational view of the organisational context may add to our ways of describing what is going on. We do not necessarily seek to change the context, but accept it and identify ways to work within it.

6.2.2. Developing the Wonderland metaphor: Curiosity

I now shift my perspective to consider the coach, and return to the topic I opened with at the beginning of the chapter; the concept of curiosity. In a world where things may not be as they seem on the surface, I want to remain curious to the multiple possible interpretations.



Wonderland epitomises curiosity, such as when Alice is curious to find out what would happen if she takes a sip from a bottle marked “DRINK ME” (1993: 4) - she shrinks. Later she finds herself ‘*opening out like a telescope*’ (1993: 7) as she curiously eats a cake marked “EAT ME” (1993: 6) that makes her grow very tall. ‘*That’s very curious!*’ *Thinks Alice as she notices a small door in a tree. But everything is curious today. I may as well go in at once.*’ (Carroll, 1993: 50). I am inspired by Alice’s willingness to enter the unknown, to ask

questions and to embrace the unusual and the novel within her experiences. Curiosity is described as *'an appetitive state involving the recognition, pursuit, and intense desire to investigate novel information and experiences that demand one's attention'* (Kashdan and Steger, 2007: 159). In a dyadic coaching context this curiosity acts on behalf of the developmental alliance between coach and coachee (Cox, 2013); the coach asks questions to help the coachee develop understanding towards stated goals.

Whereas in dyadic coaching it would be common for me to share hunches and curiosities with a coachee (Hawkins, 2011), in a team setting it was evident that I was often concerned about how different team members may react to my hunches, causing me to deliberate about when to raise certain issues. As I have illustrated through my fictitious account I was particularly tentative around publicly inquiring about issues that appeared sensitive to certain participants. I explore this issue in relation to the topic of trust in the next section. The ability to raise sensitive issues is complicated in a team setting by the degree of confidentiality each individual expects, and how open they are prepared to be in front of their peers or their boss (Clutterbuck, 2014).

Alice moves through these scenes and engages with curiosity with the characters and events as they unfold. Sometimes we hear her thoughts, as she is alarmed or surprised by the world that is so different from her own and, just like the coach, she often keeps these thoughts to herself, choosing instead to respond with careful attention to the language used or tentatively asking questions of curiosity. In the excerpt from my fieldwork analysis below I am reflecting upon an occasion where, as the coach, I felt a disconnect between the words being spoken and the mood in the room, which I was curious about.

'Even as we shared positive recollections of the previous session, the energy in the room was low. It was as if I had walked in on a team who had just heard some very bad news.' (1st level of analysis – what am I noticing? Fieldwork site one)

As the mood seemed universal within the team I felt able to raise it, although I was nervous about what bad news they had to impart. When I observed the

discrepancy, the team were quick to explain to me how their optimistic plans from our previous meetings had been quashed by uncontrollable events and that they felt worn down by their powerlessness.

In Figure 6.1. I depict the elements of Wonderland as a metaphor for the team coach embracing curiosity and recognising the organisational experiences of unpredictability, nonsense, partial accounts, absurdity, hierarchy and impossibilities.

Figure 6.1. Depiction of the metaphor of Wonderland



In the next section I explore the team coaching experience through the metaphor of Wonderland. Recognising that a stance of 'not knowing' or curiosity enables acceptance of the irrational and unexpected, I consider the role of curiosity in the coaching assignment with my teams and how this stance may be useful in my work in-the-moment and in supervision, preparation and teaching.

6.3. Coaching with the metaphor of Wonderland: Working with curiosity

'Curiouser and curiouser! cried Alice' (Carrol, 1993: 7)

In Chapters 3, 4 and 5 I illustrated my coaching approaches through vignettes of a coaching assignment within a fictional setting. In this section I revisit those vignettes to consider the role of curiosity in the coaching approaches. In analysing my coaching approaches I will consider the contribution of narratives, social constructionism and learning from family therapy applied to my team coaching practice.

In Chapter 3: Team as Machine I enter the coaching assignment with many questions as I do not know the team and have only heard about the context from two members' perspectives. My curiosities often take the form of internal questions, only occasionally in the first session do I express my questions to team members. In the following excerpts I analyse what is said and what is not said in relation to potential coach curiosities. A summary of the analysis is presented in Table 6.2.

As the coach I am aiming to create a conversation with the team. As I do not yet have a relationship established with the team members, I am seeking to establish a *'conversational space and process'* (Anderson and Levin, 2004: 51) which is different to previous conversations, opening up possibilities for change to emerge. I recognise that we create the conversation through language and that the language we use emerges from the relationships and context of the team. In these early phases I am listening for the prevailing discourse to grasp a sense of how the team members perceive their world. In the examples in Table 6.2. the only verbalised questions respond directly to the coachees' words, for instance, asking Dan to explain his phrase *'Not sure if it's possible?'* and prompting Shirley to expand on her simple statement *'I would like to feel part of a team.'*

Table 6.2. Coaching curiosities in Chapter 3 vignette one

<p>The coach's story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority. Session one: May 2014</p>	<p>My verbal or physical responses</p>	<p>Curiosities not verbalised</p>
<p><i>Diane arrives with Veronica, one of the operations managers; they are conducting a somewhat heated discussion about an incident concerning an e-mail.</i></p>	<p>No visible response</p>	<p>I wonder what is going on between Veronica and Diane. Am I witnessing 'typical behaviours'? What is the nature of the relationship?</p>
<p>Dan: <i>Can I ask a different question? Are we a team or a management group? I noticed you used the word 'team.' I'm wondering what that really means in this context?</i></p>	<p>Me: <i>Yes, that's a good question, I think that should be part of your discussion.</i></p>	<p>What is the significance of the question from Dan? Does it indicate a need for precision in language or an indication that he has an opinion on the topic?</p>
<p>Richard: <i>If I can offer an answer to that? I think we meet as a management group to review our various areas of responsibility, but perhaps it is time we worked as a team on our shared responsibility for this organisation.</i></p>	<p>Me: <i>Thanks Richard, I think that's an interesting distinction and thanks to Dan for the question. I would like to give everyone a chance to discuss their thoughts and then we will re-group if that's OK?</i></p>	<p>I wonder if Diane has been coaching him on what to say. I wonder if the question has ever come up before. Is Richard trying to impress me, or has he just recognised this need for a team focus?</p>
<p>Diane: <i>Don't we want to create a team that can make a difference - together?</i></p>	<p>No visible response</p>	<p>Is that a pleading question? Has she asked this question of them before?</p>
<p>Clive: <i>I think we could be a team, not sure if it's possible.</i></p>	<p>Me: <i>Not sure if it's possible?</i></p>	<p>Working with the coachee's language to explore meaning.</p>
<p>Shirley: <i>I would like to <u>feel</u> part of a team.</i></p>	<p>Me: <i>Could you say a little more about that Shirley?</i></p>	<p>The use of the word 'feel' is a different perspective. My instinct is to give air time to the less vocal team member.</p>

I am drawing on ideas from family therapy of creating a sense that each person has equal opportunity to contribute, without the prevailing social order of hierarchy or power constraining our interactions (Anderson and Levin, 2004). Instinctively, do I seek to minimise the impact of Richard's remarks, as the one with the hierarchical power? Or was I simply setting an expectation of equal opportunity to give voice to ideas?

Me: I would like to give everyone a chance to discuss their thoughts and then we will re-group if that's OK?

In Chapter 3 I am coaching with the metaphor of team as machine, so I move quickly to a position of introducing a functional language of teams that enables each team member to contribute to developing a shared understanding that they can all relate to. In the second session my vocalised curiosities remain contained at surface level relatively, encouraging a range of contributions around the language of team. My intention was to give everyone an initial opportunity to express their views and bring their topics to the table. I attempt to avoid making assumptions or chasing ideas that may simply be sparking my own interest.

Examples of open questioning to the whole team are illustrated in vignette two from Chapter 3:

Me: Who would like to share their insights?

Me: Ok what did others discuss in relation to that point?

Me: Ok, interesting. What else did you talk about? Where else would you like to focus?

Reflecting on the second session, there is a point in the dialogue where the coach recognises a tension between Veronica and Diane that was hinted at in the earlier session when the coach observed the heated exchange over an e-mail. In this instance Veronica again alludes to her frustration.

Veronica: *We also talked about trust. I mean we have to trust each other if we are going to cooperate. We need to trust the organisation. We need to know what is going to happen so we can manage effectively. These last two years we have been on a roller coaster.*

Diane: *I think that's about having a shared purpose so we can influence the organisation...*

Veronica *muttered almost imperceptibly... Hmm*

At the time I observe that: *I sensed a tension. I did not feel ready to call it out.*

Dan continues the conversation but then Clive appears to steer away from the vulnerability of trust to a process-driven approach.

Dan: *We talked about trust a bit as well. I think it can get quite heated at times so sometimes you keep your mouth shut to avoid another... well difficult conversation.*

Clive: *Well just to disagree with Dan a bit here, I think we just need processes, like Jess has said, how to disagree; it's more about behaviours, right?*

As the coach, in my summary I recognise the issue of trust but do not pursue it at this point, preferring to stay with the perhaps safer, contained language of teams as I had informally contracted at the start of the session. As I am not making sense of what is going on behind the words I am unsure about exploring the tension that I am sensing. An alternative approach could have been to demonstrate a greater curiosity about Veronica's comments by returning to her earlier depiction of trust within the organisation. Taking a narrative approach (Polkinghorne, 2004), I could have asked Veronica to say more about the roller coaster ride and how this experience had undermined her trust in the organisation. I explore how the story may have unfolded differently, had I taken a more curious approach, in the vignette below.

6.3.1. Coaching with the metaphor of Wonderland: Vignette one

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session two: June 2014 An Alternative story

Me: *Veronica, you mentioned the last two years have been a roller coaster. Do you want to tell me a little more about that and how it relates to the point you made about trust?*

Veronica: *Well, three years ago, the first redundancies were announced, which was a big blow for people, but we were promised there would be no compulsory redundancies. Along with that was an initiative called 'SOP' - Strengthening Organisational Performance. I was optimistic that, despite the cuts, we had a vision and we were going to take the organisation forward. I was very positive with my team, telling them this was going to bring opportunities for growth and development for people because I understood as we cut layers of management, people would have to step up into new roles. Then what happened? The organisation went outside for some key posts, people here with experience appeared to be overlooked for external people. It happened to a few people who applied for roles, not just me. Then the compulsory redundancies were announced anyway. We started to feel we were being asked to do the impossible with the people who were left. My team call SOP 'Slashing Organisational Potential.'* Veronica pauses, looks sidelong at Paul who nods encouragingly for her to continue.

Me: *You applied for a role taken by an external candidate?*

I'm walking on to a landmine.

Veronica: *Yes, she pauses, but not just me, two of my team leaders as well...*

Diane: *Veronica and I both applied for the same role...*

Me: *Ahhh...*

The implications are slowly dawning. I find myself holding my breath.

Veronica: *It's not about whether I got the job Diane, I'm over it, the way it's turned out, I'm not sure it's the job I thought it was anyway. It's the whole principle of feeling valued, people feeling valued, and people feeling they can trust what is said when we encourage them to do things, to take on more responsibility... like being a coach, or getting a coach to help them develop their skills. Will they be out of a job next week anyway? Will their efforts be taken for granted?*

Curiosity and being open to hearing more of the narrative from the team members opens up a different story to the practical one relating to team functioning. It has created a space for Veronica to speak about long-held frustrations which perhaps she had located with Diane and Richard creating unconscious group processes as described in Table 4.1 in Chapter 4: Team as Family. Perhaps Richard and Diane are perceived as the scapegoats for organisational distress, creating a resistance to team collaboration. I am starting to see why Diane called in an external coach, to break through the seemingly impossible impasse of their own shared history.

Due to this exchange I also become curious about Veronica's organisational power, through her relationships with her team and I am curious about Veronica's perception of her own agency. Does she feel heard? Could she be

a powerful advocate for change? However, I am still unsure about Richard's leadership. Does he understand the perception that he has created, and will he be prepared to respond? These curiosities remain lodged in my conscious awareness, perhaps intuitively guiding my questions and responses as I continue to listen to the dialogue from the team. I ask questions of clarification to help me understand the clients' meaning and to bring their sense making out in to the open space of the team dialogue. Cox (2013) applies the activities of listening, clarifying and narrative description to elucidate experience in dyadic coaching and the same processes appear to be at play in the team coaching context.

Curiosity appears to be intimately aligned to the asking of questions. However, I reflect on the source of my curiosities and only act on them if they appear to serve the needs of the team. For example, curious questioning from a position of not knowing – being the ignorant outsider - may serve to ask questions about what, how and why things are the way they are. Alternatively, I may hypothesise about what is going on but '*hold the question*' (Cox, 2013: 106) and keep my thoughts to myself until the dynamic I have wondered about is touched upon or hinted at by the team. Once a team member brings the topic into our developmental space it may feel like the right time to explore further.

In Chapter 4 I continue with coaching (vignette three). Now that Richard is present there appears to be a reluctance to speak freely. As the coach I am beginning to appreciate that opening up channels of communication is essential to develop trust and to build collaborative relationships between the team members. In Table 6.2. I outline the exchange between Veronica, Diane, Dan, Richard and Clive and consider my responses. Whilst I am curious about what is happening I remain silent for most of the discussion, allowing team member perspectives to emerge. However, early in the session I call out my observation relating to their reluctance to share concerns that were previously aired. Whilst I am unsure of the reasons for the team's reticence, I deem the encouragement for them to be more open as an important expectation of our agreed behavioural norms.

Table 6.3. Analysing verbalised and non-verbalised curiosities within coaching session three

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority. Session three: July 2014	My verbal or physical responses	Curiosities not verbalised
<i>Diane: Well, we spoke about the need to develop more of a team identity with a clear purpose and a vision for what we are trying to achieve, I circulated some ideas... I'm not sure if people have had a chance to take a look?</i>	I seek input from the team by attempting to make eye contact.	I am curious about what is not being said and why they are not engaging – do they not want to be seen to be supporting Diane? Is it because Richard is now in the room?
	<i>Me: I sense a reluctance to talk about some of the issues and challenges we touched on last time. I think it would be helpful if you would outline some of the concerns?</i>	I do not pick on Veronica but I am curious as to whether she will repeat any of what she had said in the earlier session. It seems authentic for me to raise the topic we all know (except for Richard) has been discussed previously.
<i>Veronica: We talked about what it means to work together differently. We need to be able to trust each other if we are going to cooperate.</i>		I am waiting and watching to see what happens, allowing them to retain ownership for the conversation. I have raised the curiosity but I am sensitive to being seen to reveal confidences.
<i>Richard: Do we not trust each other?</i>		Richard has asked about trust directly – responding to Veronica. Will this open up the conversation?

<p>Dan: <i>I'm not sure it's a matter of trust, just feeling sure of what's expected, in relation to our own KPIs and how we do things as a team.</i></p>	<p>I sit and listen, I do not interrupt or intervene.</p>	<p>What effect does my silence have? Dan moves the conversation away from trust. I am curious if this is simply his view of the situation or if he is subconsciously protecting the team from a difficult and emotive conversation by offering a functional perspective.</p>
<p>Diane: <i>Can I say that I think we could move forward if we agreed the vision and mission for the team.</i></p>	<p>I do not respond – remain open to the dialogue within the team.</p>	<p>I do not get the sense that Diane is entirely trusted and, by implication, perhaps they do not trust me either.</p>
<p>Veronica: <i>I don't disagree, but I think Richard it's also about trusting the organisation. We have been through a lot of upheaval with the 'Transition Plan' and 'SOP.' I'm not sure how confident we feel that what we agree won't be overturned at the next Executive Away day. I don't mean to be negative but...</i></p>	<p>I do not respond – remain open to the dialogue within the team.</p>	<p>Is this the start of an honest conversation between Veronica and Richard?</p>
<p>Richard: <i>I know dealing with the organisational changes has been tough, but I think you all have far more influence than you think you have. Veronica nods but looks unconvinced. She turns back to her paperwork.</i></p>		<p>I am deliberating about what to say. We have touched on matters of trust and then seem to have stepped away from the conversation. I still sense something is not being said. They are careful around Richard.</p>
<p>Clive: <i>I've heard Diane say we should look at purpose and vision. I think that's probably where we need to start. If Richard is right, and we do have influence, then we still need a vision.</i></p>	<p>Me: <i>What do others think about working on the Vision? Can we think about what this team wants to achieve?</i></p>	<p>I can see how working on Vision and Mission may move us towards the harder conversation.</p>

In the exchanges with the participants in Table 6.2. I hear partial representations and different perspectives of what is happening in the organisation. I am curious about Dan's perspective; I do not know if he is uncomfortable with the conversational turn towards trust or if he genuinely sees the issue in more behavioural terms that can be resolved with clear expectations. I choose to work with the conversational direction that appears most comfortable for the majority, however I remain open to the possibility of a future opportunity to revisit the trust issue or to observe it re-emerging elsewhere (holding the question as described above). I am also considering the relationship between Diane and Richard; has Diane protected Richard from hearing how people feel? Maybe if Veronica and Richard had the chance to strengthen their relationship it would also help the whole team. In the vignette below I reconsider coaching session three from Chapter 5. Perhaps greater curiosity about Richard's relationships with the team, beyond his reliance on Diane, may have encouraged me to experiment with getting different team members to work together. In the vignette below I pursue this idea of encouraging different conversations with different pairings.

6.3.2. Coaching with the metaphor of Wonderland: Vignette two **The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority**

Session three: July 2014 Continued from Chapter 5: Team as Family

Me: *It might be helpful if we work in small groups again. Let's take the work Diane has circulated and discuss in threes... then we can bring our ideas together...*

I suggest that Veronica works with Richard and Shirley, Paul works with Diane and Clive, and Dan works with Fin and Jess.

Diane's Vision statement document is open on each desk.

I listen in to the conversation between Richard, Veronica and Shirley.

Richard: *I hear what you are saying about organisational trust. I think we have created some unintended consequences, because decisions have been made quickly and sometimes we have gone back on what we intended to do.*

Veronica: *Exactly, the announcement about compulsory redundancies will take a long time to forgive in Customer Services.*

Shirley: *Community services feel the same, they have lost faith and it undermines the future, we have lost so many valued partners as well.*

Richard: *It sounds like we have not done a great job at explaining difficult decisions. I don't think we had a lot of choice when we had £30 million to find but I understand people are feeling bruised. What would you like to see happen?*

Veronica: *I think it would help if you come and talk to our teams Richard, explain why we have done some of the things we have done as an organisation. Give them a reason to believe that the future is still worth working for. I'm not sure a vision statement is going to have much impact until we rebuild trust, and for that we have to acknowledge some difficult truths.*

I leave them to the discussion, and muse on the paradoxical circumstances that Richard has had to manage; delivering more with less, under increasing constraints and scrutiny. I sense at times he has withdrawn from the organisation, and his absence has created anxiety and doubts. He perhaps has not recognised that people do not behave in quite the logical ways that numbers on a spreadsheet would imply.

The team share their ideas and the discussion continues, we still have some way to go to establish a shared understanding of what this team is trying to do, but they have started to raise perspectives and reveal their own drives and motives.

Shirley expressed her feelings to the group.

Shirley: *I just wanted to say I'm starting to get a feel for where you have come from as an organisation and what this means in different departments. Plus, we have started talking about what is important about what we do as a council and I have heard more alignment about that. It sounds like we all value doing what's best for people in this community and that's really important for me.*

Me: *Thank you Shirley, I would echo that observation, about stating what is important; I think it does give you a more solid foundation when you trust that you are all working towards the same values. In fact, I was wondering, if there was an appetite to do a bit more of that, by sharing what you see as important, and where you have come from personally and professionally; I think you will build stronger relationships. When you experience the challenges, that relational strength will be very powerful.*

In this development of session three, the focus on the future state of desired vision and mission and encouraging team members to work with different colleagues has opened up a different dialogue. Anderson and Levin (2004) describe their narrative approach as creating generative conversations in which the therapist does not work with a prescribed agenda but has the objective of keeping the conversation going, keeping the various players communicating, such that the possibility for seeing things differently could emerge. Adopting a stance of not knowing – *'What do you think about working on the vision?'* - I ask the team where they think they should focus the conversation. If there was little energy for the activity I would ask for other suggestions.

At times I do still offer the expert view such as reinforcing Shirley's observation that understanding underlying values is helpful for the team in order to build trust and cohesion. By amplifying Shirley's words, I am able to revisit the topic of trust that had been raised earlier, enrolling the team in an activity to share more personal perspectives, which leads to coaching session four, described in chapters four and five.

6.3.3. Coaching with the metaphor of Wonderland: Narrative and social constructionism

In this chapter thus far I have explored how adopting a stance of curiosity with the teams can change the course of our conversations revealing different routes to understanding what is going on. There is similarity with adopting a curious stance in team coaching and narrative approaches applied in therapeutic settings. Allowing team members to tell their stories about what is meaningful for them enables opportunities for relational connections, a sense of cohesion and the opportunity for co-creating new ways of collaborating in the service of the team's mission. It also offers the opportunity to question the stories and suggest alternative plotlines that lifts the team out of a place of 'stuckness' or difficulty. The following excerpt from Combs and Freedman (2004) explains the narrative approach in a group context.

The sun rises every morning, but not all sunrises are meaningful. The sunrises (and all the other events) that are meaningful to any individual person are those that get incorporated into that person's life narrative... For a sunrise to be socially, interpersonally meaningful, its story must be circulated - retold or re-enacted - among the members of a social grouping.
(Combs and Freedman, 2004: 137)

Narratives within dyadic coaching are a core part of my approach, however, I had almost dismissed the significance of hearing a story retold. I do not mention it in my retrospective review of my own coaching approach. In the team coaching context, narrative has emerged for me as a powerful way of revealing the individuals, not only to themselves or to me, but also to each other. Cox (2013) discusses the importance of narratives to enable coachees to begin to articulate

their experiences in order to make sense of them and the coach's role in listening, such that the coachee feels heard and understood. The coach can observe and inquire into the constructed paradigms and perspectives, challenging the coachee to revisit their presentation of realities. In a team context, I am attempting to role model this reflexive curiosity, such that the team members are able to recreate this climate of listening, inquiry and co-creation for themselves.

In Chapter 2 I introduced the concept of relational social constructionism (Cunliffe, 2008) as an epistemology underpinning my research; a belief that I wanted to make sense of the world by co-constructing meaning with others and that knowledge I created would make sense in the contexts familiar to my research participants and me. This research project has been an exercise in making sense of what it means to be a team coach, in dialogue with operational teams, professional coaches and the scholars who offer theoretical perspectives, to help me make sense of my experiences. As the project progressed, I began to connect ideas of social constructionism with coaching practice. For example, in Chapter 4 I recognised how a commitment to social construction allowed me to position myself as a coach in a collaborative and equal relationship with others. Encouraging self-narratives enabled colleagues in a team setting to understand how each person related to their social context, in terms of their relationship with the team, the team's purpose and to their wider experiences. Revealing these inner thoughts and beliefs allowed team members to make connections and to have a greater sense of understanding of each other. Similarly, in some instances, sharing perspectives led to developing a shared understanding of concepts critical to performance, such as the discussion in Chapter five about what it meant to operate within a coaching culture.

In this chapter, enlarging on the role of narrative, I am suggesting that social construction is a core philosophy to underpin the perspective of maintaining a curious stance, a way of *being* as a coach. As Gergen (2009) explains, our perceptions of self are socially constructed, even if we are not aware of it, and the language we use reflects social norms and relationships. At home, I am a mother, a daughter, a wife, a sister. I create an understanding of what these roles mean over time, in relation with others: As my children grow up; as my parents

and siblings age; and as my husband and I navigate our shared lives and responsibilities, negotiating what it means to be life-long partners (D’Cruz, Gillingham and Melendez, 2007).

If I remain committed to practicing team coaching through a relational social constructionist lens (Cunliffe, 2008) I am attuned to the subjective perceptions that each person brings to a dialogue. I am curious about the language used and the meanings that may be implied by this language from the speaker (Cunliffe, 2002). In the team I am interested in the relational connections, personal and professional, that may influence the dialogue and capacity for shared sense making between participants. I am curious about the language that shapes the organisational culture in which the team resides and that of the discipline or sector in which the organisation operates. I listen for the sense making derived from a team assessment questionnaire as team members strive for functional efficiency. I encourage curiosity in sharing values, beliefs and emotions to help team members connect and build trusting relationships. I encourage a spirit of inquiry, such that team members become accustomed to exploring ideas from the world around them and develop a greater capacity for co-creation and innovation. Coaching with the metaphorical perspective of Wonderland is to remain curious and ‘not-knowing.’ In other words, I perceive Wonderland as representing reflexivity in my practice (Corlett and Mavin, forthcoming).

