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What is going on when I am coaching the team? An autoethnography

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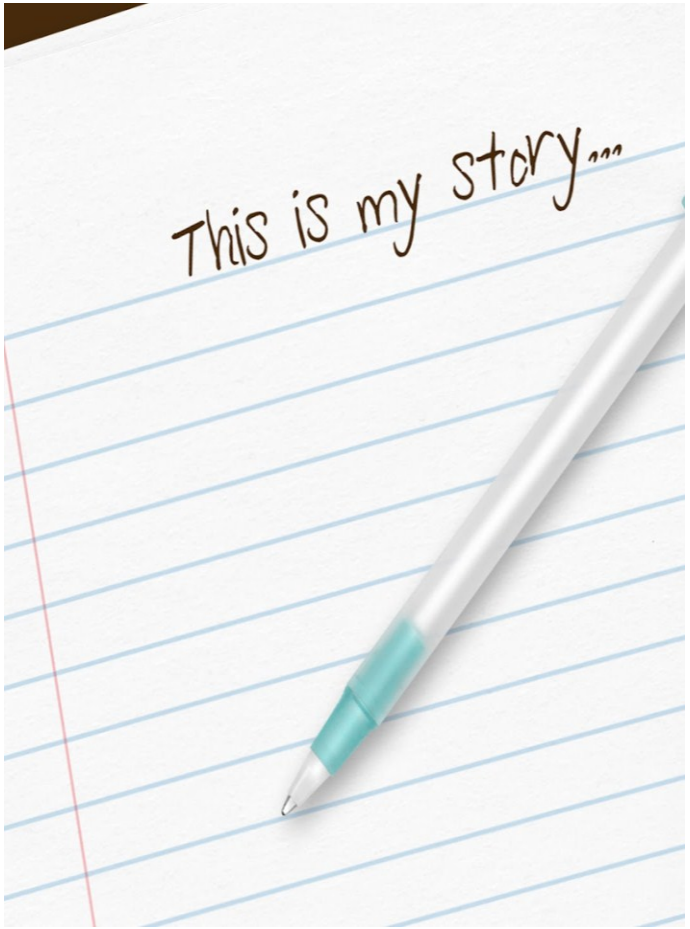