6.4. Coaching with the metaphor of Wonderland compared with other team interventions

Working with the metaphor of Wonderland has some similarities with the work of the process consultant (Schein, 1999) who advocates a spirit of inquiry, questioning of assumptions and recognising our own socially-constructed biases as we work with our clients (not that Schein uses this language). What distinguishes my conceptualisation of coaching from process consultation, as described in Chapter 4, is the commitment of Schein to a positivist view of the world, where he writes and thinks in terms of solving problems and hypothesising about causes of problems. The Wonderland metaphor invokes a spirit of curiosity within the whole team, such that each of us recognises that our interpretations

about what might be going on can only ever be partial and fragmented. It is hoped that this recognition leads us to engage in a continuous process of dialogue which moves us towards a deeper shared understanding of the various interpretations.

6.5. Coaching with the metaphor of Wonderland for planning and supervision

In this chapter I have demonstrated how, by reflecting on team coaching conversations, we can recognise our curiosities and make choices about when and how we might make these curiosities transparent for the team in the moment. Trust and a supportive pattern of relating appears fundamental to moving towards a more overtly curious stance with the team. In the Brampton Story, the coach and the team members move from a status of relatively low trust between themselves and with the coach towards a team condition that was able to withstand challenge, feedback and alternative views as in coaching session six in Chapter 5. As I have described above, the underpinning philosophy of social constructionism supports the stance of curiosity, whichever metaphorical perspective I am using to make sense of experience.

It follows then that the Wonderland metaphor lends itself to the practice of reflexivity within supervision and for planning future encounters with clients. Firstly, by adopting the inquiring stance born out of a commitment to knowledge as socially constructed, as described above. Secondly, in the allegories from the novel itself; absurdities, nonsense, partial stories, hierarchies and examples of the impossible provide different views to inquire about our experiences and what might be going on in a team context. These perspectives remind us of the irrational aspects of organisational life (McCabe, 2016) and even if we cannot influence them, we can bring them to our awareness and make some sense of how they might influence the behaviours of our coaching clients and ourselves.

6.6. The metaphor of Wonderland for creating a coach curriculum

The Wonderland metaphor is a useful perspective for working with developing coaches in three ways. First, the Wonderland metaphor challenges the predominant paradigms of organisational life (Morgan, 1986) and offers the

developing coach another way of supporting their clients. In our increasingly turbulent and 'post-truth' world, this paradigm, more than any other, acknowledges the unpredictable and, at times, irrational nature of our everyday experiences.

Second, the metaphor reintroduces the underpinning philosophy of social constructionism first discussed within coaching with the metaphor of team as family. As discussed above, working with the Wonderland metaphor has reinforced for me the power of narrative in coaching per se and in team coaching in particular, as narratives enable us to reveal the sources of meaning in our lives with others (Combs and Freedman, 2004). Similarly, whilst social constructionism is scarcely written about within coaching practice (Harsch-Porter, 2011), it provides a philosophy to encourage curiosity in our client teams, enabling them to reflect on the narratives they are engaged in and the inherent meanings implied by their use of language. This may be a coaching philosophy that is not familiar to many organisational coaches and would provide an extension to their practice both 1:1 and with teams.

Third, Wonderland introduces the stance of not knowing, which is a useful concept to invite a dialogue about the vulnerabilities of practicing as a coach. How do we present as credible, competent professionals, whilst at the same time not be seen as the expert but open to our own learning and growth? Hawkins (2011) describes being at ease with ourselves, allowing the coach to avoid over-intervening in order to demonstrate value, and conversely being willing to act on hunches without being sure of the outcomes.

6.7. Reflecting on the benefits and drawbacks of Wonderland metaphor

Coaching from the perspective of Wonderland enables one coaching outcome for the team and one outcome for my own awareness as the coach. The team coaching outcome is in enabling the spirit of curiosity and reflexivity which contributes to the quality of the dialogue in every circumstance, leading to the opportunity for the team to self-coach and to question their own approaches. Leaving the team more capable than before, the developmental process is a

central aim of my team coaching practice (Clutterbuck, 2014).

The outcome for me in adopting the Wonderland metaphor is embracing the learning inherent in vulnerability and not knowing. This outcome is two-fold: It serves to release me from feeling the need to exhibit mastery and expertise in all circumstances through the recognition that in organisational life nothing is quite as it seems; and it simultaneously strengthens my sense of my own self-efficacy by recognising vulnerability as a strength. It is when I invoke curiosity about my vulnerabilities that I am able to embrace learning and growth and potentially offer further insights for the team.

As a result of considering the team in Wonderland I have generated additional questions for the team pulse survey that reflect this metaphorical perspective. These questions help the team to reflect on the degree of curiosity and reflexivity apparent in their behaviours and explore the degree of flexibility with which they view an irrational environment. The questions are detailed in Table 6.3.

Table 6.4. Key indicators of effectiveness: Team in Wonderland

(Adapted from Cunliffe, 2002; Gergen, 1999; McCabe, 2016)

Key indicators of effectiveness: Team in Wonderland	Score/10
We operate in a spirit of curiosity and reflexivity. We clarify meanings implied in language. We look beyond the surface level explanations.	
We remain open to the possibility that organisational events may prove to be unpredictable or irrational and require us to remain flexible.	

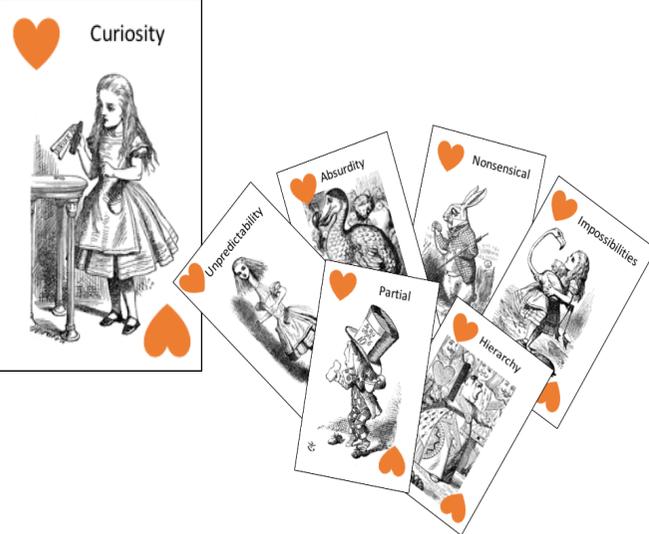
As with the previous three metaphors, this one does not work in isolation. There are times when a functional, relational or systemic perspective will yield the most value for a team in any given circumstance. However, when the coaching reaches a point of uncertainty, of 'stuckness,' of not knowing what to do, then I will turn to the metaphor of Wonderland and ask, what is going on here?

6.8. Summary of the chapter

In this chapter I have explored the metaphor of team and coach in Wonderland by considering the fieldwork and the underpinning theory that contributes to this perspective. I have considered how this metaphor allows us to notice what is going on by considering the irrational nature of organisational life and adopting a stance of curiosity to explore the team members' perspectives. I have explored a range of coaching approaches including narrative and social constructionism, and considered the pros and cons of coaching from the metaphorical perspective of Wonderland. I have compared this approach with other team-based interventions and reflected on the vulnerabilities experienced by a team coach. Finally, I have summarised the coaching focus and likely outcomes inherent in this metaphor. The ideas are collated in Table 6.4.

In the final chapter I will bring together the four metaphors into a framework of team coaching and summarise how the research project has provided answers to my research questions posed in Chapter 1.

Table 6.5. Summary: Coaching with the metaphor of team and coach in Wonderland

Metaphor	Coaching Focus	Coaching questions	Coaching approaches	Coaching outcomes
<p>Team and coach in Wonderland</p>		<p>In what ways are we struggling to make sense of the organisational and team context?</p> <p>What am I noticing that may be unpredictability, nonsense, partial accounts, absurdity, hierarchy and impossibilities?</p> <p>What am I curious about?</p> <p>How are the team members using and interpreting language?</p>	<p>Narrative methods.</p> <p>Social constructionism as a way of co-constructing shared understanding.</p> <p>Reflexivity and curiosity.</p> <p>Asking questions/ holding questions.</p>	<p>The spirit of curiosity and reflexivity.</p> <p>Embracing the learning inherent in vulnerability and not knowing.</p>

Chapter 7: Towards a Metaphorical Framework of Team Coaching

7.0. Introduction

In this chapter, I bring together the four metaphors to propose a framework of team coaching. I revisit my research objectives outlined in Chapter 1 and demonstrate how I have achieved them, contributing to practice and theory. I explain how the conceptual framework contributes to team coaching theory by bringing streams of disparate theory together within each metaphor. I demonstrate how the framework has developed my practice by reflecting upon the development journey from the account of my coaching practice written in December 2013 to my current understanding of my practice in 2017. I summarise how the framework contributes to coaching practice in-the-moment, in preparing for a coaching assignment, and during supervision when reflecting on practice. I summarise how the metaphorical framework enables me to propose a curriculum of team coaching to support team coach development.

In addition to the theoretical and practice-based contributions, I also consider my contribution to methodology in describing how autoethnography can elucidate practice. I consider the learning journey from the perspective of a researcher, reflecting upon the effectiveness and limitations of my research methods, and indicate future directions for my own academic development. Whilst I have achieved progress in developing a more coherent understanding of team coaching, this is a broad subject and I am cognisant of a number of significant topics that are excluded from the scope of this project. I outline these areas as focus for future research and reflect briefly upon the nature of these unexplored issues.

7.1. What is going on when I am coaching a team? Evaluating the research outcomes: Contribution to knowledge of theory and practice

To answer my research question *what is going on when I am coaching a team*, I established a number of research objectives, outlined in Chapter 1. The first two objectives were i) to develop greater confidence and mastery as a team coach, and ii) to contribute to the knowledge base of team coaching practice. In this

section I demonstrate how I have achieved these objectives and in the section that follows I reflect on how the learning has developed my practice.

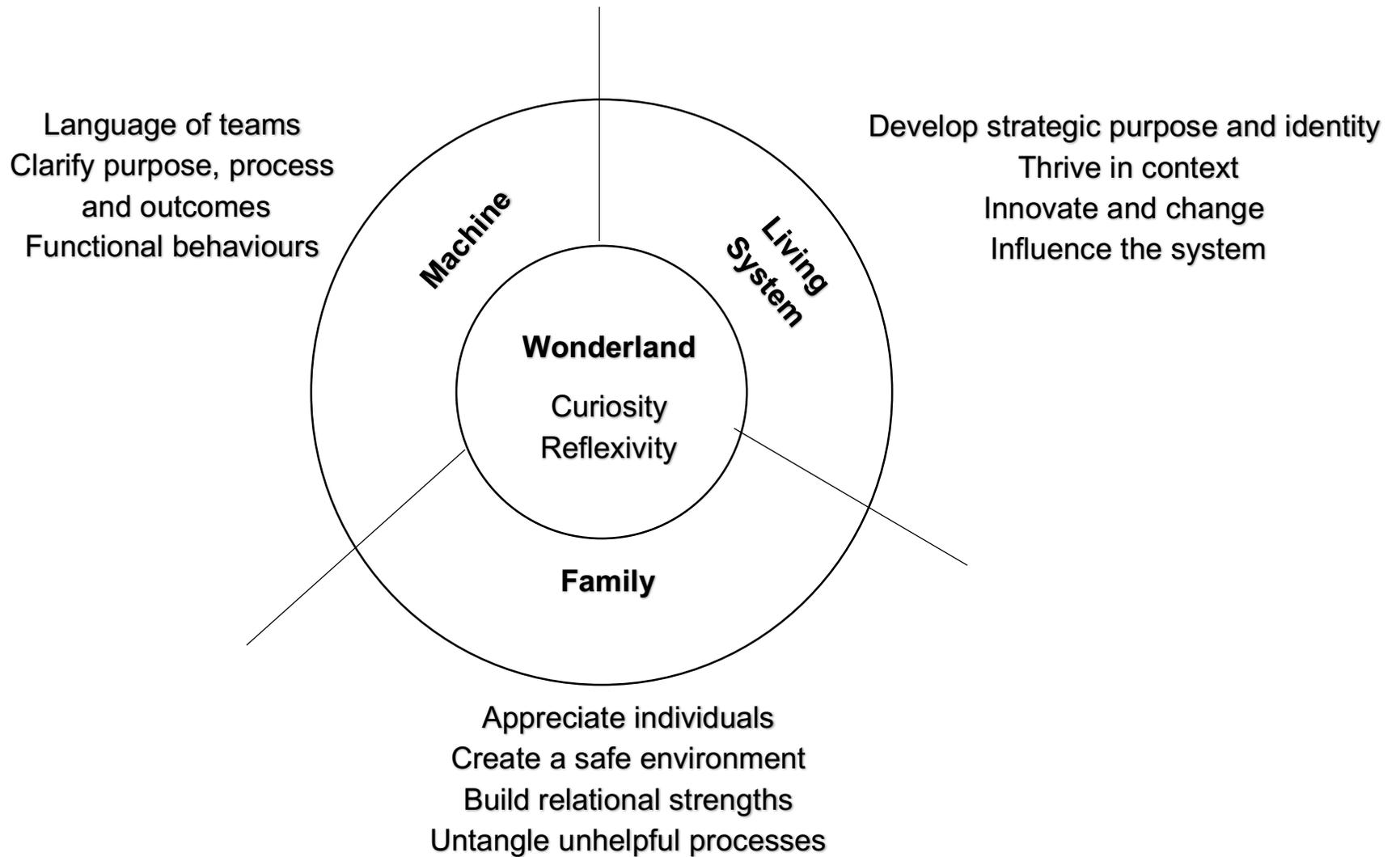
7.1.1. Contribution 1: A metaphorical framework of team coaching

To achieve objective i) to develop greater confidence and mastery as a team coach, I wanted to create a memorable conceptual framework that was accessible in the flow of practice that helped me to make sense of what I was noticing and to develop a greater range of practical responses. As a practitioner, I was frustrated by the lack of empirical research to describe the field, and what I did find often seemed to present a partial view, perhaps focussing on a functional (Hackman and Wageman, 2005), systemic (Hawkins, 2011) or psychodynamic (Thornton, 2016) perspective. This context for learning was inadequate as I could not make sense of the whole picture. The use of metaphor encapsulates complex conceptual ideas within the easy-to-remember source concepts of machine, family, living system and Wonderland (Landau, Meier and Keefer, 2010). This achieves my aim of creating something that is simple enough to remember conceptually, whilst respecting the complexity inherent in practice. My first contribution is a conceptual framework presented in Figure 7.1.

At the end of the previous four chapters, I summarised the coaching outcomes that emerged by considering team coaching from each metaphorical perspective. Each metaphor offers a different way of thinking about what might be going on and suggests a coaching focus and relevant coaching approaches. The framework offers a simple, memorable, one page visual for practical application in a coaching session. The metaphors of machine, family and living system are shown in a ring. The 11 phrases associated with each metaphor around the outside circle provide suggestions of what I might notice and, as such, offer possible areas of focus for coaching. The Wonderland metaphor forms the centre of the framework, as this is a way of being for the coach and is integral to all of the approaches.

Figure 7.1
Contribution 1

A metaphorical framework of team coaching



7.1.2. Contribution 2: Integrating diverse theoretical streams

My second contribution relates to objective ii) to contribute to the knowledge base of team coaching practice. I have integrated a number of theoretical streams from outside team coaching research to extend our knowledge and understanding of team coaching. Integrating these theoretical streams was important to enable me to have a clearer sense of the theoretical underpinning within each metaphor. I consider this to be a significant contribution as it strengthens the team coaching literature. Developing the theoretical foundations helped me to understand why team coach practitioners appeared, at times, to be presenting diverse perspectives and why they might switch from one particular perspective to another. In addition, I have added breadth to the coaching approaches offered in existing team coaching research by integrating theoretical streams from family and group therapy, dyadic coaching, team learning and action learning coaching. Utilising these diverse contexts allowed me to build upon my existing coaching knowledge and incorporate new approaches that are relevant in the team context.

The relevant theories are summarised in Table 7.1. The table can be used in conjunction with Figure 7.1. This second contribution brings together theoretical knowledge to inform a way of understanding what is going on and theory applied to coaching practice. In Chapters 3 to 6 I have explained each metaphor in more detail and demonstrated how these theoretical perspectives resonate with my fieldwork practice. In summary, team as machine draws on functionalist team effectiveness research and takes a behavioural, goal-focussed approach to coaching. Team as family is explained through psychodynamic theory and psychological states drawing on positive psychology, social constructionism and narrative to inform the coaching approach. Team as living system metaphor is based upon general systems theory and incorporates team learning and action learning as methods of enabling teams to adapt in changing contexts. Finally, Wonderland metaphor draws on concepts of curiosity, irrationality and reflexivity and utilises narrative and social constructionism to elucidate experience.

Table 7.1 Contribution 2. Theoretical perspectives and coaching approaches

Metaphor	Theoretical perspectives underpinning this metaphor	Theory informing coaching approaches
Machine	Team effectiveness attributes contributing to team performance outcomes. Developed from Cohen and Bailey (1997), Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006), Mathieu et al. (2008), Salas, Sims and Burke (2005), Wageman, Hackman and Lehman (2005).	Behavioural coaching (Passmore, 2007) Goal-focussed coaching (Brown and Grant, 2010) Task-focussed coaching (Hackman and Wageman, 2005)
Family	Psychodynamic theory. Adapted from Foulkes and Anthony (1984), Stokes (1995), Thornton (2016). Team mediating factors of trust, cohesion and psychological safety. Developed from Edmondson (1999), McAllister (1995), Salas, Grossman, Hughes and Coultas (2015).	Constructive family therapy (Hoyt, 1998; Lowe, 2004) Solution-focussed coaching (DeShazer, 1985; Cavanagh and Grant, 2014) Positive psychology coaching (Boniwell, Kauffman and Silberman, 2014) Narrative coaching (Law, 2007; Drake, 2014) Social constructionism (Gergen, 1999; Harsch-Porter, 2011)
Living System	General systems theory (Kast and Rosenzweig, 1972). Team mediating factors of shared beliefs, shared understanding and positive mood (Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006). Team learning (Decuyper et al. 2010; Kasl Marsick and Dechant, 1997).	Action learning coaching (O’Neil and Marsick, 2014; Sofo, Yeo and Villafaña, 2010) Narrative coaching (Law, 2007; Drake, 2014) Cognitive coaching (Palmer and Szymanska, 2007) Solution-focussed coaching (DeShazer, 1985; Cavanagh and Grant, 2014) Coaching through a systemic lens (Thornton, 2016)
Wonderland	Curiosity and not knowing (Kashdan and Steger, 2007; Anderson and Levin, 2004). The irrational in organisations (McCabe, 2016) Reflexivity (Corlett and Mavin, <i>forthcoming</i>)	Social constructionism (Gergen, 1999; Harsch-Porter, 2011) Narrative to elucidate experience (Cox, 2013) Narrative approaches in groups (Coombs and Freedman, 2004)

I assert that this contribution adds to our existing team coaching knowledge in three significant ways. First, I am presenting a more holistic and theoretically-robust framework compared to the existing models on offer. Second, I suggest social constructionism as a way of thinking about the nature of team coaching dialogue and sense making within teams. Social constructionism is not referred to within existing team coaching research, yet it offers a way of thinking about creating shared knowledge and developing understanding that is vital for building relational strength and establishing collaborative behaviours. Third, I draw attention to vulnerability within coaching. Vulnerability is not dealt with in existing team coaching research and does not feature in descriptions of team coaching practice. In this research, I normalise these feelings of vulnerability and suggest coaches develop greater curiosity and reflexivity in order to respond to the information that may be available during these moments.

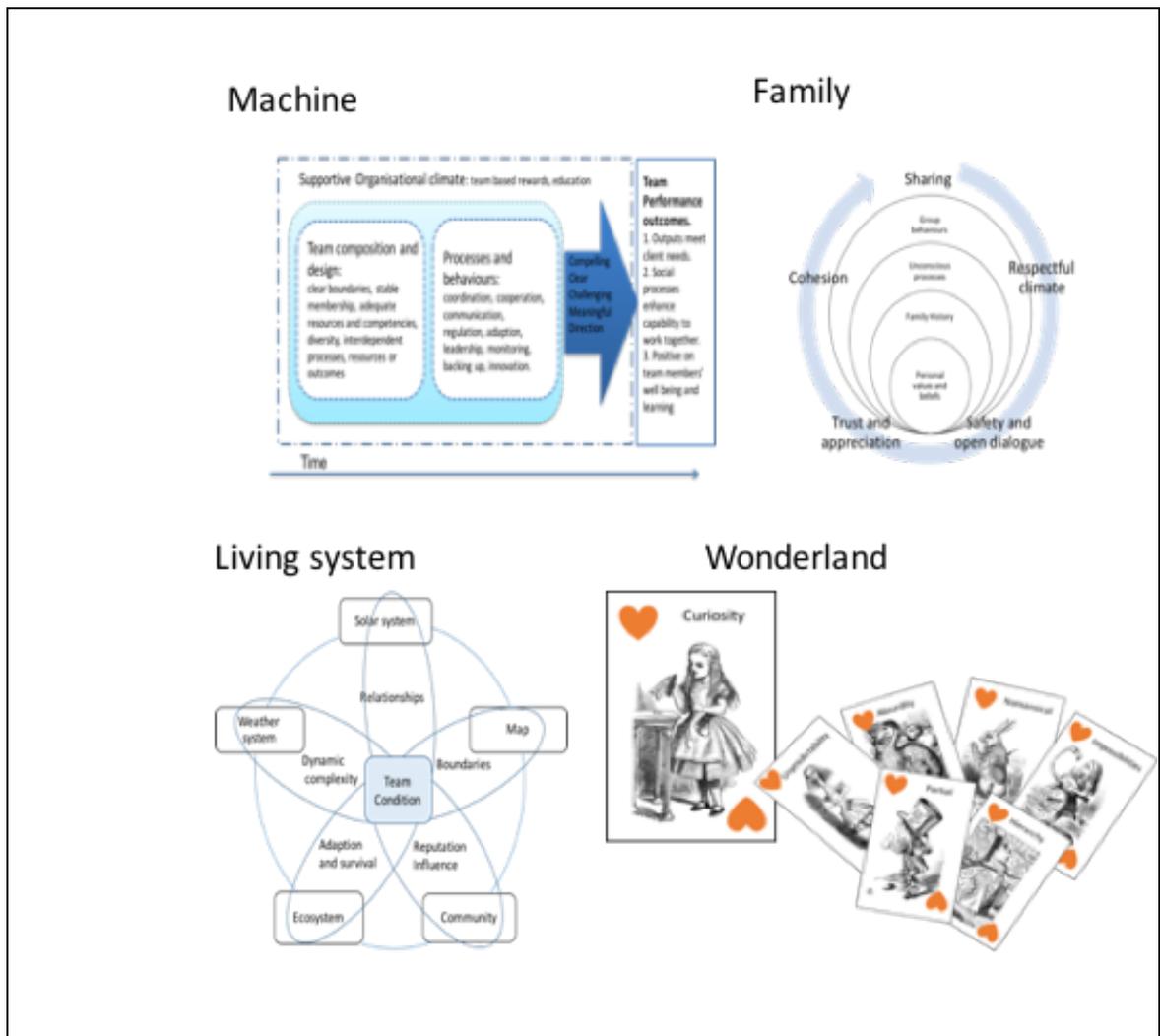
7.1.3. Contribution 3: Practical coaching tools

Returning to objective i) to develop greater confidence and mastery as a team coach, my third contribution concerns the practical tools I have developed to support my coaching practice. These tools are informed by the theoretical themes described in Table 7.1. above.

7.1.3.i. Pictorial representations of the metaphors

The first set of tools is the pictures and diagrams I have created to make sense of the theory informing each metaphor. I find pictures a practical way of mentally retaining theoretical concepts. The pictures representing the ideas in each metaphor are collated in Figure 7.2. During early dissemination of the metaphorical perspectives, professional coaches suggested that in some cases they would use the metaphorical language with their teams to reflect on team behaviours. I envisage that the pictures can be printed as a set of coloured laminated cards and kept in a coach's tool kit to stimulate discussion about where a team is focussing. Similarly, these cards could be used in coach development or coach supervision.

Figure 7.2. Pictorial representation of each metaphor



7.1.3. ii. Team pulse survey

In Chapter 3, I created a team assessment tool called the Team Pulse Survey (Figure 3.3). The questionnaire offers teams a chance to evaluate their own behaviours against known measures of effectiveness, which creates the stimulus for a number of coaching conversations. I add to these questions to reflect the other three metaphors in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 and present the entire survey in Appendix 7.1.

7.1.4. Contribution 4: Coaching techniques

In addition to the two examples of coaching tools described above, I have generated a number of practical coaching techniques within each metaphor and

these are explained fully in the preceding chapters. In Chapter 4: Team as Family Metaphor, I draw upon narrative coaching methods and social constructionism to build relational strength within the team and apply techniques of constructive family therapy to suggest ways in which a coach can create a safe environment and negotiate a process of enquiry. I characterised the role of the coach to describe how my fieldwork illustrated the conversational strategies. In Chapter 5: Team as Living System Metaphor, I provide a summary of coaching activities to support positive team conditions and for encouraging team learning. In Chapter 6: Team and Coach in Wonderland, I offer a constellation of allegories from Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland to notice the irrational in organisations. All of these techniques offer a team coach new ways of thinking about approaching team coaching situations and avenues for future research, and are summarised in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2. Contribution 4: Coaching techniques to support each metaphor

Metaphor	Coaching techniques
Family	<p>Building relational strength through narrative methods and social construction, see Figure 4.2.</p> <p>Coaching in a constructive framework, see Figure 4.3.</p> <p>Characterising team coach roles, see Table 4.2.</p> <p>Additional indicators of effectiveness for Team Pulse Survey, see Table 4.3.</p>
Living system	<p>Supporting a positive team condition, see Figure 5.1 and Table 5.3.</p> <p>Coaching activities to promote learning, see Figure 5.4.and Table 5.4</p> <p>Additional indicators of effectiveness for Team Pulse Survey, see Table 5.5.</p>
Wonderland	<p>Offers a new way to notice the irrational in organisational life, see Table 6.1.</p> <p>Additional indicators of effectiveness for Team Pulse Survey, see Table 6.3.</p>

7.2. What is going on when I am coaching a team? Evaluating the research outcomes: Integrating theory and practice for my own development

In Chapter 1, having reviewed the team coaching research and practitioner literature, I observed that *there is a greater need for integration between practice and theory*. In this section, I respond to this deficit by demonstrating how I have integrated theory into my practice; reflecting on how my practice has changed since I first articulated my approach in 2013.

Demonstrating how my practice has changed shows how the contributions outlined above enabled me to achieve the research objectives i) to develop greater confidence and mastery as a team coach, and ii) to contribute to the knowledge base of team coaching practice.

In Chapter 1 I suggested that I would have met objectives i) and ii) if the framework of team coaching I created enabled me to make sense of team coaching in-the-moment, during the flow of practice, during preparation for a coaching assignment and during coaching supervision. Next I consider each situation in turn.

7.2.1. What is going on when I am coaching a team? Coaching in the moment

The metaphorical framework of team coaching depicted in Figure 7.1. (supported by theoretical and practice-based contributions in Tables 7.1 and 7.2. and Figure 7.2) allows me to answer my research question *what is going on when I am coaching a team?* In this section, I explore how answering this question has developed my coaching practice. In 2013, I described my coaching practice in terms of a coaching philosophy founded on systems, principles and a humanistic belief in the self-determination of others. I described the purpose of my coaching as building organisational capability and described a number of practical approaches dominated by functional tools. In terms of the metaphorical framework described in Figure 7.1., I was mainly operating with the metaphor of team as machine, along with some approaches from the metaphor of living system. One of the drivers for the project was a sense that I was tacitly aware of

other aspects of team experience that I could not express through functional means. The metaphor of family has helped make sense of relational issues and group dynamics whilst Wonderland has provided a heightened awareness of the reflexive self within the coaching process. In addition, I have widened my repertoire of coaching approaches across all four metaphors.

In Chapter 1 I integrated my understanding from team coach research and practice with my own largely functionalist approach to describe team coaching as:

A contextualised, systemic developmental intervention intended to increase the collective capability, collaboration and performance of the team over time.

Now, bringing the framework of team coaching together, I offer a more nuanced understanding of what is going on when I am coaching a team.

I am in a collaborative developmental alliance with an organisational team that contributes to the team's performance over time, through effective teamwork behaviours, trusting and respectful relationships and collective capacity for learning, innovation and change.

This new description illustrates how my research process has enabled a transformation in the understanding of my practice. In the earlier description, I call the process a '*developmental intervention*' whereas I now describe it as a '*collaborative developmental alliance*.' It is my sense that this ability to create a collaborative alliance in place of an 'intervention' is at the heart of what has changed in my practice. I am prepared to go with the flow and work with the team over time. Whilst I plan a loose structure for some of the sessions I am open to the possibility of not being able to predict how it will go, and working with what happens in-the-moment.

To move from the role of facilitator to that of coach required a shift in thinking, such that I could allow myself to enter the unknown. Wonderland evokes the

absurd and irrational that pervades daily life and makes a mockery of plans to remain in control. This acceptance provides the shift in thinking required, leaving me receptive to remaining curious as to what might be going on, and to explore interpretations with the team. Social constructionism has opened my senses to the embodied experience of team coaching and to the power of language to shape my understanding of my professional life (Cunliffe, 2008). Taken within a postmodernist perspective, I can see how language is used to construct organisational 'realities' and has the capacity to empower, constrain or confuse. Person-centred approaches to coaching introduced me to the idea of listening and reflecting back meaning to a coachee. Social constructionism has given me a way of looking and listening that is tentative, less certain and diagnostic, and therefore has the potential to work in the flow of practice. I now have a new way of listening that remains open to possibilities and different interpretations, and leaves space for the team to develop a way forwards. I have given up the need for control; given up the need to come up with THE answer.

Social constructionism led me to reappraise the hidden power in narrative coaching as a means of revealing the sense-making processes going on for the coachees in a team, whilst family therapy techniques have provided me with practical strategies to create safe, trusting and mutually respectful relationships, such that team members can share thoughts and feelings without fear of reprisal, opening the possibility for a developmental alliance to occur between each of us. I stated at the start of this section that the coaching framework has given me the language to recognise that my former practice relied on functional and systemic approaches. I was locked in team as machine approaches with occasional forays into the wider living system. Team as family has given me the language and technique to create collaborative alliances, enabling the capacity for *'learning, innovation and change.'*

This possibility for learning, innovation and change allows the team to succeed in their environment and to think strategically about their place within the wider system. Whilst my role is to enable the team to think from a systems perspective, I no longer feel the need to claim that my interventions are systemic. My interventions are focussed on helping the team identify what they need to do to

build effectiveness, whichever metaphor we are considering; the team decides we need to work on the relational, functional or the systemic, I help them to remain curious and keep all perspectives open for consideration.

In the remainder of this section I will demonstrate how this conceptual framework enables me to operate in the other modes of practice, that is, in preparation and supervision.

7.2.2. What is going on when I am coaching a team? Preparing for a coaching assignment

To establish whether I have successfully achieved my research objectives i) to develop greater confidence and mastery as a team coach, and ii) to contribute to the knowledge base of team coaching practice, I will now consider how my metaphorical framework has changed my approach to team coach assignment planning by considering an example from my recent practice.

In June 2016, I was invited to work with a senior management team. I used the framework as a conceptual model as I listened to the commissioning manager describe the drivers for turning to coaching: The team was responsible for a complex range of services working within significant political and financial constraints and experiencing constant change (living system). They had developed clarity of purpose and activity, reconfigured roles and responsibilities on more than one occasion and had discussed ways of working. However, at times, they still felt their processes were ineffective (machine). Their organisation was the result of a merger of a number of smaller organisations and the stresses and tensions of the transition had taken its toll on relationships (family). Over the previous 12 months each team member had engaged in 1:1 coaching which had gone some way to improving the team's individual capability and sense of engagement as they made sense of their own personal transitions in relation to the team. However, the team still felt they were not operating to their full potential and were curious about engaging in team coaching as a way of unleashing greater capability and tackling stubborn areas of intransigence (Wonderland). Despite their best efforts, they felt they were stuck and unsure what would enable

a breakthrough. When a client first relates a myriad of issues that encapsulates their context it can feel complex and overwhelming for the coach (Wonderland).

During the conversation, the commissioning manager suggested that perhaps using a psychometric tool would develop individuals' understanding of each other and enable a more productive dialogue. Previously I would have seized upon this suggestion as a practical way forwards and no doubt facilitated a perfectly adequate one-off intervention that would have been enjoyable and created personal insights. However, I suspect I would have fallen into the category of consultant, criticised by Hackman and Wageman (2005), for creating a relational intervention that had little long-term impact on team performance. Instead, I used my holistic metaphorical framework to plan a series of interventions over nine months to explore what was going on with the team. Whilst I did not use the metaphorical language with the client, I couched the proposal in terms such as: Exploring what is working/not working (machine); building relational strength and mutual respect (family); thinking about the role of the team in its wider context and how it interacts (living system). My research project gave me the confidence and language to justify my recommendations to the client and they agreed to go ahead with my approach. A brief overview of the outlined approach from the perspective of the coaching framework is provided in Table 7.3. Whilst I expected the sessions to be more fluid in practice, the preparation gave me a sense of clarity about some core focus areas and developmental themes running through the sessions. In the early sessions, I suggested relationship building and activities to build a safe environment, whilst in later sessions I moved the agenda towards areas of focus, identified and owned by the team. I was mindful of wanting to build capability in productive team behaviours and reflective awareness as the coaching assignment progressed.

Table 7.3. Contribution 5: Sample coaching proposal drawing on the metaphorical framework of team coaching

Metaphorical perspectives	Preparation 1:1 meetings	Coachee preparation	Contracting 1st team session	Coaching 2nd team session	Coaching 3rd team session	Coaching 4th team session	Coaching 5th team session	Coaching 6th team session
Machine	Listen for the language of teams	360 feedback Team Effectiveness Survey	Establish clarity of purpose and behavioural norms	Share feedback from 360s	Identify focus areas and plan actions	Review progress and agree new actions	Review progress and agree new actions	Reflect on progress agree next actions
Family	Build rapport with each individual	Psychometrics	Create a safe environment	Appreciate individuals and build relational strength	Notice patterns of communication	Reflect on unhelpful group processes	Identify new ways of working	Reinforce new patterns of behaviour
Living system	Explore perspectives of environment		Present themes emerging from 1:1 meetings		Reinforce positive beliefs and emotions	Explore strategic purpose	Explore opportunities to innovate and influence	Explore opportunities to innovate and influence
Wonderland	Coach remains curious and open minded		Demonstrate curiosity, role model reflexivity	What am I noticing?	Introduce reflective process into sessions	What am I noticing?	Remain curious and open	Reinforce reflective practice activities

At the time of writing, I am five months into the coaching, having completed the first three coaching sessions. Due to this experience I created a simple template for initial assignment planning, attached in Appendix 7.2.

7.2.3. What is going on when I am coaching a team? Team coaching supervision

I will now consider how my metaphorical framework has contributed to reflecting upon my coaching practice in supervision and how it may contribute to the practice of professional coach colleagues. When I raised the question of how a team coaching framework may help me as a team coach in supervision, I was thinking about the conceptual frame enabling my own thinking process in my own supervision sessions. My intention is to participate as a proactive supervisee within the supervision process (Hawkins and Shohet, 2000). However, reflection upon experience was difficult without the language to make sense of what had just unfolded. In Chapter 2, I introduced the concept of modes of awareness as a way of categorising ways of looking and sense making. These modes later became the metaphorical perspectives.

Throughout the process, even as I was experimenting with different language to describe the modes, I found this categorisation useful in reflecting upon my practice for two key reasons. First, categorisation enabled me to focus on one theme of the coaching and explore it in more depth, therefore enabling me to notice and make sense of more of what was going on. As described in Chapter 4: Team as Family Metaphor, this was particularly useful when thinking about some of the unconscious processes that I may have observed but had not recognised in-the-moment. Using the team as family metaphor and its underpinning psychodynamic theory enabled me to make more sense of the relational dynamics.

Second, categorisation allowed me to observe where I was paying attention, in terms of both what I was noticing and the types of interventions I was choosing to make. Standing back and looking at the team coaching sessions through the four metaphors enabled me to see if I was operating in one or two modes only

and to make connections between the modes. As I observed at the beginning of this chapter, by describing four metaphors I can now recognise that my previous practice was located in machine and living system. Prior to creating this framework, I had limited strategies for reflecting upon my own coaching practice and possessed a limited language to explore it. As I describe in my analysis of the work with the professional coaches in fieldwork site three in Chapter 2, the coaches also often struggled to place their tacit knowledge into language in order to express how they conceptualised their practice. In the vignette that follows I share a piece of creative writing which I completed in July 2016, shortly after sharing my tentative research findings with a professional networking group, that illustrates how the framework enables practitioners to reflect upon their practice. The dialogue from the audience draws upon comments at the time and their written feedback afterwards.

7.2.3. i. What is going on when I am coaching a team? Team coaching supervision: Vignette one

July 2016, Presentation to a professional coaching network

I look out at the forty plus expectant faces staring back at me in the lecture theatre: Friends nodding encouragement, colleagues and associates, some who participated in the research as part of the professional coaches group. Some I know only by reputation. Unhelpfully, I elect to project onto them a sense of superior intellect, competence and professionalism, which is currently undermining my own confidence. They all appear eager to learn what insights I can share. Some are strangers; I do not know their background or their expectations, other than the heady promise offered by my colleague on sending out the invitation for our monthly event: 'Joanne will be sharing the findings of her Team Coaching Research.' I am worried I may disappoint them.

I stand, arms outstretched, partly in greeting, partly in submission and acknowledgement that I stand naked before them: My work, my thinking and my inferences publicly exposed. I breathe deeply, summon my professional courage and beam a wide smile at the audience. One more breath – in and out. Ahhhh.

Me: *Thank you so much for coming out on this lovely sunny July evening, it is wonderful to have so many of you here. Let me start by saying when I observe the word “findings” on the invitation for this evening it implies a degree of certainty and finality that I cannot promise. Please understand these are somewhat tentative and still with work to do. However, there are ideas here that I’m eager to share with you, and to*

receive your feedback and your response to them. I designed this work with professional coaches in mind and for me it is important to know how this work resonates with your experience...

Twenty-five minutes later I have warmed to my themes and the audience is engaged in throwing queries, offering their own observations and embracing the framework I have presented.

'I see myself operating in the team as machine mode most often but I'm interested in learning more about the living system.'

'For me I always start in Wonderland. How can you know what is going on without starting off in curious mode?'

'You have made me think. We have done so much work with teams this year in our organisation and a lot of what you are talking about resonates for me. I would like to be able to talk to you about it.'

I divide the audience into small discussion groups and ask them to describe what resonates for them about the model and how they might use it in their practice. After half an hour, they are back with me in the lecture theatre sharing their observations.

'After discussion I realise I delve into all four quadrants. This framework has helped me to articulate my practice more clearly.'

'Our group have been discussing using the framework with the team themselves; helping them to describe their modes of operation.'

'We thought it would be a useful framework for reflecting on a client team within a supervision setting as well.'

'I have started to think about tools and techniques linked to each quadrant. You are going to work on developing that, aren't you?'

Unsurprisingly I am floating on a cloud of excitement and relief. I have released my cherished framework and exposed my ideas to a professional audience and they have adopted the ideas, developed them, raised questions, offered their own interpretations and applications. The framework lives in the minds of others. It is out in the world now, independent, and an entity in its own right.

The experience of sharing the metaphorical framework with professional coaches illustrated how it can facilitate reflection upon practice, primarily as it offers a language to articulate experience (Cox, 2013) to make sense of it for themselves and to co-construct meaning with others. Additionally, the metaphors helped the coaches to recognise what was absent from their experience as well as what was present, opening their eyes to new ways of approaching their practice.

In this chapter, so far, I have focused on contributions related to my own practice. However, the vignette above reveals how my autoethnographic research has demonstrated it has relevance for others. I continue this theme in the next section by considering my final research objective: To create a framework that would allow me to shape a curriculum of team coach education to support the development of others.

7.3. What is going on when I am coaching a team? Evaluating the research outcomes: Contribution 5; Coach curriculum development

It was imperative for me to clarify my own conceptual understanding of team coaching before attempting to offer development strategies to others. The development of each metaphorical perspective has caused me to explore the underpinning theory inherent in each and to consider how the approaches differ from dyadic coaching or other team-based interventions. I can now present a clearer description of what team coaching is and what it is not, and distinguish it from other similar practices. The participants who enrol on the Masters in Coaching at my institution are typically experienced professionals who bring a wealth of previous knowledge of coaching, organisational development and team-based work. Therefore, when planning a coach curriculum, it seemed appropriate to position team coaching in relation to these activities. Contribution 5 is a team coach curriculum and is summarised in Table 7.4. The curriculum identifies for each metaphor where a developing coach may apply previous knowledge from both dyadic coaching or team-based experiences and where additional knowledge may be required. From this start point, developing team coaches can evaluate their own understanding, consider how what they know applies within each metaphor, and identify areas of further development.

To develop my thinking, I reflected upon the developmental pathways of two fictional students, one of whom has worked primarily in an organisation as OD specialist and a second external coach who works one to one with clients. In both cases, I demonstrate how charting a developmental path through the four metaphors of the team coaching framework enables the students to locate where their existing knowledge may support them as a team coach and where they may have development needs that are supplied by the theoretical streams and coaching approaches inherent in each perspective. This analysis is attached in Appendix 7.3.

Table 7.4. Contribution 5. Sample coach curriculum based on the metaphorical framework of team coaching

Metaphor	Theoretical perspectives	Applications from dyadic coaching	Applications from team interventions	Additional understanding offered by team coaching framework.
Machine	Elements of team effectiveness	Behavioural coaching Goal-focussed coaching	Team building and team facilitation approaches	Creating the developmental alliance with the team Working with a shared language of teams Developing shared purpose and goals Developing functional behavioural norms
Family	Psychodynamic theory Trust, cohesion, psychological safety Social constructionism in constructive family therapy	Psychodynamic theory Building trust and rapport Narrative, cognitive and solution-focussed approaches	Team building skills Awareness of communication and behavioural processes in team process consultation	Creating a safe environment in team setting Creating trust and rapport in team setting; using narratives to build appreciation and respect Making process interventions for collaborative inquiry in groups Social constructionism as a philosophy to develop collaborative relationships in groups
Living system	General systems theory Team learning theory Shared beliefs, positive moods and shared understanding among team members	Narrative, cognitive and solution-focussed approaches Reflective dialogue	Team facilitation skills Systemic focus in team process consultation	Creating positive team condition Working with the team's context; working across boundaries, mapping external relationships, establishing team reputation and developing strategy Enabling learning dialogues; initiating inquiries, knowledge sharing, sense making, giving and receiving feedback, embracing conflicting perspectives, questioning assumptions, co-creating
Wonderland	Irrationality in organisations Curiosity, vulnerability and reflexivity in coaching	Working with the self in coaching	Reflecting on self within team process consultation	Recognising the vulnerable self in practice as a catalyst for curiosity and learning Working with complexity, contradiction, absurdity and nonsense in organisational life Encouraging a culture of curiosity and reflexivity within the team

In the chapter thus far I have outlined the framework of team coaching, drawing upon four metaphorical perspectives to explain what is going on when I am coaching a team. I demonstrate how a framework enables me to develop mastery in my practice in-the-moment, during preparation and supervision, and in developing a learning curriculum for others. I have therefore demonstrated how I have met my research objectives i) to develop greater confidence and mastery as a team coach, ii) to contribute to the knowledge base of team coaching practice and iii) to shape a curriculum of team coach education that would enable me to support the development of others.

In the next section, I reflect upon the approach to the research itself and evaluate how well I was able to remain true to my research commitments, and offer a contribution to the development of autoethnographic research.

7.4. Evaluating the research process

In Chapter 2, I explained that I was committed to developing a research approach that enabled practice-based enquiry and embraced social constructionism as a way of understanding how we develop knowledge. In addition, I stated my intention to adopt storytelling to enable sense making. In this section I now evaluate how effective the autoethnographic approach has been in meeting these fundamental commitments. To frame the evaluation, I return to the criteria described in Chapter 2 section 2.2. where I stated my intention that my research would be impactful, credible, engaging, reflexive and ethical (Tracy, 2010).

7.4.1. Evaluating the research process: Impactful research

At the commencement of the research process I outlined my motives for completing this particular project. I could have been personally satisfied merely to achieve objective one, and to develop my own practice. However, to demonstrate that this was a piece of impactful research it was important to make contributions that go beyond my own personal concerns (Tracy, 2010). In the section above I outline contributions to knowledge and practice that others can use. Through these contributions I assert that I have responded to critics of the autoethnographic method (Delamont, 2009) and show how personal experience can contribute to a broader understanding.

7.4.2. Evaluating the research process: Credible research

In Chapter 2 I describe the journey of discovery through action research and practice-based research methodologies that ultimately brought me to this autoethnographic study. Autoethnography enables practice-based enquiry as it allows the practitioner to immerse themselves within their own field of practice; to collate fieldwork data where they are the subject of enquiry. Recording my experiences with my teams and fellow professional coaches created a rich data set with which it was possible to balance theoretical analysis with evocative descriptions of practice (Tedlock, 2013; Wall, 2016). This combination of being embedded in practice, offering multiple perspectives through the voices of others and robust theoretical analysis, lends a credibility to my study.

7.4.3. Evaluating the research process: Engaging research

I wanted to create a piece of engaging research that has resonance for my intended readers, coach practitioners and developing coaches. Therefore, in addition to the issues of credibility described above, I have found that adopting an autoethnographic approach has challenged the way I write about my research.

I have rejected impenetrable forms of academic text in favour of vignettes where the embodied sense making (Cunliffe and Coupland, 2011) is revealed with transparency, allowing readers to connect with their own emotional experiences (Bochner, 2000) within the messiness of practice.

Committing to an evocative form of writing was not easy. At times, I have asked myself why I did not take a more conventional route that would have enabled me to extract themes from a qualitative data set. Adding the creative vignettes seemed like an additional burden that I could have avoided. This challenge became even more difficult when I realised I could not merely dramatise events directly, but had to create fictional accounts to resolve ethical issues of protecting anonymity.

7.4.4. Evaluating the research process: Reflexive research

Throughout the research process and the writing of the thesis I have made a commitment to adopting reflexive approaches and to make this reflexivity transparent. In planning the fieldwork, I was conscious of my positions as researcher, practitioner and research subject. To manage the overlapping boundaries, I instigated reflective writing immediately after each coaching encounter as well as at periodic points in the research process. At these times I could write from the different perspectives and explore any competing concerns. To manage myself during the fieldwork period I established the principle that the clients were my priority. When I experienced anxiety around a research activity being compromised due to the needs of my practice, such as the recording of a coaching session or the sharing of reflective diaries, I reminded myself of the principle of prioritising practice. This proved very effective and helped guide decisions.

I felt confident that, later, I could tell the story of the practice and therefore the research could continue, even if I had cause to adjust my approach.

Throughout the analysis phases, I enjoyed the layers of reflexivity built into my emerging process, from asking a simple question *what is going on here?* through to a more challenging deconstructive approach of – *what else could be going on here? Which story is not being told?*

The final layer of reflexivity has been within the research supervision process itself where my doctoral supervisors have helped me become aware of blind spots and assumptions, particularly in relation to my residual need to demonstrate a scientific method and my functionalist and managerial leanings towards OD. Often these unconscious leanings are betrayed by use of functional or reductive language undermining my espoused values of social constructionism. This process has parallels in the coaching supervision process where my ingrained assumptions around the need to control ambiguity and add value by providing the answer are gently explored and challenged in supportive supervision.

7.4.5. Evaluating the research process: Ethical research

At the end of Chapter 2 I reflected upon the ways in which I have attempted to conduct ethical research that recognises the need to protect participants through anonymity and informed consent. Throughout the course of the project, I was challenged to live up to the standards that I set for myself, particularly where participants could be identified through their evident relationships with me. I am fortunate in working with professionals who share an interest in personal development and reflective practice, such that they are tolerant of the transparent nature of the process and familiar with revealing the self in the service of learning. However, I feel I could have done more along the way to re-contract with participants about content we were sharing and to regain consents as the key messages and themes have emerged. Whilst protection of identities via fictionalisation has been a pragmatic solution, I believe I could make further efforts in future to keep participants engaged in the emerging findings. This would mean sharing my work more often with those involved and giving the opportunity to raise any concerns about ideas presented that could be attributable. I also feel a huge debt of gratitude, particularly to the professional coaching groups for their willingness to share their stories. Their insights have informed my thinking and I want to acknowledge their contributions when I disseminate further.

7.4.6. Evaluating the research process: A methodological contribution

At the start of this section, I outlined my commitment to creating a flexible form of practice-based research utilising autoethnography. I conclude this section by claiming a methodological contribution that adds to our understanding of autoethnography as a research method, and provides finer detail of the implementation approach. Doloriert and Sambrook (2012: 86) present three perspectives of organisational autoethnography. These are '*autoethnography within HE settings*,' '*autoethnography reflecting on previous life or other life experiences*' and finally '*autoethnography as complete member research*' in other organisations. My research has embraced elements of all of these contexts, participating within both a Higher Education setting and as a coach within a client organisation, as well as reflecting upon my 'other life' of being a coach. However, I would emphasise a fourth perspective that could reside within all these categories, that of autoethnography to explore professional practice within

organisational research. A small number of personal-practice based autoethnographies exist (Duncan, 2004; Gibbon, 2011), however I hope my contribution may encourage others to follow this path; in my area of executive education where I am supporting professionals to develop their leadership and coaching practice I would particularly encourage this research approach.

I described in Chapter 2 how autoethnographic texts are often short on methodological details (Anderson and Glass-Coffin, 2013) and therefore outlined my methodological choices in a transparent way; separating fieldwork and analysis and describing a five-phase process of analysis and interpretation, summarised in Figure 2.1. I offer this combination of fieldwork and analysis as a contribution to autoethnographical methods.

In this chapter thus far I have detailed the theoretical, practical and methodological contributions emerging from my research project. However, any project has limitations and leaves aspects of the topic unexplored. In the next section I outline elements of my research project that could be developed further and suggest future avenues for my own research.

7.5. Areas for future research

During the development of the team coaching framework I have been conscious that certain aspects of my practical fieldwork were not developed as fully as others. In this section, I review the topics that have remained unexplored and argue for their consideration in future research. The topics include: Contracting; the relationship between the coach and team leader; coaching individuals on a 1:1 basis along with team coaching; research exploring team members' experiences of specific coaching approaches; and team coach vulnerability.

7.5.1. Areas for future research: Contracting with the team

Contracting is a foundational activity within all coaching engagements (Lee, 2013) as this process establishes the basis for the professional relationship, sets objectives for the development, and clarifies the expectations of all parties, both coach and coachee and also third party stakeholders. Thorough and sensitive

contracting to establish trust and confidentiality is also seen as a core activity in establishing an effective coaching relationship (Cox, 2012).

Throughout my fieldwork I refer to aspects of the contracting process, and examples of contracting-type activities are apparent in my coaching approaches. For example, within team as machine I talk about establishing clarity of goals and development objectives emerging from the team assessment process. In team as family I refer to 1:1 meetings to establish expectations of the coaching work with each team member. Also within team as family I describe the hosting process to establish the safe environment for coaching. In team as living system I describe how the professional coaches were aware of contextual issues challenging the boundaries of their remit and in some cases their recognition of the need to re-contract with organisational stakeholders about what might be affecting a team's performance. Additionally, I describe working with the team to establish their own team contracts more broadly with their stakeholders, to clarify expectations of the team in their wider context, which then informs the developmental work we might do together.

In this research project I used contracting as a start point to disrupt our thinking about the nature of the coaching relationship and to offer Wonderland as an alternative narrative where we are uncertain about what we may be contracting about. Therefore, I have not explored the practical behaviours when in contracting mode. However, contracting is an ongoing activity and in future research the contracting issues arising from a team coaching assignment could be explored more fully than these fleeting glimpses into the relevant issues have allowed. It would be useful to follow the thread of contracting activity from the start to the end of a team coaching assignment in order to highlight the challenges and choices I am making along the way. Contracting within team coaching appears to have additional challenges to those raised within dyadic coaching, firstly because of the multiple relationships between the coach and team members and secondly because of the issues arising from the team's organisational context. As I described in Chapter 5: Team as Living System Metaphor, the contextual issues appear to take a more prominent position within the team coaching dialogue than in dyadic coaching as these issues were shared and experienced

by all team members. Issues that could be explored in more depth within the contracting process from a living system perspective include questions such as: Who initiated the coaching? Who has expectations of the team coaching? What is the coach's responsibility to the team members? What is the coach's responsibility to the organisation?

7.5.2. Areas for future research: The relationship with the team leader

During discussions with the professional coaches in fieldwork site three, a number of participants described how they would routinely coach a team leader along with the team. Individual team leader coaching is thought to support the overall developmental effort and provide the team leader with additional capabilities to coach the team themselves, and to lead more effectively when the formal coaching assignment ends (Carr and Peters, 2013). Within the scope of my research I did not feel I had the capacity to explore this area fully, as I sensed there was a complex interplay of roles and relationships between a team, their leader and the coach.

I describe in Chapter 2 how the team in fieldwork site one were uncomfortable with having the team leader as part of the development process, and ultimately the developmental team that I worked with excluded the team leader from the work. In the fictional vignettes running through the thesis I depict Richard as a leader that, at times, seems distant and uncertain in his role. As the coach I am deliberating how I should work with him separately to enable him to recognise how his behaviours affect the team's performance. In future research I would want to consider this unique relationship in more depth. In particular I want to consider if the coach has a unique contract with the leader which is separate from the relationship with the individuals in the team. Future research could explore the roles the coach plays with the leader and how the coach decides which of these roles are appropriate.

In a recent study, Rapp, Gilson, Mathieu and Ruddy (2015) explored the impact of external coaches on a team empowerment initiative and highlighted some of the challenges in relation to the team leaders in the process, for example where team leaders were not ready to relinquish control. This research aligns with the

challenges I have faced in my own fieldwork and coaching practice where a team is responsive to coaching in order to facilitate their growth and empowerment but the team leader behaviours appear detrimental to the development effort. The question of the coach's role in working with the team leader along with the team would appear to have some interesting potential for future research. This topic also relates to the area of contracting described above. If a team leader has a unique role in a team, it may be appropriate that the coach has a unique contract with them, along with contracts with team members and other organisational stakeholders. These are issues which are only hinted at within my current study.

7.5.3. Areas for future research: Incorporating dyadic coaching approaches to support team coaching initiatives

Team coaching research sometimes refers to coaching initiatives that are based on 1:1 coaching carried out individually with the whole team (Anderson, Anderson and Mayo, 2008) whereas others describe individual coaching along with the team-based interventions (Carr and Peters, 2015). In my practice I have led team coaching interventions where individual coaching was part of the overall package of activities. Whilst anecdotal evidence suggests that this can be a useful parallel process, further research is needed to explore how best to frame this individual intervention and to consider the interplay between this activity and the team coaching initiative. For example, in my practice I have experienced team members receiving 1:1 coaching as a precursor to the collective coaching approach, and as a process that ran alongside. In both cases, where personal 360-degree feedback was shared, I arranged 1:1 coaching for individuals to commence prior to the collective coaching to give team members time to make sense of their own data and consider possible implications for their own development. Further longitudinal research into coachee experiences of different approaches would be useful to consider implications and establish principles of best practice.

7.5.4. Areas for future research: Considering individual coaching approaches

Within my current study I have indicated a variety of coaching approaches; behavioural, solution-focussed, narrative, psychodynamic, etcetera, that

appeared to be useful as I practised in-the-moment with my teams. As I have considered the fieldwork experiences within each metaphor I have provided some discussion as to why each approach may contribute to the coaching objectives and makes sense in the context, given the theoretical perspective I was working with. For example, I noticed how narrative approaches appeared useful in revealing personal values and beliefs, and appeared to support strengthening trust and cohesion within a team.

In future research it would be useful to explore the different coaching approaches more directly and consider how the team members experienced these approaches. In this current study I kept my prompting questions to the participants very open when asking about their reflections of a session, therefore much of this research relies on my own interpretations of how different approaches appeared to shape the participants' experiences. In future research it could be useful to ask for direct feedback relating to individual coaching behaviours in order to hear a wider range of perspectives relating to the implications of each approach.

7.5.5. Areas for future research: Team coach vulnerability

In Chapter 1, I reflected upon my feelings of vulnerability as a team coach being a significant factor in motivating the research project. Later, in Chapter 7, I reflect upon the benefits of embracing vulnerability with a stance of not knowing to enable reflexivity and learning. I liken this perspective to Alice's childlike innocence and curiosity in the face of absurdity and nonsense in Wonderland. In sharing my metaphors with others I have found a significant resonance with the Wonderland metaphor and individuals have begun to share their own feelings of vulnerability, curiosity and uncertainty in different team coaching contexts. I sense I may have only just begun to unpick the surface layer of this topic area. In dyadic coaching there is limited research exploring anxiety and doubt within the coaching process (de Haan, 2008) and no mention of the presence of these phenomena in team coaching. Exploring vulnerability within team coach research could reveal additional questions around team coaching practice and may lead us towards developing further insights both conceptually and in practice.

7.5.6. Areas for future research: Developing research approaches

In this section so far I have considered future research areas with a focus on the gaps in knowledge, particularly in relation to developing aspects of team coaching practice. In the final part of this section I consider the research approaches that may lend themselves to these research areas.

Reflecting upon the topics for future research highlighted above I would like to return to action research approaches in future projects. The critical issue preventing action research this time around was my lack of a clear conceptual frame for team coaching. Now I have established a coaching framework I have a start point that I could investigate further through action research approaches. I would welcome the opportunity to work with my professional coaching group in a more formal cooperative inquiry process, developing our approaches to team coaching in a more formalised plan-do-review cycle, sharing our reflections, co-constructing meaning and developing our understandings of the practice, before planning future action. In particular, I would see the topic to develop deeper understandings of when and how to apply specific coaching approaches within team coaching being usefully explored through action research.

I may also consider cooperative inquiry as a method to explore contracting within team coaching assignments. Either I could co-opt an operational team to work with me to reflect upon the emerging contractual understandings as we navigate a coaching assignment, or I could work with professional coaches who would each be bringing their own contracting practices to a shared inquiry group. I perceive contracting to be an ongoing process throughout the coaching process and a series of inquiry conversations may enable reflections upon the nature of the process to emerge over time, whilst the inquiry group may also serve as a self-supervising support network where coaches could reflect upon their contracting approaches and try out different styles as they respond to the needs of their team context.

Thinking about the research questions relating to the relationship with team leaders, it may be appropriate to attempt a co-produced autoethnography in partnership with a team leader whom I work with in practice. Kempster and

Stewart (2013) produced a similar research project created through a series of reflective dialogues based on one party's professional experience. In my case I would attempt to take the process one step further, such that through dialogue and co-authoring we may be able to reveal the relational challenges inherent in negotiating both of our respective roles in this context. Whilst this type of autoethnography would still raise ethical challenges, the process of co-authoring may enable negotiation of what each author is prepared to reveal about their experience.

7.6. Dissemination of doctoral research

Sharing my research with others has been a developmental process throughout the doctoral journey. In the early stages I shared my ideas through poster presentation at my university's doctoral conference. Later I took my ideas to conferences aimed at joint research, and practice audiences at the coaching conference at Oxford Brookes (2015) and UFHRD (2015, 2016 and 2017) in the scholarly practitioner stream and later the coaching stream. The paper presented at the Oxford Brookes conference was subsequently published in a special issue of the *International Journal of Coaching and Mentoring Research and Practice*. I presented at British Academy of Management Conference (2016) where I joined the methodology stream. In addition, as described within the thesis, I have presented at the first International Team Learning Conference (2015) and to members and friends of the Association for Coaching in the North East (2016). A summary of my conference papers and journal publications to date are summarised in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5. Dissemination of doctoral research

Item	Title
Conference paper: Oxford Brookes' Coaching and Mentoring Conference 2015	<i>Autoethnography: A methodology to elucidate our own coaching practice</i>
Journal article: International Journal Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring (2015)	<i>Autoethnography: A methodology to elucidate our own coaching practice</i>
Conference paper: UFHRD 2015	<i>What is going on when I am coaching the team?</i>
Conference paper: Team Learning Conference 2015	<i>A Year in the Life of a Team Coach</i>
Conference paper: BAM 2016	<i>Autoethnography: Illuminating stories, elucidating practice in turbulent times</i>
Conference paper: UFHRD 2016	<i>What is going on when I am coaching the team?</i>
Conference paper: UFHRD 2017	<i>Taking a metaphorical view: A framework for team coaching</i>

7.7. My development as an academic: Where does the story go next?

Considering my future development, I am looking forward to continuing my journey through collaborations with colleagues both within professional coaching and the academy. Specifically, I will continue to lead a Special Interest Group (SIG) of team coaching with participants drawn from the Association for Coaching Co-Coaching Forum that has resided at Newcastle Business School since 2010. This SIG builds upon the professional coach dialogue groups (fieldwork site three) and I see potential to develop this group as a site of learning and, potentially, for future research. A number of the professional coaches who took part in the research have expressed an interest in continuing to meet to progress our collective development.

In research terms I have three immediate sources of future collaboration, the first is with the contributors to the UFHRD coaching and mentoring stream where I have been supported and encouraged over the past three years and there appears to be growing interest in the study of team and group coaching. The second opportunity for collaboration is with colleagues in Newcastle Business School who are developing an interest in team-based coaching as pedagogy for student learning. Staff who have come from traditional teaching approaches are developing an interest in developing their practice in working with student teams as sites of learning. Thirdly, I am keen to develop collaborations with colleagues at Oxford Brookes who have created a broad range of coaching research through their International Centre for Coaching and Mentoring Studies.

As I have described in the thesis thus far, this research project aimed to have impact with team coach practitioners. Therefore the final development strand is to continue to disseminate my findings in a variety of forms and I have begun to develop ideas for journal publications. However, an immediate next step is to embed my research into my institution's Coaching Masters programme in a module on organisational coaching, which will run for the first time in January 2018. As we continue to support our local group of coaching alumni and professional practitioners, I hope there is an opportunity to bring these communities of research and practice together, with joint activities in the years to come.

7.8. Summary of the chapter

In this final chapter I have presented the outcomes of my research project. I have demonstrated contributions to the conceptual understanding of team coaching through a metaphorical framework and added to the theory base of team coaching by bringing together a number of theoretical streams. I have described practice-based contributions in the form of coaching tools and techniques and described a coach curriculum based on the framework. Finally, I have outlined a methodological contribution by describing a detailed fieldwork and analysis process that explores practice through autoethnography.

Through these contributions I have demonstrated how I have responded to my research question *what is going on when I am coaching a team?* and how I have met each of the research objectives; i) to develop greater confidence and mastery as a team coach, ii) to contribute to the knowledge base of team coaching practice, and iii) to create a team coaching curriculum.

I have returned to the criteria for evaluating research that were discussed in Chapter 2 and reflected upon the ways in which my research has met these quality criteria. Finally, the chapter explores opportunities for future research, considering the topics, the approaches and the colleagues who may collaborate with me. So the journey of development continues and I suspect autoethnography may be more than a research method, it may have become a way of living. The final words are from Douglass and Carless (2013: 85) who express how the research starts all over again.

Something Is Missing

Where and why?

What is the problem?

I felt a need - that is not being met

Now, you might be wrong

I hear the tale you are telling

But it's partial, incomplete

...something is missing

Douglass and Carless (2013: 85)

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Summary of Appendices

Chapter two

Research design

- Appendix 2.1 Organisational and individual consent forms
- Appendix 2.2 Examples of Field work data collection.
- Appendix 2.3 Thematic maps from fieldwork site two
- Appendix 2.4 Getting started with creative writing: synopsis of each fieldwork site
- Appendix 2.5 Team learning Conference: Experiences and Reflections
- Appendix 2.6: Deconstructing stories: Character pairs
- Appendix 2.7 Fieldwork data illustrating metaphors
- Appendix 2.8. Team coaching vignettes: The Brampton Story

Chapter seven

A framework of team coaching

- Appendix 7.1 Comprehensive Team survey questions based on framework of team coaching
- Appendix 7.2 Planning a team coaching assignment
- Appendix 7.3 Reflecting on the metaphorical framework of team coaching to prepare a team coaching curriculum.

Appendix 2.1 Ethical consent forms
Informed Consent Form for research participants

Title of Study:	How can a team-coach enable team learning?
Person(s) conducting the research:	Joanne James
Programme of study:	DBA
Address of the researcher for correspondence:	Joanne James Rm 435 Newcastle Business School City Campus East Newcastle NE1
Telephone:	01912273054
E-mail:	Joanne.james@northumbria.ac.uk
Description of the broad nature of the research:	<p><u>The research seeks to answer the question “How does a team coach enable team learning?”</u></p> <p>By exploring and reflecting on my own practice as a team coach and working with colleagues, clients and peers who also want to explore this aspect of their own practice I am seeking to make a contribution to practice whereby I can articulate a conceptual framework that explains how a coach may enable team learning and ultimately team performance. This framework will inform my own coaching approach to working with leadership teams and enable me to disseminate this knowledge to others such as managers who want to adopt a coaching approach within their team based organisations.</p> <p>The research approach is ‘participatory action research’ where a community sharing a common interest in exploring an aspect of practice come together to plan, execute a reflect on their work during a series of research cycles with the aim of learning, taking action and creating change.</p> <p>I will be working simultaneously as a researcher and a practitioner coach from the outset of the project and as such I require participants to be aware of this from the start.</p> <p>The implications are that I will be observing the processes and interactions within the team</p>

	<p>from the perspective of a researcher wanting to understand the processes of team learning as well as a coach aiming to work reflexively with you to enable team performance. I will capture my observations and reflections in an electronic diary after our sessions. I may chose to bring some reflections back to the group at a later meeting to encourage dialogue and reflection. This may be for the purposes of both team learning (our work together as practitioners) or learning about the learning (our work together as a participatory action researchers).</p> <p>Participants will have the option to withdraw their participation at anytime.</p>
<p>Description of the involvement expected of participants including the broad nature of questions to be answered or events to be observed or activities to be undertaken, and the expected time commitment:</p>	<p>You are invited to join me in exploring the research question: “how does a team coach enable team learning?”</p> <p>I have agreed to provide a team-coaching role to support this team, and understand that one of your team objectives is to develop your professional practice as team coaches.</p> <p>To explore this question and support your professional development you are invited to reflect on your own learning as team coaches and the processes of learning within your team and the team you are coaching.</p> <p>This data collection will take the form of participants keeping an electronic reflective diary after each team meeting and engaging in reflective dialogue to interpret and learn from our experiences of working together. This reflective dialogue will be recorded during our team meetings on a monthly basis.</p> <p>You may also wish to bring feedback from your students in to the sessions and consent will be requested separately from them to allow student feedback to form part of the material for discussion.</p>
<p>Description of how the data you provide will be securely stored and/or</p>	<p>Research diaries will be collected at the end of each action- research cycle when each respondent’s data will be allocated a code so that responses remain anonymous. Team</p>

<p>destroyed upon completion of the project.</p>	<p>meetings will be transcribed /stored electronically with names removed.</p> <p>During the analysis phase themes will be explored and individual quotes may be used to illustrate key learning or insights.</p> <p>This work will be shared with you as it progresses and will only be used with your permission.</p> <p>All data will be password protected.</p>
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Information obtained in this study, including this consent form, will be kept strictly confidential (i.e. will not be passed to others) and anonymous (i.e. individuals and organisations will not be identified *unless this is expressly excluded in the details given above*).

Data obtained through this research may be reproduced and published in a variety of forms and for a variety of audiences related to the broad nature of the research detailed above. It will not be used for purposes other than those outlined above without your permission.

Participation is entirely voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time.

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you fully understand the above information and agree to participate in this study on the basis of the above information.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Please keep one copy of this form for your own records

RESEARCH ORGANISATION INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Faculty of Business and Law
University of Northumbria

Completion of this form is required whenever research is being undertaken by Business and Law staff or students within any organisation. This applies to research that is carried out on the premises, or is about an organisation, or members of that organisation or its customers, as specifically targeted as subjects of research.

The researcher must supply an explanation to inform the organisation of the purpose of the study, who is carrying out the study, and who will eventually have access to the results. In particular issues of anonymity and avenues of dissemination and publications of the findings should be brought to the organisations' attention.

Researcher's Name: _____ Joanne
James _____

Student ID No. (if applicable): _____

Researcher's Statement:

The project involves participative action research (AR) with team coaches engaged in working with students on the [REDACTED] programme. The research seeks to answer the question "How does a team coach enable team learning?" By exploring and reflecting on my own practice as a team coach and working with colleagues, clients and peers who also want to explore this aspect of their own practice I am seeking to make a contribution to practice whereby I can articulate a conceptual framework that explains how a coach may enable team learning and ultimately team performance. This framework will inform my own coaching approach to working with leadership teams and enable me to disseminate this knowledge to others such as managers who want to adopt a coaching approach within their team based organisations.

The research will take the form of participant observation; reflective diaries and transcripts from team meetings. Research participants will be invited to jointly participate in interpreting the data as part of the learning process. As part of the learning process the team coaches participating in the study will be encouraged to obtain feedback from their student teams and this feedback may form part of the materials shared within team meetings and reflective logs.

In order for this material to be ethically made available to this researcher's project I will request informed consent from students to have their feedback data brought in to the research project domain. They will be provided with a version of the participant's individual consent forms to provide students with the back ground to the study and to obtain informed consent at this stage once a process for obtaining feedback is established with the coaches themselves.

In order to establish and maintain clear understanding of the use of their feedback data I will meet with the students at the outset to explain the rationale and process

of the project and will make myself available to answer student queries during the research period.

In order to ensure continued protection of the student data I will instigate a check step at the beginning of each team meeting with Group 1 (██████████) that any data they are about to share needs to be covered by student consent and ensure any issues are aired and resolved. Student feedback given to staff by any student who does not want to have their data introduced to the team setting will be excluded from the meeting.

I will be available to meet with any students at any time during the research period to respond to questions and concerns.

This project with ██████ is part of a wider piece of research exploring team coaching also working with research participants from ██████████ Council and Professional Coaches who are members of the ██████████g. The professional coaches will form a reflective learning group providing feedback & critique on the research plan, findings and conclusions. The intention of this group is to obtain 3rd party perspectives how the work resonates with their own practice.

Whilst individual participant input will remain anonymous and organisation data will remain confidential the researcher aims to share themes and to disseminate learning across all participant groups involved in the study as part of developing further opportunities for learning.

Any organisation manager or representative who is empowered to give consent may do so here:

Name: _____

Position/Title: _____

Organisation Name: _____

Location: _____

If the organisation is the Faculty of Business and Law please completed the following:

Start/End Date of Research / Consultancy project:	Start: Oct 2013 End: Oct 2016
Programme Year Sample to be used: seminar group entire year etc.	████████████████████ Cohort 1 – entry 2013/14 Entire year

Has Programme Director/Leader, Module Tutor being consulted, informed.	Yes , [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are aware and supportive
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Anonymity must be offered to the organisation if it does not wish to be identified in the research report. Confidentiality is more complex and cannot extend to the markers of student work or the reviewers of staff work, but can apply to the published outcomes. If confidentiality is required, what form applies?

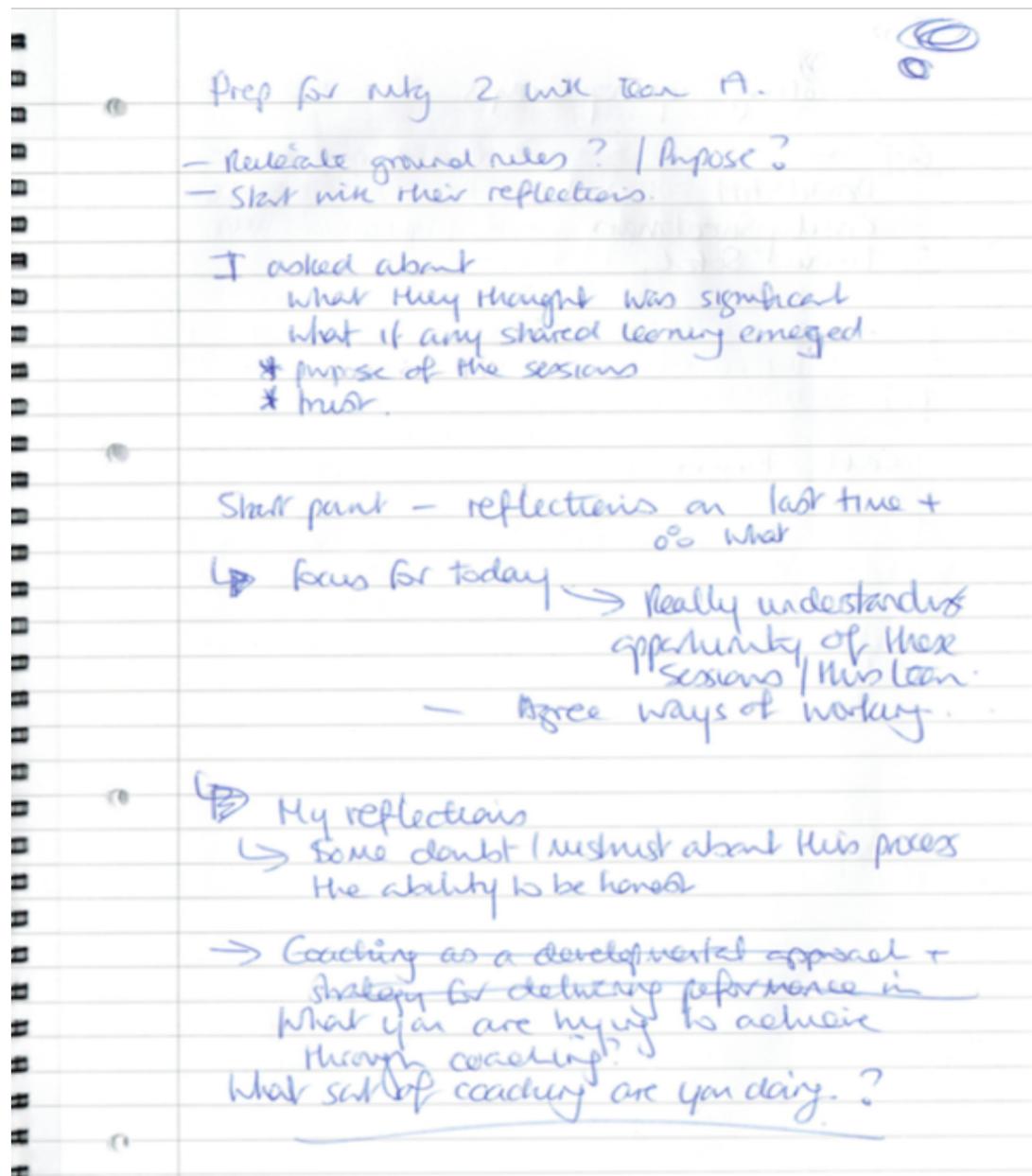
- No confidentiality required
- Masking of organisation name in research report
- No publication of the research results without specific organisational consent
 - Other by agreement as specified by addendum

Signature: _____ Date: _____

This form can be signed via email if the accompanying email is attached with the signer's personal email address included. The form cannot be completed by phone, rather should be handled via post.

Appendix 2.2 Examples of Field work data collection.

Field work site 1: Local Authority Team Diary notes March 2014



Field work site 1: Local Authority Team
Reflective Diary notes July 2014

July 4th 2014

Reflections on mtg with ~~the~~ combined team.

I was very excited on Wednesday after the session. I felt proud of them as a group and delighted to see what they had produced. All of them came prepared & even ~~the~~ who claimed to have forgotten about it had thought about the question & shared her model of coaching & Kolb & developing a reflective approach.

It was useful for all of us to hear them articulate their understandings of coaching. It felt like the most productive meeting, I'm sure they felt on more solid ground.

After sharing they were energized, lots of ideas flowing, I was trying to capture them, I'm not sure at this point they were listening very well to each other.

I was conscious in the session to make each person feel valued for what they had brought especially ~~the~~. I'm also conscious of wanting to shut ~~the~~ up, to contain her - am I threatened by her? Or am I concerned she dominates the group because she knows a little bit more than them.

Ultimately they felt empowered & suggested an away day for the wider team which would focus on a similar role of sharing practice, values & approaches. I'm excited to see what happens next.

Field work site 1: Local Authority Team
Example of participant diary entry Jan 2014

Hi all,

Thank you for your time and contributions last week. I would like your reflections on the session. Please keep your own copies of your replies as I will invite you to share some of your reflections at the start of our next

session. Please just answer the questions where you feel you have something to say.

Q1. What are your thoughts/ feelings about the team session?

- There was an environment of trust from the outset.
- We were all able to be honest and open about our feelings about team coaching.
- I felt that I could completely trust the integrity of the facilitator.
- At the start of the session I was surprised at the reluctance of some of my colleagues to engage with the process
- By the end of the session members of the group felt that there could be great value in team coaching. I felt that this shift was due to time being given to explore people's concerns.

Q.2 What happened in this session that seems significant for you?

- There was a valuable and lengthy discussion before ground rules could be established. I thought that it showed great wisdom on the part of the facilitator that this was not stifled
- People were able to air their concerns about the process
- A consensus was reached about the way forward

Q3. What did you appreciate about the behaviours of any of the team members or the coach in the session?

I valued the honesty of my fellow team members

Q4. Were you aware of any shared understanding or shared learning developing through the discussion?

We feel that we have the opportunity to build on recent experiences of working as a team

**Field work site 1: Local Authority Team
Example of participant diary entry Dec 2014**

Hi everyone,

I just wanted to thank you all for your time and commitment to the coaching supervision team and to my research interests over the past 12 months. It would be very helpful to get your reflections on how you felt you worked as a team in the last session and your overall feelings and observations about the process overall.

Q1. What are your thoughts/ feelings about the last team session?

It raised lots of questions and reflections in itself but these were positively focused on how we move forward. It was forward thinking and the team approach to finding a solution definitely is the most productive way to work things through.

Q.2 What happened in this session that seems significant for you?

The way that we worked together on how to move things forward and how that worked as each member brought an idea or helped work through an issue. This was really productive and it struck me we don't do enough of this when faced with issues in our service. There always seems to be a 'snap' decision made that doesn't engage people in the process.

Q3. What did you appreciate about the behaviours of any of the team members or the coach in the session?

As always the honesty of the group in saying how they find things and how they work through problems. Also the ability to not say things when it's clear someone is trying to work things through themselves (like I do when I talk too much!). The supportive atmosphere and lack of rebuke is refreshing too.

Q4. Were you aware of any shared understanding or shared learning developing through the discussion?

Shared understanding of where we are, where we could be, where we need to be and how we might get there. Shared learning about each other's preferences in terms of moving forward and how we might do that in a way that suits the needs of the group.

Overall thoughts about working as a team and team coaching

It hasn't been easy but has been a great opportunity to work things through together. The fact that we were able to develop our own team and way of working together was very good, although this is not replicated in other areas of our work. We have been able to identify differences within the styles in the ALA but I do think that we are not given the opportunity to develop this more with the whole management team or to develop this as part of our review of our individual performance.

It has been really beneficial to have someone that is not part of the organisation working with us as there is no sense of hidden agenda or politics behind the work being done. It has meant that the discussions can be much more open and free and that I feel like what I say is not going to be taken down and held against me at a later date!

Fieldwork site 2: University management Team
Field notes March 2014

NBS Session 2 Merchants
 • No delivery of content (less?)
 • Taught vs coached
 • What would be useful when / shot briefs
 - Entrepreneurial behaviors
 - Biz leaders?
 Hybrid uncomfortable
 Getting them active
 out there doing things.
 - My intention is it then is it ya
 ↳ Was that a useful intention - No!
 ↳ Coaching sessions - they don't make notes
 don't have a sense learning
 happens in the coaching sessions.
 - Directive vs non directive -
 ↳ I made intervention about sketch + using assessment
 - as a vehicle for this
 plus challenges to create sketch
 builds on their idea of the customer need
 What is key is the team are very focussed on doing the
 task so they are not so keen to focus on their own
 learning.
 They are developing shared understanding.

How would we
 create a team
 Learning contract
 What are our
 rules as a coach
 - what would we
 do

Fieldwork site 2: University management Team

Participant diary March 2014

E mail from me sent on Monday after Friday March 14th session

Thank you for your time in the session on Friday. I have sent a reminder of the questions for reflection. I would be really helpful to do it sooner rather than later so the thoughts are fresh in your mind.

Q1. What are your thoughts/ feelings about the team session?

As ever I was completely unprepared having given no thought to an agenda for our meeting – whether that was an unconscious expectation that Jo would do this or not I don't know!

A good opportunity to get together to discuss the programme & where we are at currently; particularly good to follow up discussion we had as a coaching team in [REDACTED]

Q.2 What happened in this session that seems significant for you?

The most significant part for myself was the suggestion of utilizing assessment as the driver for learning & linking all elements to assessment (book points, attendance/engagement etc).

Q3. What did you appreciate about the behaviours of any of the team members or the coach in the session?

The degree of openness of all; a willingness to share ideas & listen to views of others without being judgmental. The 'space' created to air our individual thoughts/concerns – for me that is quite powerful – to place trust in colleagues allowing this to happen.

Q4. Were you aware of any shared understanding or shared learning developing through the discussion?

A shared desire to amend the programme to create something which is engaging & more challenging in the first academic year in terms of entrepreneurial activity.

Q5. What would you like to focus on in the next session?

A greater focus on our own learning as a team of coaches. Whilst both sessions have been extremely useful there is a tendency to focus upon the students and/or the programme rather than ourselves as a coaching team.

I'm still at a little bit of a loss as to my understanding of what the role of coach on the programme should be – to me this currently feels like part tutor, part mentor, part coach, part parent! So clarification of what the role should be/could be would be useful.

**Fieldwork site 2: University management Team
Participant Diary from July 2014**

I thought it was an enjoyable and useful session. I think we were getting much closer to a coach development type of dialogue, especially when (with Jo's encouragement) we did a bit more digging into each other's philosophy's.

Q.2 What happened in this session that seems significant for you?

I need to work at listening better to [REDACTED] and to digging deeper into what he says so I can understand his personal perspectives more clearly. He spoke less than [REDACTED] and I. I felt I got too carried away with my own stuff and stopped really listening to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] at times.

Q3. What did you appreciate about the behaviours of any of the team members or the coach in the session?

I appreciated the way Jo suggested we dug a little deeper into individual coaching philosophy's. I appreciated listening to [REDACTED] concerns about coaching and finding that I could identify with many of them. I also really liked the fact that [REDACTED] captured the principles/values (whatever!) and shared them so quickly after the session.

Q4. Were you aware of any shared understanding or shared learning developing through the discussion?

Lots of overlap including areas for action and areas where everybody's confidence is thin.

Q5. What would you like to focus on in the next session?

I think for me future sessions (more generally) need to focus on developmental coaching issues which are supported by colleagues in a non-judgmental, nor evaluative way.

Fieldwork site 3: Professional Coaches discussion groups
 Example reflective notes May 2014



Fieldwork site 3: Professional Coaches discussion groups

Example field notes July 2014

Cooperative Inquiry Army For field notes
Kick off group 2. July 1st 2014

Cath - client wanted team coaching because too expensive to do 1:1 coaching.

- How agreed are the goals
- How do I build a relationship with the group by building individual relationships
- Relationship with the contracting person.
- How much to use different
- How do you embed the learning.
- How much are you in the driving seat.
- Teams - what is the role of the coach
- Contracting
- How much is context
- Do people come together bringing cultural strands & organizational dynamic

Difficult to name it. (what I do).

See organizational

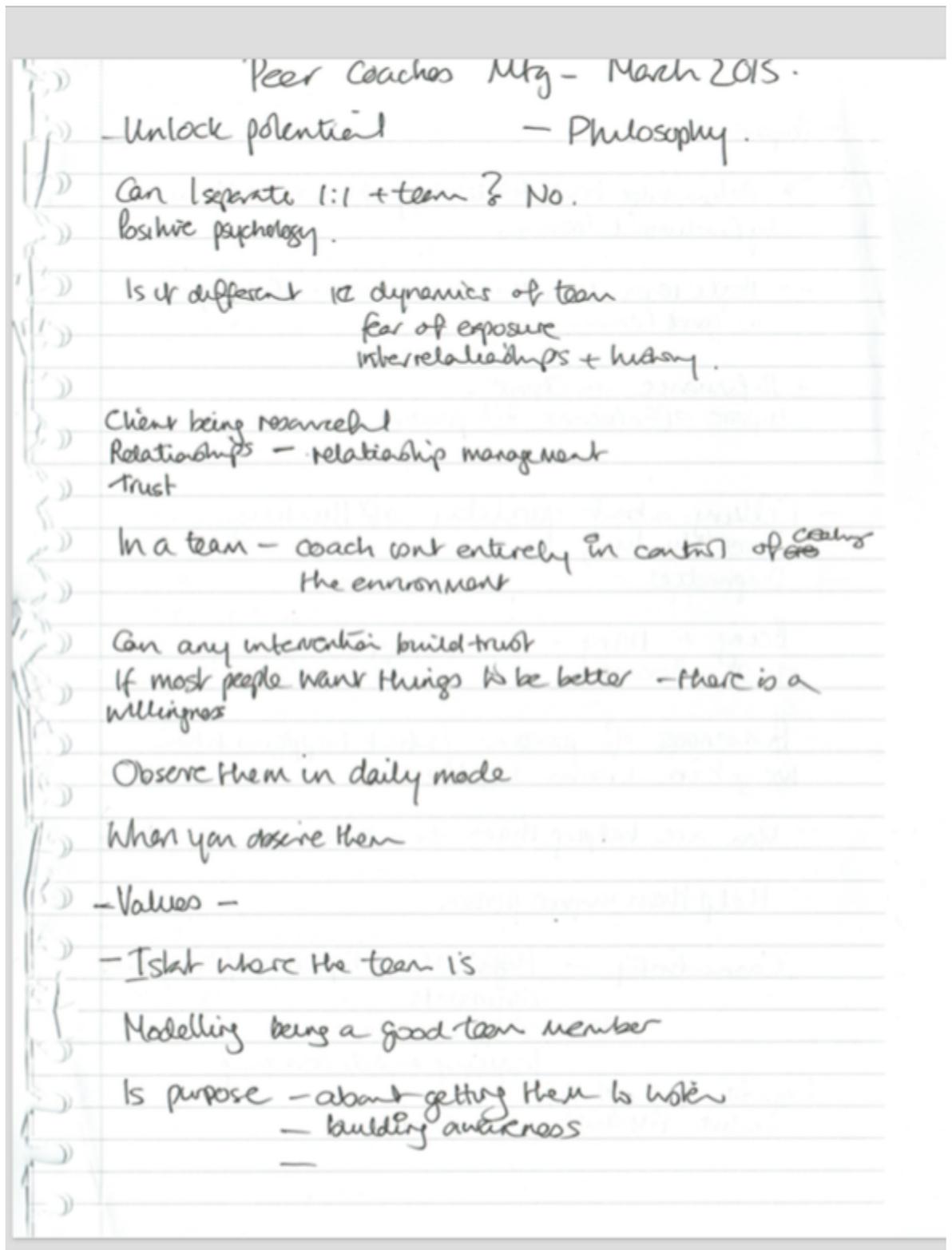
psych Coaching.

Do I teach teams
↳ it depends

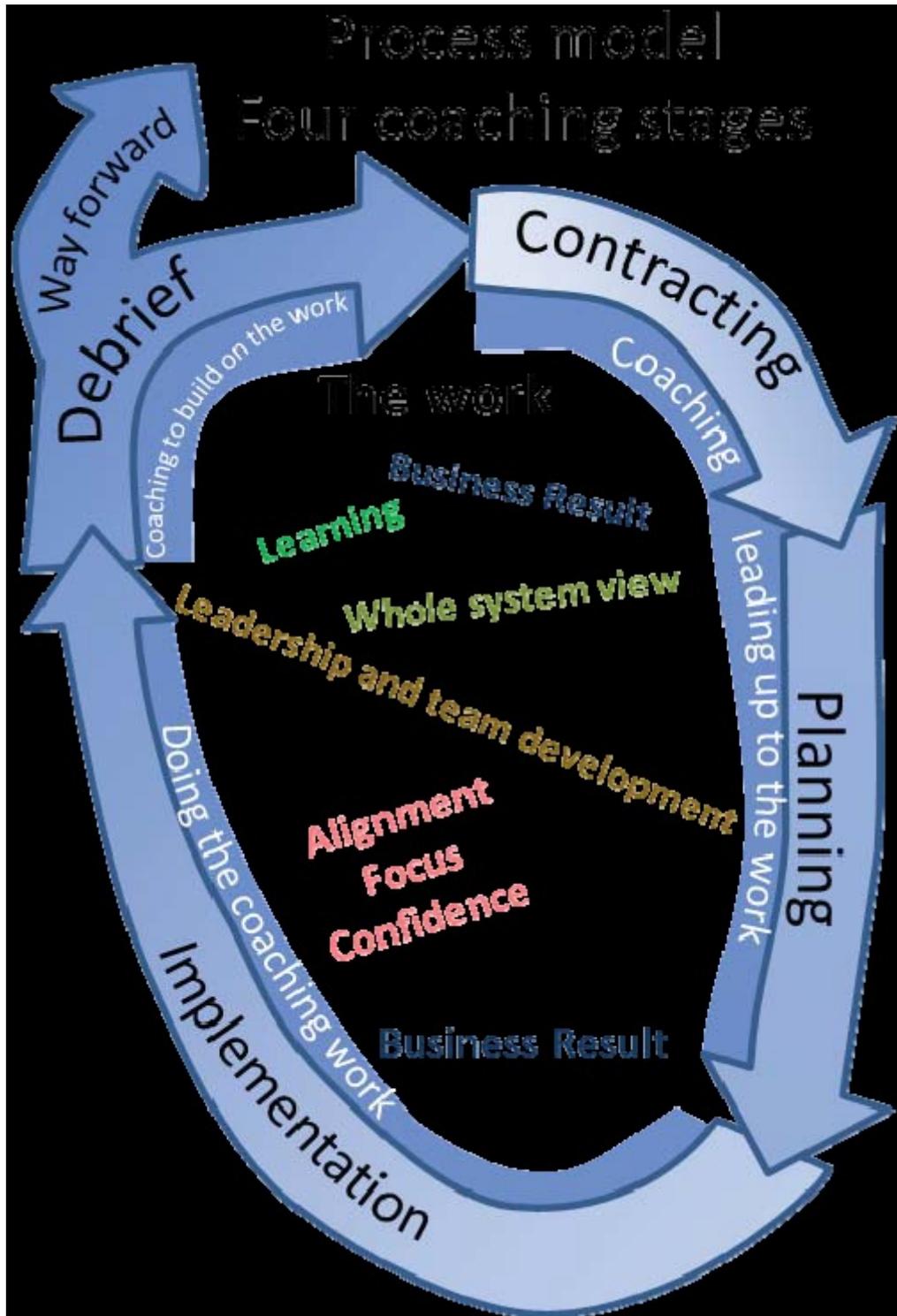
Coaching
Awareness as the coach
A catalyst role?

- Contract - Do 10 people want different things to hear

Fieldwork site 3: Professional Coaches discussion groups
Example field notes March 2015



Fieldwork site 3: Professional Coaches discussion groups
Participant 2 correspondence March 2015



Fieldwork site 3: Professional Coaches discussion groups

Participants 3 correspondence March 2015

Peer coach responses to the question what is your purpose, philosophy and approaches

Here are some thoughts for starters

Respondent 1

Underpinning Philosophy

- I start from the human premise that people genuinely want to contribute positively to their teams
- And, that all teams would like to do better - even high performing teams
- Teams find it hard to get quality time together to do this kind of development (pressures of business get in the way)
- They often look to a coach/facilitator as the catalyst to enable different conversations

Purpose of the coaching

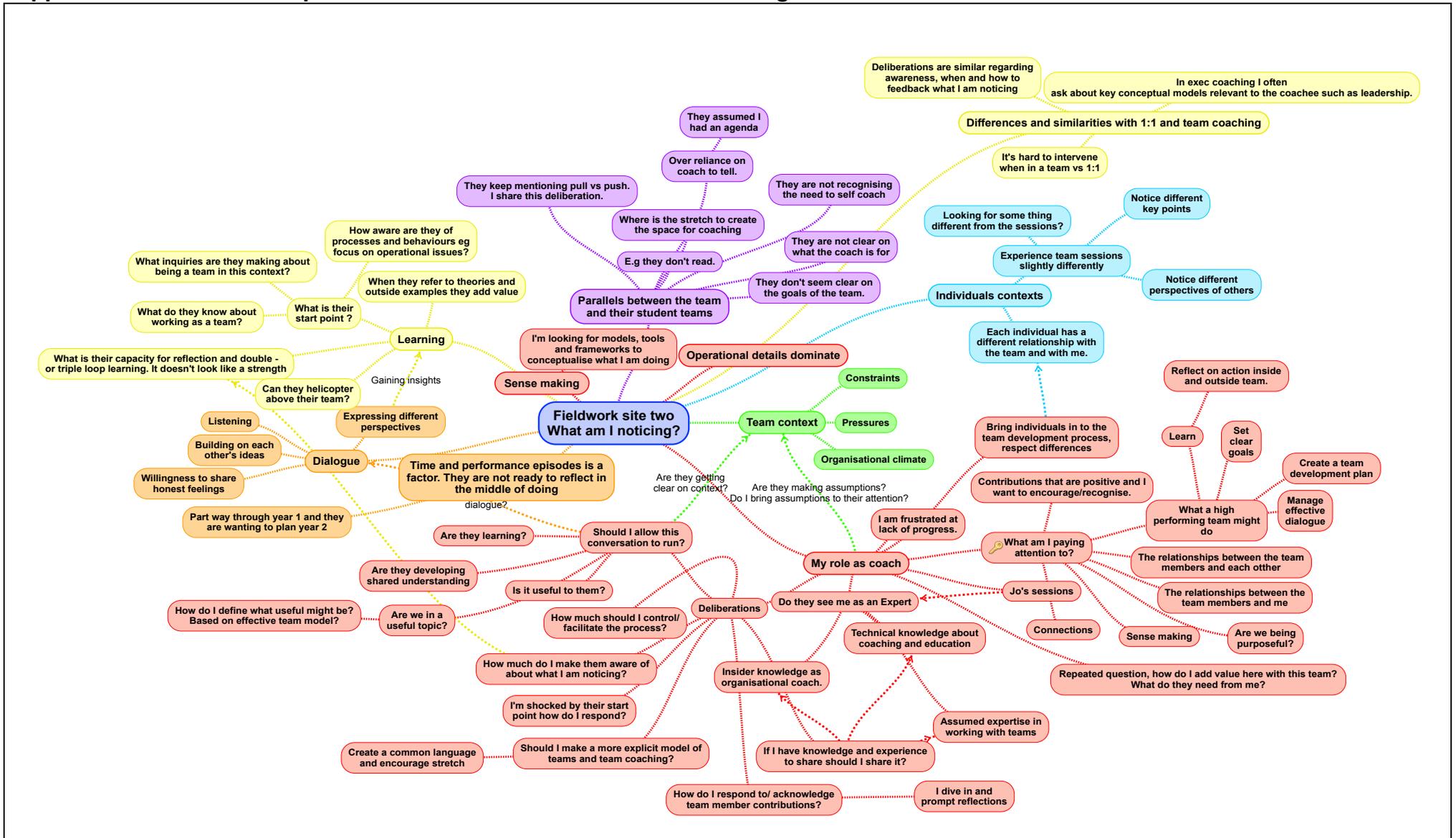
- Usually, time out to step back from running the business to explore and understand each other better
- Develop a deeper and higher quality level of trust
- Share feelings as well as thoughts/ideas
- Sometimes, draw up a set of protocols as to how this team will work together in future
- Tackle specific business issues in a safe, facilitated environment

Techniques and Approaches

- **ARK** Associates use our own approach called **██████** This encourages teams to take time on each of the components - thinking, listening and communicating - to significantly improve the quality during the session.
- Nancy Kline's "Time to think" sets out 10 criteria for effective thinking together
- I often start a session by asking people "What is important for us to think about today?" almost regardless of what the pre-session agenda
- Marshall Goldsmith uses an approach which gets team members to share deeper thoughts/feelings, using the question "When I get better at....." and giving everyone several turns to speak, uninterrupted, on this matter

Happy to expand further on, or before, 25th March

Appendix 2.3 Thematic map from fieldwork site two: What am I noticing?



Fieldwork site two: character map



Appendix 2.4 Examples of getting started with creative writing

1. Writing brief synopsis of each fieldwork site

Fieldwork site one story.

Ambitious plans for a developmental initiative seem dashed before they begin when I stumble upon disharmony between management and staff. Hardworking dedicated professionals thwarted by the constraints of organisational life are ambivalent about their capacity to influence change. Reflective contemplation and creativity temporarily transforms and energises before the pressures of everyday close in again. Along the way, dialogue, understanding and search for meaning inspire acts of autonomy and collaboration. Human spirit ignites but the tsunami of institutional constraint prevails. The team disbands but faint footprints remain.

Fieldwork site two story

A collaborative and dedicated group embark on an experimental and ambitious adventure. Originality and optimism are at times overwhelmed by unforeseen operational challenges. Personnel come and go with a shared sense of pride and anticipation but without the time and traction to make significant change happen. There are glimpses of pedagogical creativity and professional development. And then, radio silence as the protagonists are sucked in to the giant machine.

Appendix 2.5 Team learning Conference: Experiences and Reflections



Preparing for the Team learning conference

Along with a presentation about my research I was keen to gauge reaction to my creative writing activities. I had been continuing to explore creative writing (Richardson and St Pierre, 2011) 'a process of 'writing into' rather than writing up' (Pelias, 2011: 660) and was curious to know if the form and content of my writing had resonance for others, particularly practicing coaches. Having written a number of 400 word vignettes based on my fieldwork experiences, in the first person, (similar to Vignette one in chapter three) I shifted the form to second person narratives, addressing the reader as 'you' and placing them in the shoes of the coach with the intention of overtly involving them in the experience as if they were seeing through my eyes and hearing my thoughts. The example of the excerpt is included at the end of this document. Researchers have found that this device works

well when the reader is likely to share some of the life experiences of the protagonist (Mildorf, 2016). I was interested to explore if changing the structure in this way would address the criticism that autoethnography was self-absorbed (Anderson, 2006) by turning the focus back on the reader and their engagement with the social world under study.

At the end of each excerpt I asked, '*What did you notice? Does anything strike you about that account?*' There was a high degree of alignment between our observations and interpretation about what might be going on. I have summarised the feedback in table A 3.3 1 below.

Table A3.3 1 Analysis of feedback from reading creative vignettes aloud.

Scenario One	
What did I notice? What did I think the excerpt demonstrated	What did they notice?
Second person evokes a feeling of being there as the coach	A participant is curious about the second person voice and the articulation of my thoughts as if out loud.
Details of time and place	A participant notices the details I have included and is surprised I would include all of this. Can relate to the scenario.
I am an outsider	A participant shares an emotion it evokes in her of being distant and excluded
Issues of Trust	Trust
The messiness of real world coaching	No direct comment on this but perhaps the fact that it evoked in them a feeling of being there meant it was worth including these details.
Coaching utilises our whole self, cognitions, emotions and physical energy. I want to convey that I am working in the world of practice – a practice based epistemology to reinforce my methodology perhaps – to	Several participants who coach teams came to speak to me afterwards and said they related to my work.

justify why I wanted an organic, emergent approach.	
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The audience related to my making visible the internal dialogue of the coach (Hamdan, 2012) and were engaged with the scenarios I created. There was verisimilitude; it was believable, they imagined themselves there in the coaching role (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2010). The discussion turned to considering alternative actions by the coach and the implications of each along with exploration of the role of the coach within each scenario. This gave me confidence that my findings had resonance for others and that any resultant framework had the potential to make a contribution.

Excerpt from the life of a team coach. (Based on vignette one in chapter two – converted to second person voice)

February 5th 2014

Its 3.30pm in the afternoon. The sky is a thick relentless grey and at this time of year the daylight is fading fast testing your positive mood.

You are driving to Melrose community centre in the industrial end of town to meet with your new coaching client team. They are an education and training team in a local government organisation. This is the first meeting and you are not quite sure what to expect.

The room is fuggy and hot from the previous meeting. The manager is already there and deep in conversation with colleagues. You meet the technician. At this out of town location even loading a memory stick seems fraught with difficulty. All you wanted to do was suggest a few ground rules and a couple of activities on a PowerPoint slide.

Time is ticking. The session will start late. Your anxiety begins to mount.

Team members shuffle in. You greet each person whilst still keeping half an eye on the technician who still cannot log on to the shared IT system. The messy reality of working on someone else's turf hits home.

The brief is to work with the team to develop organisational coaching across the division; Peter, the manager invited you in to help the team to work together to learn how to take these objectives forward.

Finally you get started. As an ice breaker you suggest everyone introduces themselves along with their experiences of coaching and being coached.

“So tell me about your experiences of coaching?”

Barbara is first, she outlines her coaching credentials and her enthusiasm for coaching. Your mood lifts. Others share some limited experiences.

Peter, speaks last. “Well, I have never coached anyone and I have never been coached.”

Curious! you are thinking – you maintain a fixed smile. A couple of team members avoid eye contact.

“So. lets talk about our work together you say. I thought we could begin with hopes and fears...”

Valerie immediately offers to speak first.

“I have to raise a concern about Peter being here, I really don’t think people will be comfortable about sharing their concerns about coaching in front of him?” Its not personal Peter it is your position as the manager.

Your mind accelerates in to overdrive...You are thinking
If they don’t trust Peter then will they trust me? This is tricky.

Appendix 2.6: Deconstructing stories: Character pairs

Finding Dualities between characters (Boje (2001))

In the table below I have indicated from the mind maps where I identified a character that could be one half of a duality. I recognise that in some cases the implied character on the other side of the duality is myself as the coach and at other times it is another organisational actor or perhaps another team member. I label in blue where I have assigned roles/ characters from the data, ie through observation, reflection or because the coachees themselves assign these roles via their written responses or verbally. Therefore, where there is a pairing in blue this dual relationship was evident as the story unfolded and or in the initial retelling. Second I indicate where the other half of a duality may lie, raising the question about which voices and stories are not being told.

Role Dualities in the Team coaching stories

Coach	Organisational actor	Team members Coachee
Expert		Non expert ?
Teacher		Pupil
Parent		Child
Rescuer?	Captor	Captives
Co-Collaborator		Collaborators
Wise?		Innocents
Cheerleader		Worrier/ anxious/ tentative
Educator?		Scholar
Positive psychologist		Eyore/ glass always half empty
Confidante/ preist	In relation to accepted norms	Sinner/ one who voices taboo thoughts
Un blocker?		Blocker
Saviour/ emancipator		Deflated/ downtrodden
Rescuer?	Hijacker	Hijacked
Champion?	Bulldozer manager	railroaded
The observed?		Watchful observer
	Wrong doer	Resentful/ angry
Appreciative audience		Story teller
Inquirer		reporter

Diplomat	The stakeholders	
		The intellect
Facilitator		Participants?
Change agent		Of what?/ with whom
Tour guide		Tour party
Nurturer		Nurtured?
Advisor		Client
Stuck		Resistant

Some roles I play that are not dualities?

Team process expert; drawing on knowledge of teams
Systems thinker – observing the bigger picture and connections in the system
Weaver of ideas: to keep everyone's threads on the table
Scaffolder of thinking, planning and deciding conversations
Tactician (advisor?)– suggesting next moves
Reflective practitioner remaining reflexive

Awareness of relative power

In my mind maps and reflections there are a significant range of incidences where I deliberate over the various dualities that have me in the position of perceived power and the coachees as the ones without power or with lesser perceived power: Expert, teacher, parent, rescuer etc.

Coach characteristic	Team members' characteristics	Perceived power
Expert	Non expert	Coach Knowledge power Team members: Control agenda and choice about what to do with the knowledge
Teacher	Student	Positional power, knowledge power Students

Parent	Child	Positional power Knowledge power
Rescuer	Victim/ captive	In this mode the Positional power
Advisor	Client	Knowledge power

Whilst I am in this mode I am concerned that I am unable to create an environment of empowerment. It may be appropriate to spend short times in expert mode to impart knowledge or experience but needs to be done with awareness, and choice that it is the appropriate intervention. The relative power imbalances and how these roles are negotiated will be explored in chapter seven.

Appendix 2.7 Fieldwork data from three field work sites illustrating each metaphor

Team as Machine:

Field work site	My field notes and reflective diaries	Participant reflective diaries	1st level analysis – What am I noticing	2nd level analysis - Writing as a method of inquiry
Case 1	<p>I did not get a chance to share any kind of model of team effectiveness but already it is clear this is not a team at present and it seems as if the coach has been given the job of creating one.</p> <p>It may be appropriate to hold the team together until they develop their team processes.</p> <p>Should I devise some team working processes?</p>	<p>There is enormous scope to apply models.</p>	<p>I am deliberating about what to share of the theoretical explanations of team behaviours.</p> <p>Do I recommend a way forwards when they appear to be struggling?</p>	<p>I am interpreting lack of progress with lack of action but they see the opportunity to speak and gain confidence as progress. My machine mentality is causing me to look for outputs. Progress could be like a plant laying down roots, you can't see anything on the surface.</p>
Case 2	<p>They do not seem to have a clearly articulated model of team effectiveness.</p> <p>Should I have been more directive? More structured in clearly defining an effective team?</p> <p>I can see how starting with a team effectiveness tool is helpful.</p>	<p>It is important for us to read about high performance teams.</p> <p>Perhaps next time we could vote to select the most important issues and discuss them. Create an effective process.</p> <p>We had a clearer agenda, were more focused, and, yes, we actually have a working</p>	<p>I'm noticing how I'm trying to get them to operate like a machine but they are in survival mode.</p> <p>I am asking them questions about high performance teams such as how would you measure your effectiveness?</p>	<p>I have a mental map about what is going on in the team. I wonder if I should share it.</p> <p>I am becoming conscious that without an explicit and shared model of team effectiveness and team behaviours I implicitly own the process.</p>

		framework for the team. That's an outcome.		
Peer coaches	Peer coach dialogues			
	<p>You need to know what a good high performing team looks like (P.5)</p> <p>Sometimes a model may provide you a structure, give you a language to talk about teams. (P.6)</p> <p>You need to establish with the team, what a good team is (P. 1)</p> <p>Sometimes the purpose of coaching is to help the team with a task. (P.12)</p> <p>My coaching is problem oriented. I help tem define goals, issues, strategy and plans. (P. 2)</p> <p>Sometimes sharing a simple process can help to transform their clunky machine. For example, a feedback process or a meeting protocol. (P.5)</p> <p>I want the team to say; we have a way of working together that gives us the best chance of succeeding (P. 6)</p> <p>I'm interested in process so I'm wondering how much we need to know about the individuals (P. 13)</p> <p>We did an assessment, a bit of a diagnosis as a collective (P.8)</p>			
	Peer coach reflective writing			
	I start from the premise that all teams want to get better, even high performing teams (P.1)			

(P. N) refers to peer coach participants

Team as Family

Field work site	My field notes and reflective diaries	Participant reflective diaries	1 st level of analysis what am I noticing	2 nd level analysis - Writing as a method of inquiry
Case 1	<p>I was conscious of the dynamics in the team, the diverse personalities, the history they all bring.</p> <p>Their willingness to speak up was brought up several times in the meeting.</p> <p>I don't think I felt able to challenge so early in the process.</p> <p>I have seen their unwillingness to progress agreements outside the safe environment of the meeting.</p> <p>I am recognising a tension...there is a risk they all clam up.</p>	<p>I felt I could trust the integrity of the facilitator.</p> <p>It's good to know you are not the only one feeling this way.</p> <p>I liked the group members. I can have an honest conversation without being made to feel inferior.</p> <p>Good to know you are not the only one feeling a certain way.</p> <p>The team took time to listen to my concerns.</p> <p>I believe we have grown more cohesive as a team.</p>	<p>I noticed their tentative offerings: This sounds silly but... I'm just talking out loud now... I don't know if its relevant... I don't want to disagree but I feel it slightly differently.</p> <p>I'm noticing feelings of alignment and trust.</p> <p>I'm trying to disrupt the balance of power.</p> <p>I am struck by their genuineness and honesty. Each person shares something of themselves</p>	<p>They are like Mr and Mrs angry.</p> <p>They were passive observers waiting to see the lay of the land.</p> <p>They are beginning to trust me and find their voice.</p> <p>Jessica has come out of her shell after the shared journey together.</p>
Case 2	<p>They need to develop an awareness of the team dynamic – their relationships. The team seems to have focussed entirely on tasks.</p> <p>I am aware of the power dynamics coming from their roles and relative position in the</p>	<p>I have a lot of questions. I don't know if it's helpful to share my uncertainties</p> <p>I liked that everyone was talking so openly</p>	<p>I found myself supporting Martha. I feel they don't listen to her.</p> <p>I noticed Martin kept deferring to me. What is going on there?</p>	<p>I am absorbing his worries.</p> <p>They seem relaxed and collaborative, comfortable with each other.</p> <p>They are joking and sharing anecdotes; they welcome me in to their workspace.</p>

	<p>hierarchy, their personalities and their knowledge base.</p> <p>I was momentarily annoyed by the challenge. I felt he was testing me. Then I noticed challenging may be his way of working with others.</p>	<p>I appreciated the degree of openness and the space that was created.</p>		
Peer coaches	Peer coach dialogues			
	<p>It's often about relationships. It's the rubbish that gets in the way of them achieving their goals. (P.11)</p> <p>How do I build a relationship with the group – I'm noticing what's happening between us (P.5)</p> <p>You have the politics between each of them (P. 11)</p> <p>Individual life stories come in to play. Behaviours are influenced by complex issues. I want to acknowledge that but I don't want to get in to it all (P.13)</p> <p>It's interesting to notice what people are using the team platform for (P. 10)</p> <p>You notice the responses of the group to an individual (P.10)</p> <p>It's about us as human beings, individually and together. (P. 3)</p> <p>I explore their individuality, what they bring (P.15)</p> <p>I noticed the team shift in confidence with each other, revealing things (P. 8)</p> <p>The individual relationships built in to a team hairball. I asked each of them – which part of the dysfunction do you own? (P.6)</p> <p>Everyone is holding stuff (P. 15)</p> <p>I cannot imagine working with a team if I didn't work with them 1:1 – I need to have the individual relationships (P. 6)</p> <p>You have no control over the past history of employees (P. 5)</p> <p>I think what I do is create a climate (P.6)</p>			
	Peer coach reflective writing			
	<p>Relationships underpin my view of the world. Our identity, as well as our security and our belonging and effectiveness is significantly defined by relationships. My approach is focussed on the relationship with the coachee. (P. 10)</p> <p>I believe relatedness is the foundation of results so relationship building is a fundamental part of my work. (P.2)</p> <p>My purpose is to develop a deeper and higher quality level of trust (P. 3)</p>			

Team as living system

Field work site	My field notes and reflective diaries	Participant reflective diaries	1 st level analysis – What am I noticing	2 nd level analysis - Writing as a method of inquiry
<p>Case 1</p>	<p>The fact that the team is situated in an organisational context is very apparent and dominated the discussion.</p> <p>I did ask how empowered they felt to make changes in the organisation.</p> <p>There was a growing sense, as they built on each other's ideas that something good could come from the process.</p> <p>I need to keep an eye on organisational imperatives.</p> <p>I'm starting to think about the boundary issues...</p> <p>Am I saying I am the guardian of the organisational objectives?</p> <p>Their choice was to disband the team going forwards. It was at risk of being hijacked by other agendas.</p>	<p>We found common ground.</p> <p>The way we worked together on how to move things forward as each member brought an idea or helped work through an issue... it struck me we don't do enough of this when we face an issue in our own service.</p> <p>I felt there was a group moment of 'ah we know what we are here for now' beginning to develop a shared vision.</p> <p>I feel this is a big step in the way we are starting to work.</p> <p>Shared understanding of where we are, where we could be (as an organisation) and how we might get there.</p>	<p>When X shared her 6 principles it seemed to capture holistically what they were all trying to do.</p> <p>We had a great discussion about naming concepts and how something that is implicit can be examined and explored and developed once we name it, articulate it and share it with others.</p> <p>Half wanted to take a strategic approach and tackle the whole culture, half wanted to work on their own areas of influence.</p>	<p>I feel like a guardian of the individuals, the team as an entity and the obligations of the organisation...I take temporary ownership for these things until they can own them for themselves.</p> <p>'I think we should all share what we know', said Jessica. 'It would help us build our understanding as a team'. Jessica has come out of her shell in this meeting, somehow she seems emboldened by our collective journey to this point.</p>

<p>Case</p>	<p>Asking what they wanted to achieve generated a lot of discussion about expectations, stakeholders and what they are doing.</p> <p>Im thinking about the context and challenges facing this team.</p> <p>They were making connections</p> <p>Tacit knowledge appears to be very powerful. It gives them confidence in their practice but then they struggle to articulate where they are coming from.</p> <p>I suggested sensemaking from previous experience.</p> <p>What was interesting was the different ways of learning in the group.</p>	<p>There is a lack of clarity about stakeholder's goals.</p> <p>There was a willingness to listen to others views and to critically review our work.</p> <p>I think what struck me was that we had similar understanding but used different language to convey the message.</p> <p>We went around in circles, opinions changed with each iteration. Non-linear, open to criticism.</p>	<p>Im struck by how much difficulty I am having getting them to step outside day to day experience</p>	<p>The context is so important for them; they can't get past it.</p>
<p>Peer coaches</p>	<p>Peer coach dialogues</p>			
	<p>The culture affects what you do (P.11)</p> <p>You can almost guarantee the stakeholder who contracted you is sitting in the room (P. 5)</p> <p>The individuals bring strands of organisational culture in to the room. (P. 11)</p> <p>I think it's useful to work on the mission. Why are we here as a team? What is it we can't do alone (P.8)</p> <p>I think it's interesting to think about how you go about using different parts of the system. (P.11)</p> <p>I get them to share information about their world, to make connections so everyone understands the bigger context. (P.8)</p> <p>Teams have to interpret what they are there to do. (P.12)</p> <p>Sometimes you have to be aware that the team is having a problem, but the team is not the problem. (P.1)</p>			

	<p>There is an issue of the boundary – where the contract lies – particularly when issues in the team are affected by outside factors (P.5)</p> <p>We did a piece of work with a team – getting it aligned with the organisation – it was transformational in that then, other teams wanted to engage. (P.10)</p> <p>I think it's about rising the team's awareness and asking them what they are going to do differently. (P. 2)</p> <p>Coaching is about deepening the reflection process with the team to get learning and then planning for next time. (P.15)</p> <p>Is there an argument for immersing yourself in the system? (P.6)</p>
	<p>Peer coach reflective writing</p>
	<p>My purpose is to facilitate thinking; both analytical and creative thinking. (P. 10)</p> <p>Coaching the team requires creating across the organisational context an open, honest, reflective space that allows the team to achieve their shared purpose. (P. 11)</p>

Team and Coach in Wonderland

Field work sites	My field notes and reflective diaries	Participant reflective diaries	1 st level analysis - What am I noticing	Writing as a method of inquiry
<p>Case 1</p>	<p>I'm thinking about the first session. I need to articulate the coaching principles that underpin what I do. Or do I? Im wondering to what extent I need to make it transparent at this stage. I want to start from where the client is. I don't know what they know about being a team. I don't know if they see themselves as a team when they are not in the room.</p> <p>I have a lot of uncertainties. This is messier in practice.</p> <p>I'm disappointed individuals have not taken their concerns to management. I wonder what it says about the importance of this team succeeding.</p> <p>I wonder if Valerie is raising a genuine concern or if this was coming from team B. I felt a plan was being executed.</p>	<p>At the start of the session I was surprised at the reluctance of my colleagues to engage with the process.</p> <p>I'm still very unsure about what we are trying to achieve.</p> <p>I'm not sure what to focus on as I'm not sure about my colleague's motives to attend.</p> <p>We were v. slow and ponderous, not clear about what we need, want or expect. I discerned the presence of an elephant and realised it was me.</p> <p>It was perplexing that we couldn't move towards a shared goal.</p>	<p>When Valerie suggests some people may not feel able to be honest others don't really back her. Some topics appear safe to challenge, others remain unspoken.</p> <p>I feel like I'm trying to weave a tapestry out of the random threads bag.</p> <p>It seems as if our initial plan to create an autonomous coach development team was lost on them. But I don't know how it was lost.</p> <p>Even as we shared positive recollections of the previous session, the energy in the room was low. It was if I had walked in on a team who had just heard some very bad news.</p>	<p>I was questioning myself. Have I allowed them to work some angle I'm not aware of or have we negotiated a better way to proceed?</p> <p>I mull on the role I have played in the languid pace... I was oblivious to key issues at the start. I encourage them to open up. I listen without judgement. I share the funny side. I was a pawn in the game as much as them.</p> <p>I begin to see my role as less like a knight on a white charger and more like Alice following the white rabbit down the rabbit hole. Nothing is as it seems.</p> <p>Round and round we go...I'm silent for as long time. Deliberating. How can I help them now?</p>

	<p>I was curious that the manager looked uncomfortable but kept on smiling.</p> <p>I'm wary of really knowing the motives of the individuals.</p>			
Case 2	<p>I wonder if that emotion of feeling uncertain could be useful?</p> <p>I'm wondering what this team needs from me right now.</p> <p>I suggested that we update Rose on what we had covered so far. Jorge remarked he wasn't sure where we were at and Stuart remarked it would be easier to say where we weren't at. I was grateful when Martha outlined a summary that chimed with my memory of events.</p>		<p>Are they discussing content that is useful or are we avoiding a key issue?</p> <p>I'm reflecting on the observation that although they seem to be having a useful discussion facilitated in some way by my presence, they are not focussing on the core topic that we had contracted to work on.</p> <p>I start the session by asking two questions at once. Why did I do that? Do I let them off the hook of reflecting on team process by enabling them to focus on operational discussions?</p>	<p>My voice was shrill, the anxieties leaking out, the wider expectations remain unspoken, assumed.</p> <p>Seeing the world of team coaching as the Mad Hatters Tea Party was liberating. How could I possibly know what was going on?</p> <p>There is a sense of holding back. What am I not saying?</p> <p>You know I'm feeling a little bit confused and curious. It seems as if you are all able to agree you want to get better (at X) but also you seem reluctant to state it as a team objective.</p>
Peer coaches	Peer coach dialogues			
	<p>I ask myself- what am I really here for? (P.4)</p> <p>What does awareness mean in this context, for a team? (P.4)</p> <p>I'm trying to find out what's going on. (P.6)</p> <p>I think you have to have an openness to learning as the coach. To be vulnerable. To be willing to not be the expert. To be able to learn from the uncomfortable moments (P. 4)</p> <p>It's about being reflexive. (P.11)</p>			

	<p>There is such a volume of stuff going on. (P.11)</p> <p>I try to get the group reflecting together (P. 15)</p> <p>It's different from the day job, much less about agenda, looser. (P. 3)</p> <p>I say to them, Im going to deliberately slow you down. (P. 2)</p> <p>I keep asking – Is this a coachable moment for this team? (P. 5)</p> <p>Are the ingredients for coaching present? (P10)</p> <p>I ask myself am I the right person, is there something to be done?</p>
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Appendix 2.8. Fictional vignettes presented chronologically with reference to original presentation in the thesis.

4.1. Team as family: Vignette one, chapter 4 p. 116

Diane's story: Creating a coaching culture at Brampton Local Authority

June 2012 – Interviews for the post of Organisation Development Specialist

Receptionist: *Good morning Mrs Watson, the interview panel will see you shortly, please take a seat.*

Diane was shown in to a small office overlooking the carpark and the country park beyond. A second candidate was already seated.

Diane: *Hello, are you here for the interviews as well?*

Veronica: *Hi, yes. I'm Veronica. I work here in customer services. Have you come far?*

Diane: *Reading, but I'm from here originally. I have been doing an interim role for the past year. I really wanted to come back if something permanent comes up in the North.*

The receptionist reappeared at the door. 'Mrs Watson, they are ready for you now.'

Diane: *I hope to see you again. She smiled, smoothed down her jacket, pressed back her shoulders and took a deep breath as she followed the receptionist down the hall to her interview.*

4.1.1. Team as family: Vignette two, chapter 4 p. 117

Diane's story: Creating a coaching culture at Brampton Local Authority

January 2014: Richard Wainwright's management meeting

It was half past two. Diane was stealing a glance at the clock behind Richard's silver grey head. He was still going through the financial forecasts for the new financial year. Jo should be here by now. I need her to see this lot in operation.

Finally, the door opens. The receptionist is showing Jo in.

Diane: *Come in Jo, take a seat, we are almost at the relevant point on the agenda.*

Richard finally concludes 10 minutes later than promised. Now they had exactly 20 minutes before everyone would get up and walk out claiming 3.00pm appointments elsewhere. Diane indicates to Fin to raise the blinds as she shuffles the flip chart stand to the front of the room.

A phone vibrates on the table, Richard glances at it and jumps up to answer, waving an apologetic hand as he steps out of the room. The atmosphere lifts. There is an immediate hum of chatter.

(Me: *Wonder who that was? They all seem relieved his presentation is over.)*

Paul, always the charmer, raises a teacup and waves it at Jo. His eyes indicate the catering tray.

Paul: Hi, I'm Paul Honeywell. Can I get you a coffee?

(Me: He seems friendly at least, I bet they are wondering why I'm here, is he going to sound me out?)

Diane can feel the muscles in her jaw tighten. Richard has just walked out, and this lot would happily chat and drink coffee until they ran out of time to discuss anything. It was an uphill struggle to get anyone to participate.

Diane: Ok everyone, let's get started again. I want updates from each department. Jess would you start us off please? Where are we up to with developing the coach training programme?

(Me: Diane seems quite stressed...)

Jess: Well we are down to the last three suppliers and procurement have set up a selection meeting for next week. We are proposing a three-day programme delivered in a two-day block with a follow-up day after some practice. We will need about 15 attendees to make it cost effective.

Veronica: I can give you two names but only if the training is May or June, we need to be clear for year-end in April.

Paul: Yeah, Ronnie is right. We will have to do it after April, all of our projects get reassessed in March and April, it's a really busy time. Are we selecting people or inviting them?

Jess: Ok, May would work with the follow-up day in June.

Diane: Perhaps we could get the first two days in March with the follow-up in May?

Veronica: No, schedules for March are already fixed in Operations, aren't they Paul?

Paul: Yeah that's right, sorry Diane.

(Me: What's going on here? We seem to be talking about the minutiae of a training programme. I wonder if Diane wanted me to ask innocent questions or just observe? I don't want to deflect them further.)

Clive: I'm telling my two team leaders they have to do it. It's a management skill. I can give you the names now Jess.

Paul: Well I'm not sending my team leaders - Dave and Chris; they have forty years' experience between them. I will send the younger guys.

Clive: Doesn't it depend what the 40 years' experience has taught them? Perhaps there is a different approach that's a bit more collaborative?

Paul: Perhaps Clive, if you came down from your crystal palace now and again you would see what Dave and Chris have to manage. We repair holes in the road; there isn't much room for 'what do you think we should do?'

(Me: Ouch! Crystal Palace? – that sounds like a bit of 'them and us' on display, I wonder if there is a personality clash between these two.)

Clive: Whatever our different departments I still think we need more agreement about what we mean by 'coaching culture.'

Dan: I think you are overcomplicating things Clive. Let's just say we all utilise coaching and we may well have different approaches depending on department. Georgia is our coach in finance. She teaches month end processes and she has been working with Jess on a performance management process.

(Me: teaches month end?)

Paul and Veronica exchange glances.

(Me: Hmm...was that a knowing look? They seem like a tight unit.)

Clive: Can I just ask about this performance management thing, I'm not sure how you are relating it to coaching?

Paul: Who is supposed to do the training for that?

Jess: Everyone, Paul, it's a general thing, but we think coaching will help to support the process. Shall I just go over the main points of the proposal...

(Me: I can feel my chest tightening. I'm frustrated and anxious but not sure if it's empathy with Diane or because I'm not sure what I'm getting myself embroiled in. Why are we suddenly talking about performance management? This conversation seems to be going all over the place. The statements feel disconnected. I can't quite make sense of it. Are they gerrymandering to avoid progressing Diane's agenda or just not very good at listening to each other? It feels so incoherent. I wish I had asked Diane a few more questions now, I trusted her judgement when she said come along and observe - I didn't expect her to drop me in to something as chaotic as this. What is she up to?)

Diane glances at Jo and hopes she is taking all of this in. They all have a different view of what coaching is for. She's not sure Richard gets it. Veronica still resents her and the others side with her – at least Paul does. Paul is the big personality so they all go along with him. Clive likes to throw out questions no one bothers to respond to and Dan thinks he has it all sewn up with a training protocol in place for month-end. It's almost three. As predicted, they all start checking the time and packing to go. Diane asks Fin to make what he can of the meeting notes and send her the draft. He agrees and sets off with Jess to catch up on another project.

Diane: So, you can see why I invited you?

I raise an eyebrow quizzically. I'm not sure how much to say to Diane about my thoughts at this point. I wait for her to explain.

Diane: I thought with your research interests you could work with the team. We need this coaching initiative to get off the ground and this team are a shambles.

Me: This is a team? I fail to mask my incredulity.

Diane: Yes, Richard Wainwright's management team. The guy doing the presentation when you walked in.

Me: Ahh – Okay... How...erm... How do you think I can help?

Diane: Well, I thought you could coach them. I need to create a functioning team.

Me: Well... it's possible I could work with you... (I want to play for time, have a chance to think) but I have a few questions. We need to discuss what you mean by 'being a team,' I mean, beyond what it says on the organisation chart. We would need to establish what you are trying to achieve as a team.

And I would need to know that Richard agreed there was a development objective. It would also be helpful to know from both of you what you think help looks like - where the challenges lie? (I need to get a handle on what is going on if I'm to step in to this).

Diane is not sure how much to say. She is still new here. She cannot say what she really thinks of Richard. She can't speak about half of the stuff that's going on, especially not the part that she won't admit to herself; that she feels she is failing and has made a mistake coming here. She just needs someone independent to get them all on the same page.

Diane: *OK, I will talk to Richard. Can I get back to you?*

3.2.1. Coaching from the metaphorical perspective of team as machine: Vignette one, chapter 3 p. 97

The coach's story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session one: May 2014

It has been a long time coming but I am here at Brampton to work with the management team. I was invited by Diane who took an OD post here 18 months ago. I have known Diane since she was an MBA student five years ago and respected her hard work and intellect. After a meeting in January where Diane had suggested I observe the team in action, I met with her and the Operations Director, Richard Wainwright, to discuss their objectives. Diane told me that she wanted to use coaching as a route towards culture change within the Local Authority and she saw this management team as crucial. Richard was quiet in the meeting, nodding thoughtfully but leaving Diane to do most of the talking. I found myself working within the same dynamic, making eye contact with Richard and then not being surprised when it was Diane that spoke for them both. We agreed a series of six coaching sessions with the team, with a view to develop a self-sustaining team at the end of it.

When I arrive the room is empty. Will anyone turn up? I'm anxious about how it's going to go. I'm not sure what this group understand by team working, team coaching or the relationship between Diane, Richard and the others.

Suddenly there are voices in the corridor. Diane arrives with Veronica, one of the operations managers; they are conducting a somewhat heated discussion about an incident concerning an e-mail that Diane sent out to Veronica's team.

Paul arrives.

Paul: *What's up 'Ronnie', I can hear you ranting all the way down the corridor. Hi Jo - ready to start the counselling session?*

Veronica: *It's coaching Paul, she isn't going to put you on a couch.*

Paul: *More's the pity, I could do with a little light therapy!*

He squeezes Veronica's arm and gives a wink and changes the subject to a shared problem they are having with the data systems. Diane retreats to get coffee.

One by one the team members arrive and Diane introduces me. Veronica, Paul and Shirley are the operations managers, Dan leads Finance, Clive heads up Information Systems, Jess is the HR partner and Fin is an HR intern.

Eventually Richard bustles in.

Diane: *Ok! Welcome everyone to our first team coaching session. For those who haven't formally met our coach, this is Jo and she is going to help us work as a team. You all know that I circulated a paper about creating a coaching culture over a year ago now but we seem to be struggling to really get it off the ground. I believe some coaching for us will help us get moving.*

Me: *Thanks Diane, it is great to be working with you all. Today is a setting-the-scene meeting, helping me to understand your start point and what you are looking for from team coaching. Let us start by getting some thoughts about what this team is here for and why we might embark on team coaching. Perhaps if you spend 10 minutes talking with the person sitting next to you and then we can share ideas.*

Dan: *Can I ask a different question? Are we a team or a management group? I noticed you used the word 'team.' I'm wondering what that really means in this context?*

Me: *Yes, that's a good question, I think that should be part of your discussion. If you are a team, how is it different from the management group that formally has a reporting line to Richard?*

Richard: *If I can offer an answer to that? I think we meet as a management group to review our various areas of responsibility, but perhaps it is time we worked as a team on our shared responsibility for this organisation.*

I wonder if Diane has been coaching him on what to say. I wonder if the question has ever come up before.

Me: *Thanks Richard, I think that's an interesting distinction and thanks to Dan for the question. I would like to give everyone a chance to discuss their thoughts and then we will re-group if that's OK?*

There is a hum of discussion in the room. Paul and Veronica. Fin and Shirley, Dan and Clive, Jess talking to Diane and Richard together.

Me: *Ok so that clearly generated some discussion. Can we have a sense of what you talked about from each pair.*

Dan: *Well to answer my own question, I don't think we are a team but maybe we don't need to be. Clive and I discussed coming from the service departments. We need to interact with Ops, and we work together quite a lot. Maybe it's horses for courses?*

Veronica: *I have a team of my own managers and 75 customer service staff who run an operation. They cover for each other, plan the operation for the year, same as in Paul's department. I think the teams sit in departments. We do share a responsibility for the organisation, I understand where Richard is coming from, but as a management team/group - call it what you like.*

Diane: *Don't we want to create a team that can make a difference - together?*

Clive: *I think we could be a team, not sure if it's possible.*

Me: *Not sure if it's possible?*

Clive: *I don't know what others think but, we are in competition aren't we? Who can deliver best results each month. My first priority is to my own team. I mean that's how we are measured.*

Richard: *Hmm. That is an interesting observation.*

Shirley: *I would like to feel part of a team.*

Me: *Could you say a little more about that Shirley?*

Shirley: *Well, maybe it's just me, being new. Feeling you have a place where you can share things, where you can say 'I'm not sure what to do here...'*

Pulling together the ideas feels like knitting with spaghetti. I'm still unsure if we are all talking from common experience, or if they have a picture of what good team work looks like to appreciate the benefits.

Me: *Ok so I'm hearing a number of perspectives about how your individual roles contribute to a collective effort. And how you balance working in this team and your department simultaneously, it can create conflicts and it could also create a support mechanism. Would it be useful to spend some time on these issues in more detail?*

There are polite nods. I plough on.

Me: *Would it be helpful if I shared a model of team effectiveness?*

I bring up the team model slide and talk through the elements. They all listen politely. I'm feeling we are at sea, clinging to this model like a life raft. I don't feel like a coach right now, but I do feel we need a shared language.

Me: *So one way forward is to take this model and the questionnaire that goes with it. We use it to assess ourselves as a team and it points to the places where you have strengths and where you might want to develop further. If each of you identifies your own scores. Then in the next session we can discuss how you got on.*

3.6. The metaphor of team as machine: Vignette two, chapter 3 p. 108

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session two: June 2014

As agreed at the second session, we focus on the team assessment questionnaire. Richard does not appear at the meeting.

Me: *The goal for today is for us to begin to develop a shared understanding about this team, how it operates and where you think you have strengths and development areas.*

The team work in pairs to discuss their high and low scores and discuss the differences in interpretations relating to each category area. Then pairs come together to the main group and share what they have discussed.

Me: *Who would like to share their insights?*

Veronica: *Jess and I had similar scores mainly. We both agree we need more clarity on the purpose for this team and what we are trying to do, in fact we had quite a discussion about our role in the organisation. Jess thinks we are like a project team accountable for delivering specific objectives. I thought we were talking about culture change so it is bigger than that. So the team would discuss ideas, we agree the big picture then implement in our own areas in our own way.*

Me: *Ok, what did others discuss in relation to that point?*

Paul: *Shirley and I have talked about that as well, I think we came along with the same idea as Ronnie that we just need to agree the plan and we can action it in our own areas but since you asked about the team thing I am starting to wonder. A team definitely is about shared goals; I mean it's like in football. You all want to win. The goal is clear. And you need a strategy and some tactics as well as strong players and a creative game plan.*

Me: *Ok, Clive, Dan what came up for you?*

Clive: *Dan and I discussed about us being in competition with each other, I mean we compete for resources and to show we are delivering KPIs in each department. Using Paul's football analogy, I think we need to recognise when we are playing for our local team and when we put on our national shirt. We have to cooperate to win the world cup! Sometimes clubs give up good players to the national side.*

The others are all listening now. The room is quiet and reflective. There were murmurs of agreement.

Me: *Ok, interesting. What else did you talk about? Where else would you like to focus?*

Jess: *Well I think we need to agree some effective behaviours. Not just about how to communicate who is doing what but when it comes to disagreements, how will we resolve them.*

Veronica: *We talked about trust. I mean we have to trust each other if we are going to cooperate. We need to trust the organisation. We need to know what is going to happen so we can manage effectively. These last two years we have been on a roller coaster.*

Diane: *I think that's about having a shared purpose so we influence the organisation.*

Veronica *muttered almost imperceptibly... Hmm*

I sensed a tension. I did not feel ready to call it out.

Dan: *We talked about trust a bit as well. I think it can get quite heated at times so sometimes you keep your mouth shut to avoid another... well difficult conversation.*

Clive: Well just to disagree with Dan a bit here, I think we just need processes, like Jess has said, how to disagree; it's more about behaviours right?

Me: Ok so if I play back what I'm hearing: you want to be clear on purpose and goals and develop a creative game plan, and some agreed-on processes so we can work together when the going gets tough? And some of you are saying it goes beyond behaviours to feeling trust between you?

There were nods.

Me: Can I come back to the point about competition for resources and results? Having discussed it, how do you see it now – has anything changed?

Paul: Veronica talked about culture change. If that's the big prize, we need to cooperate not compete. We share the players, the problems and the plaudits! Hey that was quite neat!

There is a release of laughter. Paul grins and soaks up the appreciation of his colleagues. Diane sends me an imperceptible glance of appreciation that maybe we are on the verge of a breakthrough. There is a sense of a shift in thinking. Clive and Dan are nodding.

Me: Very good Paul, you can be our team PR man! So to paraphrase, the team purpose needs to capture that sense of cooperation and togetherness?

Me: Ok I'm conscious we are short of time, let's agree to take something forward. What is the next step?

Diane: Should I draft a team purpose and circulate it for comments, we could start to develop some more clarity that way?

Fin: I could help draw together your ideas for processes and behaviours – how you want to work together? I could share it around for discussion.

There are nods and time is running out. I notice, despite everyone starting to make good contributions it is Fin and Diane who take the actions. Am I seeing the usual behaviours playing out? And where is Richard?

6.3.1. Coaching with the metaphor of Wonderland: Vignette one, chapter 6 p. 209

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session two: June 2014 *An Alternative story*

Me: Veronica, you mentioned the last two years have been a roller coaster. Do you want to tell me a little more about that and how it relates to the point you made about trust?

Veronica: Well, three years ago, the first redundancies were announced, which was a big blow for people, but we were promised there would be no compulsory redundancies. Along with that was an initiative called 'SOP' - Strengthening Organisational Performance. I was optimistic that, despite the cuts, we had a vision and we were going to take the organisation forward. I was very positive with my team, telling them this was going to bring opportunities for growth and development for people because I understood as we cut layers of management, people would have to step up into new roles. Then what happened? The organisation went outside for some key posts, people here with experience appeared to be overlooked for external people. It happened to a few people who applied for roles, not just me. Then the compulsory redundancies were announced anyway. We started to feel we were being asked to do the impossible with the people who were left. My team call SOP 'Slashing Organisational Potential.' Veronica pauses, looks sidelong at Paul who nods encouragingly for her to continue.

Me: You applied for a role taken by an external candidate?

I'm walking on to a landmine.

Veronica: Yes, she pauses, but not just me, two of my team leaders as well...

Diane: Veronica and I both applied for the same role...

Me: Ahhh...

The implications are slowly dawning. I find myself holding my breath.

Veronica: It's not about whether I got the job Diane, I'm over it, the way it's turned out, I'm not sure it's the job I thought it was anyway. It's the whole principle of feeling valued, people feeling valued, and people feeling they can trust what is said when we encourage them to do things, to take on more responsibility... like being a coach, or getting a coach to help them develop their skills. Will they be out of a job next week anyway? Will their efforts be taken for granted?

4.3. Trust and psychological safety in team as family: Vignette three, chapter 4 p. 130

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session three: July 2014

I have returned to Brampton. After a phone call with Richard I have confirmed he will be at the meeting. I was concerned that he seemed to be losing interest in the project and it was having an

effect on the team. I don't want to become the pseudo leader. In a group supervision session my colleagues were asking me why I was not coaching the manager as well. They may have a point.

Me: Good morning everyone. As Richard missed our session reviewing the team effectiveness questionnaire, could someone start us off by summarising the insights and where you think we got to in our discussions?

Diane: Well, we spoke about the need to develop more of a team identity with a clear purpose and a vision for what we are trying to achieve, I circulated some ideas... I'm not sure if people have had a chance to take a look?

There is a shuffling of papers and I fail to get anyone to make eye contact.

Jess: We talked about developing some processes and systems to work as a team. I think Fin has circulated something about that as well.

Fin nods.

Jess: Are we ok with the suggestions?

They all nod. Richard refers to the relevant notes. There is a sluggishness in the room. I sense the team holding back, watching and waiting.

Me: I sense a reluctance to talk about some of the issues and challenges we touched on last time. I think it would be helpful if you would outline some of the concerns?

Veronica: We talked about what it means to work together differently. We need to be able to trust each other if we are going to cooperate.

Richard: Do we not trust each other?

Dan: I'm not sure it's a matter of trust, just feeling sure of what's expected, in relation to our own KPIs and how we do things as a team.

Diane: Can I say that I think we could move forward if we agreed the vision and purpose for the team.

Veronica: I don't disagree, but I think, Richard, it's also about trusting the organisation. We have been through a lot of upheaval with the 'Transition Plan' and 'SOP.' I'm not sure how confident we feel that what we agree won't be overturned at the next Executive Away day. I don't mean to be negative but...

Richard: I know dealing with the organisational changes has been tough, but I think you all have far more influence than you think you have.

Veronica nods but looks unconvinced. She turns back to her paperwork.

Clive: I've heard Diane say we should look at team purpose and vision. I think that's probably where we need to start. If Richard is right, and we do have influence, then we still need a vision.

I'm deliberating about what to say. We have touched on matters of trust and then seem to have stepped away from the conversation. I can see how working on Vision and Mission may move us towards the harder conversation. I still sense something is not being said. They are careful around

Richard: I don't get the sense that Diane is entirely trusted and, by implication, perhaps they don't trust me either.

Me: What do others think about working on the purpose and vision? Last time I remember Paul used the analogy of a football team which seemed to generate some ideas: The idea that you are playing for your clubs in the departments and the national team when you work together in this team. Can we think about what this team wants to achieve?

Paul: Yeah...something better than getting knocked out in the qualifying rounds!

As usual Paul made them all smile and released the tension. There seemed to be an acceptance to work on the task so I pressed on.

Me: It might be helpful if we work in small groups again. Let's take the work Diane has circulated and discuss in threes... then we can bring our ideas together...

6.3.2. Coaching with the metaphor of Wonderland: Vignette two, chapter 6 p. 214

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session three: July 2014 Continued from Chapter 5: Team as Family

Me: It might be helpful if we work in small groups again. Let's take the work Diane has circulated and discuss in threes... then we can bring our ideas together...

I suggest that Veronica works with Richard and Shirley, Paul works with Diane and Clive, and Dan works with Fin and Jess.

Diane's Vision statement document is open on each desk.

I listen in to the conversation between Richard, Veronica and Shirley.

Richard: I hear what you are saying about organisational trust. I think we have created some unintended consequences, because decisions have been made quickly and sometimes we have gone back on what we intended to do.

Veronica: Exactly, the announcement about compulsory redundancies will take a long time to forgive in Customer Services.

Shirley: Community services feel the same, they have lost faith and it undermines the future, we have lost so many valued partners as well.

Richard: It sounds like we have not done a great job at explaining difficult decisions. I don't think we had a lot of choice when we had £30 million to find but I understand people are feeling bruised. What would you like to see happen?

Veronica: *I think it would help if you come and talk to our teams Richard, explain why we have done some of the things we have done as an organisation. Give them a reason to believe that the future is still worth working for. I'm not sure a vision statement is going to have much impact until we rebuild trust, and for that we have to acknowledge some difficult truths.*

I leave them to the discussion, and muse on the paradoxical circumstances that Richard has had to manage; delivering more with less, under increasing constraints and scrutiny. I sense at times he has withdrawn from the organisation, and his absence has created anxiety and doubts. He perhaps has not recognised that people do not behave in quite the logical ways that numbers on a spreadsheet would imply.

The team share their ideas and the discussion continues, we still have some way to go to establish a shared understanding of what this team is trying to do, but they have started to raise perspectives and reveal their own drives and motives.

Shirley expressed her feelings to the group.

Shirley: *I just wanted to say I'm starting to get a feel for where you have come from as an organisation and what this means in different departments. Plus, we have started talking about what is important about what we do as a council and I have heard more alignment about that. It sounds like we all value doing what's best for people in this community and that's really important for me.*

Me: *Thank you Shirley, I would echo that observation, about stating what is important; I think it does give you a more solid foundation when you trust that you are all working towards the same values. In fact, I was wondering, if there was an appetite to do a bit more of that, by sharing what you see as important, and where you have come from personally and professionally; I think you will build stronger relationships. When you experience the challenges, that relational strength will be very powerful.*

4.4. Coaching with the metaphor of team as family: Vignette four, chapter 4 p. 135

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session four: September 2014

Diane has booked a meeting room in a local hotel and extended the session for half a day. There is nervous laughter, betraying a little anxiety at what we are about to do. I have asked the team members to prepare to talk from a personal perspective. How I came to be working at Brampton? What values and experiences I draw from when I manage a team? What does coaching mean to me and what will it mean for people in my department? What I hope for from this management team?

Me: *Is everyone ready? I smile at them reassuringly.*

Me: Today is a very important day in the development of this team. We have spoken many times about trust and about a shared vision. It's my observation that you would find it extremely useful if you knew more about where each of you is coming from - about each person's beliefs and values, and some of the underlying ideas you may have about management, coaching and people in general. I recognise that, for some people, this session will be a challenge, particularly if you are less comfortable with talking about yourself. But it is vital to building strong relationships of trust and respect between you. Today is a reflective day. To help that process I would like each of you to note down your thoughts as each person speaks, perhaps thinking about: What resonates for me? What do I appreciate about what the person has said? What more do I want to know? Each team member will take their turn. Then I will ask you to share one or two reflections.

Paul, always comfortable to express a view, volunteers to go first.

Paul: Ronnie knows this because she and I were at junior school together. But when I was 11 years old I failed my 11 plus. I was devastated. For a long time afterwards I was angry and stopped trying. I left school with hardly any qualifications. I started here at Brampton when I was 16 years old as an apprentice in the workshop and... My first boss was called Reg Pickles... He took me under his wing... (he catches his breath and swallows the lump that has appeared in his throat)... he saw the potential in me – sent me to night classes – I took an HND and I started working on site with the guys. I found I was good at it, getting the lads to do things. I liked the fact that you could see what needed to be done and just got stuff organised to do it. So, yeah... (he looks down at his notes). Yes, so when I became a manager, I suppose I wanted to be like Reg.

Everyone is sitting on the edge of their seats. Their faces rapt with attention. Paul is starting to look vulnerable, like he is fearing he has shared too much. I step in to reassure and encourage him.

Me: Thanks for sharing your story Paul, that's exactly the kind of insight I was looking for. Would you tell us a little bit about what you take from Reg's management approach?

Paul: Well, he believed in me. He gave me a chance to try things. He was direct though, he would just tell you straight if you went wrong. I liked that. No messing about. But I knew he cared. Now I try to emulate that. I get to know the lads; I keep an eye on them.

Me: Ok and thinking about this from a coaching perspective, and what it means?

Paul: *I see their strengths and weaknesses; I try to work with that – to give them opportunities, nudge them when I think they have more to give. Then there's Dave and Chris; hard as nails - get things done, firm and fair but perhaps lacking a bit of...subtlety.*

There is laughter in the room, and it breaks the tension. Wow! I'm thinking, that's a way to start!

Paul: *I admit I still have a bit of an inferiority complex about the 11 plus. I get defensive sometimes, I know that, but I would like to keep it real, a mix of experience as well as theory and training. It's about getting people to want to get the job done. I don't want to lose sight of that.*

Me: *Thank you, Paul, for kicking us off, I appreciate you for being so open. You gave us some food for thought. Who would like to share their reflections...*

Clive: *I just wanted to say thank you to Paul for sharing that. I realised that even when you work together for years you don't necessarily know people. I mean, understand how they really think.*

Me: *Yes, the understanding is helpful isn't it, who else has a reflection?*

Dan: *Well I was thinking about Paul talking about caring for the guys and seeing their potential. I have been thinking about coaching as skills to do the job.*

Me: *Good, that's helpful to start to unpick the distinctions in our thinking. Dan, do you want to tell us your story?*

I feel something shifting from the moment Paul starts speaking; a deeper understanding between them. The potential for trust.

To be continued...

4.6. Coaching in a constructive framework: Vignette five, chapter 4 p. 146

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session four: September 2014. The session to share professional background, values and beliefs continues.

Diane: *Jo, I wanted to say, I am really appreciating the honesty from people. Can I go next?*

Me: *Yes of course, please do.*

Diane: Well, as you all know I only came to Brampton in 2012 and it has been so busy that we have hardly got to know one another. I know some of you have worked together much longer. So I have brought a couple of photos.

Diane shares a photograph of herself as a little girl.

Diane: This is me when I was six on a seaside holiday with my parents and my little brother. We had been flying a kite and rock pooling. You can see me looking particularly pleased with myself that I was able to do these things all by myself. I can still remember being six and feeling like I knew everything there was to know about in my little world and that everything was perfect.

Diane's next photograph is of her graduation. A serious-looking young woman stares out of the photograph.

Diane: This is me at my graduation. You can obviously see that. What you can't see is the fact that only my brother and dad are there that day. And even though I had a First, I felt so sad that my mother was not there to see me collect it. My mother...well she died when I was fourteen... (Diane swallows hard and pauses, blinking back tears.) It was 20 years ago but it still upsets me when I think about it. My mother's death hit the whole family really hard.

Diane takes a moment to compose herself. Shirley, who is sitting next to her, briefly places a comforting hand on her arm. The others wait quietly. I smile and nod at Diane reassuringly. I hold the emotional space and the team stay with me.

Diane: Anyway, the point about the photos is that, looking back, I went from being a carefree little girl to... well, I threw myself in to my studies. After graduation I started my career in retail, then human resource management, again, a bit of a workaholic. Then five years ago I took time out to complete an MBA. I met so many fantastic people and as part of the course we were encouraged to work on what drives and inspires us. I ended up unravelling a bit. I realised I was working hard but had no purpose in life. I wasn't working towards anything that really mattered to me. It brought me back to my teenage years after my mum died. I realised how important the local youth group had been, and the teachers at school in keeping me focused on something, even whilst I was numb on the inside. It made me realise the importance of community services and how easy it is for events in people lives to derail them. I wanted to work in local government, in community services, to be involved in some small way in supporting others...

The room is silent, everyone focused on Diane. I glance at Veronica, she is listening intently, her eyes never leaving Diane's face as she speaks. I sense a connection.

Diane: *So, I'm telling you all of this because I am coming to recognise, I'm still very much a work in progress. I am trying to work out who I am. I was reflecting on the past 18 months and I wonder if in some ways my determination to succeed in a new environment, that is so important to me, may have made me a little too driven, too quick to jump to actions, and not take the time to really get to know what would work for everyone. I think I would like the work of creating this new team to be an opportunity to rewind the clock and to approach some things differently.*

We all take a collective breath. I look around the room for reactions.

Me: *What do you appreciate about what Diane has just said?*

Veronica: *Can I say something?*

I nod encouragingly

Veronica: *Diane, I want to say how much of what you said resonated with me. My mum died when I was in my early 20s. I really know where you are coming from, throwing yourself into work. And I think we should apologise. You are right, some of us have known each other forever; I've known Paul since school, I'm married to his brother, I've worked with Clive and Dan for 10 years. We all know how each other tick. We didn't make much effort to bring in new people. You, Fin, Shirley, Jess all joined in the last two years. It must be harder for you.*

Diane raises a weak smile of appreciation.

Shirley: *I feel we have turned a corner today. I have worked in teams where I knew everyone in the past, but was I just accepting I was new so it would take time. But this process is really speeding things up. I could have worked here another five years and not known what I have learned today. I think there are lots of other topics where we could share knowledge and experience about that would help us all to do our jobs better.*

Fin: *Yes, I agree, I'm learning a lot just listening to how you all think about your roles and what's important. It's making me realise it's not just about what you learn in books.*

Me: So, I don't want to interrupt our flow, but shall we note an action step to look at other aspects of knowledge and information we might want to share in future sessions and Veronica's suggestion about how we bring new people on board?

To be continued...

5.1. Team as living system metaphor: Vignette one, chapter 5 p. 155

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session four: September 2014 Continued from Chapter 5.

The session to share professional background, values and beliefs continues. It is two hours into the session before Richard offers to share his story.

Richard: You may have gathered I am not particularly comfortable with talking about myself. But you have all been so open that I am going to give it my best shot. I came to Brampton six years ago working within Financial Systems. Before that I worked in Financial services for 15 years, again within management information and financial systems. Suffice to say I am very comfortable with data on a spreadsheet. I know this sounds really lame but I can get quite excited about giving management the information they need to make important strategic decisions. And I suspect it was that ability to combine information with strategic thinking that enabled me to progress to a senior role. However, as I'm sure all of you know, I'm not the world's best people person. My wife tells me I have to think my way to feelings.

There is a ripple of laughter.

Richard: I really wanted to work here at Brampton, my family has lived here since my grandad moved here over 100 years ago. The place matters to me and I want us to be a successful local authority and a successful thriving community where people want to live and work – well you all know we have some challenges there.

I feel the connection in the room, the energy, the deepening understanding. I'm beginning to make sense of the unpredictable behaviour.

Me: Richard; this is really helpful. Tell us how this background translates to your understanding of management and our organisational culture work.

Richard: The way I see it, my role is to be externally facing. I am attempting to help move the council to a place of resilience and strength and that has meant some significant cuts in people and services and significant reconfiguring of how we go about our work. That change is difficult; I know that much.

There are nods of acceptance.

Richard: *But I see a very capable group here. You manage the operation and the staff far better than I can. I cannot claim to have a great understanding of coaching and what we need to do. But I have seen enough and learned from people around this table to know that getting the best from people and showing we care about them is a good thing... his voice trails off.*

Me: *What do you want for this management team?*

Richard: *I want you to know that you have my respect and appreciation even if I don't remember to say it very often. I want you to develop a sense of autonomy, this is your division, your organisation. I want to know that we can have honest conversations about the challenges because I **will** bring you challenges. We are working in a very tough climate and I don't see that changing...*

5.2.3. Developing the living system metaphor: Vignette two, Chapter 5

P. 164

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Late September 2014: telephone call with Richard Wainwright

Richard: *Hi Jo, thanks for making time for the call. I wanted to bring you up to speed. I need to let you know that we have made further redundancy notices. We are going through a consultation at the moment about how this will progress but I expect another 70 people to go in the next six months. Hopefully mostly voluntary but then there is a lot of internal reorganisation to get through. It's going to be a turbulent time. Diane and I are still wanting to use the coaching initiative to help us get through this. I wonder if you can help us. Could the next team meeting help us to refocus and clarify a clear strategic mission?*

5.3.2. Coaching with the metaphor of team as living system: Vignette three, chapter 5 p. 170

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session five: October 2014

I arrive early for the session. I have asked to work in the big conference room so we can spread out. Fin meets me at reception and helps me prepare the room. We lay out 200 A4-sized images on tables around the room, and on the shelves and the window ledges. In fact, on every flat surface, even the floor. It's like an art installation. On three sides of the room I place three flip chart sheets on the wall.

Richard arrives early too.

Richard: *Hmm, this looks interesting, are you all set Jo?*

Me: *Yes, I think so thanks. What's the mood like, are they going to be up for this today?*

Richard: *I hope so. They are a resilient bunch and I think we have called it correctly to focus on looking forward.*

The team members arrive in twos and threes, and are naturally drawn to exploring the images. I have prepared a process to scaffold the session, with a view to enable constructive dialogue, to make sense of the context and to navigate a way forwards.

Me: *Welcome everyone. How are you feeling?*

We do a quick round of comments to check on everyone. They are bruised from the previous weeks but have come prepared to be positive and support each other. The team spirit we developed in that last session seems intact.

Me: *So to the process for today. You are going to work alone to begin with and then in threes. I want you to select three images - one that says something about how you see your world right now. Paint a picture of the environment with all of its challenges, opportunities, constraints and risks. Next I want you to select pictures that describe what you want this organisation to look like, let's say in two years' time. Now the third picture, think about your team purpose and aims to create a coaching culture. What should this team focus on to move from where we are now – to where you want to be? What's important for this team to create?*

The teams work together in threes, the energy levels are high, there is passion and laughter and dialogue as perspectives are shared. Each team makes three picture boards on the flipcharts. Then each trio tells their stories.

I ask the whole team to suggest themes. We move the images into clusters, we add key words, we begin to create a way forwards. It is not the whole picture but it's the start, it's a journey.

5.3.3. i.i. Coaching with the metaphor of team as living system: Vignette four, chapter 5 p. 176

The Coach's Story: Coaching at Brampton Local Authority

Session six: January 2015

The team is meeting three months later, having commenced a second round of redundancies and reorganisation and having started to operationalise their team's purpose: To create a resilient, innovative and engaged organisation, inspired to serve the communities of Brampton. This session is designed to enable team members to develop a shared understanding of how they are doing and what more they can do to achieve their purpose.

Me: *Welcome back everyone! So how are things going?*

Veronica: *Really great! We have developed a clear statement of what sort of organisation we want and the approach we are taking to the reorganisation. Richard has visited all of the departments and we have conducted meetings for all the staff to hear what is going on and the approach.*

Richard: *Yes, thanks to Veronica and Shirley for suggesting that to me, I have found it really useful to get a feel for how people are thinking and feeling.*

Paul: *I have had three of my younger managers attend the coaching training. They are starting to ask different questions; it has woken them up a bit, motivated them. I will admit we still have Dave and Chris leading the teams, and I'm not entirely sure how to bring them on board with the new culture.*

Dan: *Yeah: I have a few like that in finance as well. They understand training but I only have a couple who see a more collaborative developmental approach being appropriate.*

Clive: *Well, IT and data systems is the same, but I still think it's horses for courses. Do we need everyone to be coaches?*

Diane: *I believe our longer-term goals should be to move everyone towards more of a coaching approach, I recognise it takes time.*

Me: *Would it be helpful to explore this topic in more detail?*

There are nods of agreement.

Veronica: *My experience with the three coaches who went on the programme was different for each of them: One got it right away, one was quite nervous about trying a different approach and one was reluctant at first but when she saw how it made a difference to people facing redundancies she became*

an absolute advocate and it has really built her confidence too. Jess and I have discussed creating a coaching supervision network to support their development so they can learn from each other. I think that might help the ones that are struggling to get it.

Dan: *So that would be like coaching the coaches?*

Jess: *Yes exactly.*

Paul: *I still don't see Dave and Chris taking to it very well.*

Me: *Well maybe you have to manage a situation where the longer-term goal is for everyone to coach but for some people, you accept it may not be possible? What do others think?*

Veronica: *I think what we communicate is important, we cannot say that it's OK for some people to opt out. BUT I understand where Paul is coming from. I think we need to find ways to break the coaching skills down to simpler activities. All of them can learn to listen a bit more and sometimes ask the person what they are thinking they should do before diving in – even Chris and Dave. Do you think, Paul, you need to think about your own coaching capabilities? Are you coaching your staff?*

Paul looks at Veronica with a sheepish grin.

Paul: *Thanks for showing me up! You know I'm not coaching to your level!*

Veronica: *Oh come on you can take it.*

Me: *It's an interesting point Veronica makes. And thanks for owning up Paul. (I smile at him reassuringly.) I suspect you are not the only one. We all have different skills and experience, don't we? Shall we discuss this a little further? What does this team stand for in terms of developing a coaching ethos and what is your role in that? Let's hear a perspective from each of you and then we can generate some ideas about what to do.*

7.2.3. i. What is going on when I am coaching a team? Team Coaching Supervision: Vignette one p.238

July 2016 Presentation to a professional coaching network

I look out at the forty plus expectant faces staring back at me in the lecture theatre: friends nodding encouragement, colleagues and associates, some who participated in the research as part of the professional coaches' group. Some I know only by reputation. Unhelpfully, I elect to project on to them a sense of superior intellect, competence and professionalism, which is currently undermining my own confidence. They all appear eager to learn what insights I can share. Some are strangers; I do not know their background or their expectations, other than the heady promise offered by my colleague on sending out the invitation for our monthly event: Joanne will be sharing the findings of her Team Coaching Research. I am worried I may disappoint them.

I stand, arms outstretched, partly in greeting, partly in submission and acknowledgement that I stand naked before them. My work, my thinking and my inferences publicly exposed. I breathe deeply, summon my professional courage and beam a wide smile at the audience. One more breath – in and out. Ahhhh.

***Me:** Thank you so much for coming out on this lovely sunny July evening, it is wonderful to have so many of you here. Let me start by saying: when I observed the word “findings” on the invitation for this evening it implies a degree of certainty and finality that I cannot promise. Please understand these are somewhat tentative and still with work to do. However, there are ideas here that I’m eager to share with you, to receive your feedback and your response to them. I designed this work with professional coaches in mind and for me it is important to know how this work resonates with your experience...*

Twenty-five minutes later I have warmed to my themes and the audience is engaged in throwing queries, offering their own observations and embracing the framework I have presented.

‘I see myself operating in the team as machine mode most often but I’m interested in learning more about the living system’.

‘For me I always start in Wonderland. How can you know what is going on without starting off in curious mode?’

‘You have made me think. We have done so much work with teams this year in our organisation and a lot of what you are talking about resonates for me. I would like to be able to talk to you about it.’

I divide the audience in to small discussion groups and ask them to describe what resonates for them about the model and how they might use it in their practice. After half an hour, they are back with me in the lecture theatre sharing their observations.

'After discussion I realise I delve in to all four quadrants. This framework has helped me to articulate my practice more clearly.'

'Our group have been discussing using the framework with the team themselves; helping them to describe their modes of operation.'

'We thought it would be a useful framework for reflecting on a client team within a supervision setting as well.'

'I have started to think about tools and techniques linked to each quadrant. You are going to work on developing that, aren't you?'

Unsurprisingly I am floating on a cloud of excitement and relief. I have released my cherished framework and exposed my ideas to a professional audience and they have adopted the ideas, developed them, raised questions, offered their own interpretations and applications. The framework lives in the minds of others. It is out in the world now, independent, and an entity in its own right.

Appendix 7.1 Comprehensive Team survey questions based on framework of team coaching

Key Indicators of Effectiveness: Team as Machine

Adapted from Cohen and Bailey, (1997); Kozlowski and Ilgen, (2006); Mathieu *et al* (2008); Salas, Sims and Burke, (2005); Wageman, Hackman and Lehman, (2005).

Key Indicators of Effectiveness	Score/10
COMPELLING CLEAR DIRECTION	
We have a clear sense of purpose. We know why our team purpose matters to the organisation and key stakeholders.	
Everyone can explain what the team is here to accomplish.	
The team's purpose is challenging	
I am motivated to achieve the team's purpose. It is important to me and others	
TEAM PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES – Stakeholders, other teams & team members	
We are meeting expectations of our customers/ clients or stakeholders.	
We monitor our effectiveness in working with others and discuss ways to improve performance.	
Our team performance is improving over time through increased capabilities.	
We monitor team members' satisfaction. Team members feel positive about working with the team.	
TEAM CONTEXT	
The organisation values team work. The team is supported by organisational policies and procedures. E.g we are rewarded for succeeding as a team.	
This is a good moment in time to plan our development.	
TEAM MEMBERS COMPOSITION AND DESIGN	
We are interdependent in resources, processes and/ or outcomes. We believe it makes sense to work together.	
We have the right people with the correct balance of experience, knowledge and skills to be successful.	
We seek out diversity and understand what diversity brings to a team	
We have sufficient stability of membership to be effective	
The team structure, roles and responsibilities are clear and effective.	
TEAM WORK PROCESSES	
We communicate effectively	
There are clear expectations about roles, clear assignments are made, accepted, and carried out.	
We have agreed ways to share work, we cooperate to get the work done.	
The team tracks progress against goals regularly and discusses how to build on successes and to close performance gaps.	
We all feel responsible for team outcomes and will support colleagues and raise concerns for the overall good of the team.	
We have developed clear norms of behaviour that enable us to function effectively, and bring new members on-board with these norms quickly.	
We are good at working together to learn and grow, developing new ideas and adapting to change.	

Key Indicators of Effectiveness: Team as family

Adapted from Casey-Campbell and Martens, (2009) Edmondson, (1999); Salas, Grossman, Hughes and Coultas, (2015)

Key Indicators of Effectiveness: TEAM as FAMILY	Score /10
We have a shared commitment to the purpose and values of this team.	
There is interpersonal trust and mutual respect between team members. We operate in a climate of openness and appreciation	
We are share individual member values and beliefs and how they connect with the team's ideology.	
There is a sense of belonging and pride in being a member of this team	
We address issues of conflict and disagreement constructively and with respect for different perspectives.	

Key Indicators of Effectiveness: Team as living system

(adapted from Edmondson, (2002); Hawkins, (2011); Kozlowski and Ilgen, (2006); Silberstang and London, (2009); Thornton, (2016);

Key Indicators of Effectiveness: TEAM as LIVING SYSTEM	Score/ 10
We make time to understand the external context of our team.	
We build positive relationships with external stakeholders and with other teams	
We seek to continuously adapt, innovate and change to the needs of the environment	
We are confident that our team can succeed in this environment	
We are externally focused. For example, seeking feedback from stakeholders and learning from the best practices of others.	
We seek to influence our environment for the good of the whole system.	
We engage in continuous learning, and challenge our thinking by questioning assumptions. We encourage innovation and change.	

Key Indicators of Effectiveness: TEAM in Wonderland

Adapted from Cunliffe, (2002); Gergen, (1999); McCabe, 2016)

Key Indicators of Effectiveness: TEAM in Wonderland	Score/ 10
We operate in a spirit of curiosity and reflexivity. We clarify meanings implied in language. We look beyond the surface level explanations.	
We remain open to the possibility that organisational events may prove to be unpredictable or non-rational and require us to remain flexible.	

Scoring Key

0-2 Item missing or working extremely poorly. We have not considered this item.

3-4 Item works poorly or inconsistently most of the time in our team.

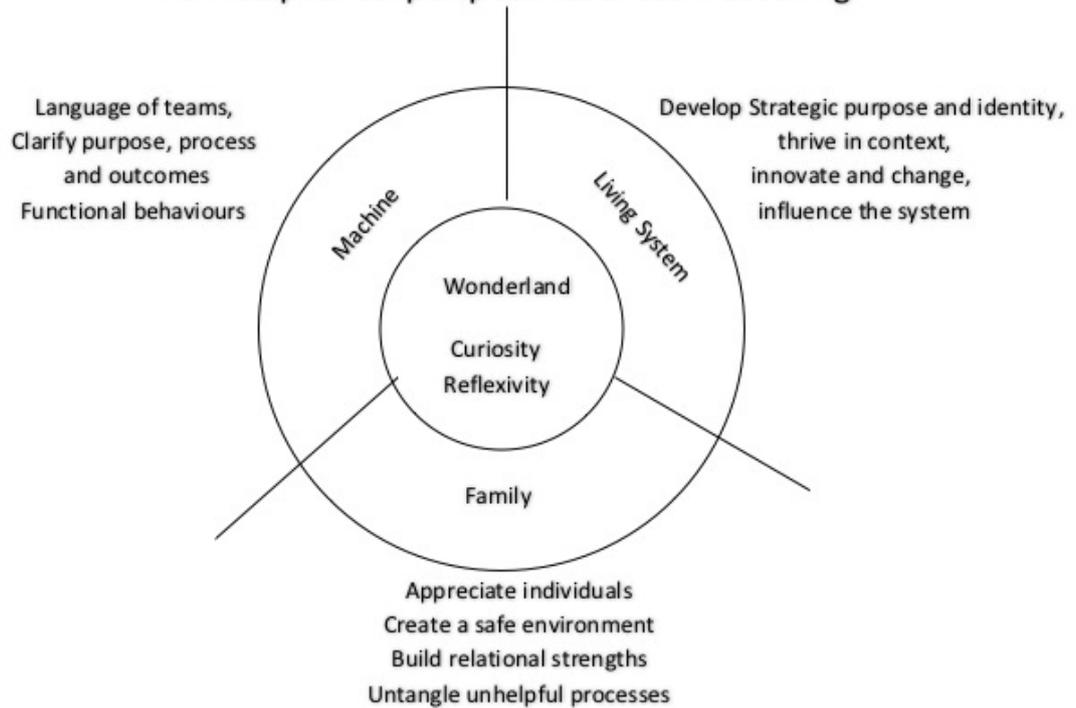
5-6 Item is working partially, or some of the time. There is much room for improvement.

7-8 Item is working well most of the time in our team. Still some room for improvement.

9-10 This is a real strength sustained over time.

Appendix 7.2. Planning a team coaching assignment

The metaphorical perspectives of team coaching



Metaphorical perspectives	Listening for clues/ asking questions
Machine	What is working/ not working
Living System	What is the context?
Family	What is the quality of the relationships?
Wonderland	What are you curious about?

Appendix 7.3. Reflecting on the metaphorical framework of team coaching to prepare a team coaching curriculum.

Student one: Ann Marie is a OD specialist who has worked in HRD for twenty years. She has been involved in facilitating team building activities with operational teams and has a working knowledge of dyadic coaching mainly taking a behavioural approach through application of the GROW model underpinned by her excellent capacity for listening and empathy. Ann Marie wants to deepen her coaching knowledge and apply this learning 1:1 and with teams.

Student two: Gordon is an Executive Coach who has worked with senior executives within the NHS and some FTSE 500 companies for 15 years. Before turning to executive coaching Gordon studied as a psychotherapist and has a psychodynamic approach to his coaching with leaders. He now wishes to take on more team coaching assignments working with senior management teams.

Team as machine metaphor for teaching team coaching.

The team as machine metaphor draws on team effectiveness literature to create a framework of an effective team. This theory allows Ann Marie to connect her OD experience and team facilitation skills to the theory base whilst for Gordon the team literature provides a gateway to learning about the functioning of teams. Team as machine applies behavioural and goal focused coaching approaches along with team assessment tools to scaffold a coaching process and create a shared language. Both of the students may have a familiarity with behavioural approaches to coaching and Ann Marie may have used various team effectiveness frameworks. Ann Marie may have tools and techniques to share relating to developing productive team behaviours. As Gordon reflects on the team theory he may have experience to share relating to leaders he has worked with who have been tasked with developing their own teams. Ann Marie may have received previous training in team process consultation or team facilitation techniques and apply them in her practice. Students would be asked to reflect on their philosophy of coaching throughout the programme, challenging them to explore how they may approach their interventions differently from the stance of a collaborative

developmental relationship. For example, how might they place continued emphasis on the capabilities and self-determination of the client teams whilst using a team effectiveness questionnaire or developing action plans for functional team behaviours?

Team as family metaphor for teaching team coaching.

Team coaching through metaphor of family introduces psychodynamic theories to make sense of complex group dynamics and to reflect on what might be happening between the team members or in the group behaviour. I would expect Gordon to have some familiarity with these theories from his training as a psychotherapist although he may not have worked with the theories within group contexts. The psychodynamic theory may be new language for Ann Marie but her practical experience with teams is likely to yield examples of where she has seen entrenched patterns of behaviour or dysfunctional group processes in play. OD practitioners who have been trained in process consultation may be familiar with the ideas of observing communication patterns and processes in groups.

Secondly team as family introduces theory from team effectiveness research that explores the factors of trust, cohesion and psychological safety on team behaviours and performance. This leads to a conversation about the coaching approaches to create a safe environment between the team members and with the coach. Whilst dyadic coaching approaches place a clear emphasis on the relationship and trust between coach and coachee (Gyllenstein and Palmer, 2007; Baron and Morin, 2009) this metaphor introduces the idea of creating this relational alliance within the team setting.

Thirdly the team as family metaphor introduces Lowe's (2004) constructive framework from family therapy. The techniques of hosting as described in chapter three build on ideas of rapport building that are likely to be familiar to dyadic coaches but place the activity within a group context. Similarly, this constructive philosophy enables the introduction of solution focused and narrative coaching drawing on theories of appreciative inquiry and positive psychology. Again these theories may be familiar to dyadic coaches but their contribution to the team context can be emphasized. I would introduce social constructionism as a coaching philosophy which underpins constructive

family therapy. I would expect both coaches to connect with the idea of social constructionism underpinning a coaching conversation where a client works with a coach to make sense of their personal and professional lives. Equally this could lead to a conversation about how a team could be encouraged to share perspectives and to co-construct meaning about their experiences, relationships and ways of working and interacting.

Returning to Gordon's experience as a psychotherapist I would introduce the challenge here that relates to the traditionally directive and analytical approach of a therapist working from a psychodynamic perspective compared with the more collaborative co-constructionist philosophy that underpins the narrative and solution focused approaches. This lens would provide both students with additional theoretical material to connect with their experience and continue to refine their coaching philosophy.

Team as living system metaphor for teaching team coaching

The team as living system introduces general systems theory and would offer students a myriad of ways of looking at the team's environment and context developing a language of boundaries, dynamic complexities, relationships, communities, evolution and survival and systemic and strategic thinking. Again, Ann Marie as the OD specialist may have some familiarity with these terms and will have tacit knowledge through her experience of organisational life. Gordon's coaching clients are likely to have spent coaching time exploring their role in working within their own complex contexts. Practitioners familiar with process consultation may want to reflect on the traditional diagnostic approaches emphasized by Schein (1999) as opposed to the stance of collaborative inquiry I have introduced within the team coaching framework.

Secondly, the team as living system metaphor introduces coaching approaches of initiating inquiries, dialogue and reflexivity that are essential for facilitating the processes of team learning. Introducing action learning coaching provides useful techniques at the team level to help dyadic coaches more familiar with the posing of questions and initiating inquiries in a 1:1 setting. Particularly techniques for building the teams capacity to demonstrate skills of inquiry, co-construction, constructive challenge and reflexivity with

each other. Coaches from a background in OD or dyadic coaching could be encouraged to reflect on how often they draw their coachees attention to cues and resources from their environment to stimulate growth, learning and change.

Team and coach in Wonderland for teaching Team coaching

The Wonderland metaphor offers two critical perspectives on organisational coaching that have hitherto been missing from the coaching literature both in team coaching and dyadic coaching settings. First, the metaphor introduces the language of the non-rational which I would expect all organisational coaches to relate to from their own experiences and those shared by their clients. I would introduce the Wonderland scenarios such as nonsense, absurdity and unpredictability to generate a dialogue amongst the coaching students about their own non-rational experiences within organisations. Then we would reflect on the benefits of helping our coachees to stand back from their own experiences using similar approaches. I would be interested to know how both Ann Marie and Gordon relate to the metaphor particularly in relation to the idea that accepting the non-rational may release our clients from the notion of always being in control.

Secondly, Wonderland introduces the coaches to the concept of curiosity and a conversation about the benefits of accepting vulnerability within the coaching relationship and working with the stance of not knowing. Experienced coaches are likely to be familiar with the concept of working with the self in coaching and this metaphorical lens develops this idea. Whilst vulnerability in coaching had manifested itself for me largely within the team coaching context I believe it will open a wider conversation about individual vulnerabilities every coach may feel at different times. I would expect this discussion to be a trigger for further reflection on practice for all the students in line with research that suggests a challenging coaching programme brings about transformational development for the coach practitioner along with developing techniques for enabling transformational change with clients (Leggett and James, 2016).

Thirdly, Wonderland reintroduces the philosophy of social constructionism within coaching that was first introduced in team as family and is carried through the framework as a meta-approach that enables a collaborative developmental alliance with clients. Most coaches are familiar with humanistic philosophies and would operate from a stance that respects client strengths and self-determination. A philosophy of social constructionism is congruent with the humanistic philosophies but may offer an extension of the coach's techniques and approaches working 1:1 or with teams as this perspective helps them to 'tune-in' to the client's world view and enables questions of curiosity to emerge that reveal alternative perspectives and the possibility to construct new meaning and understandings.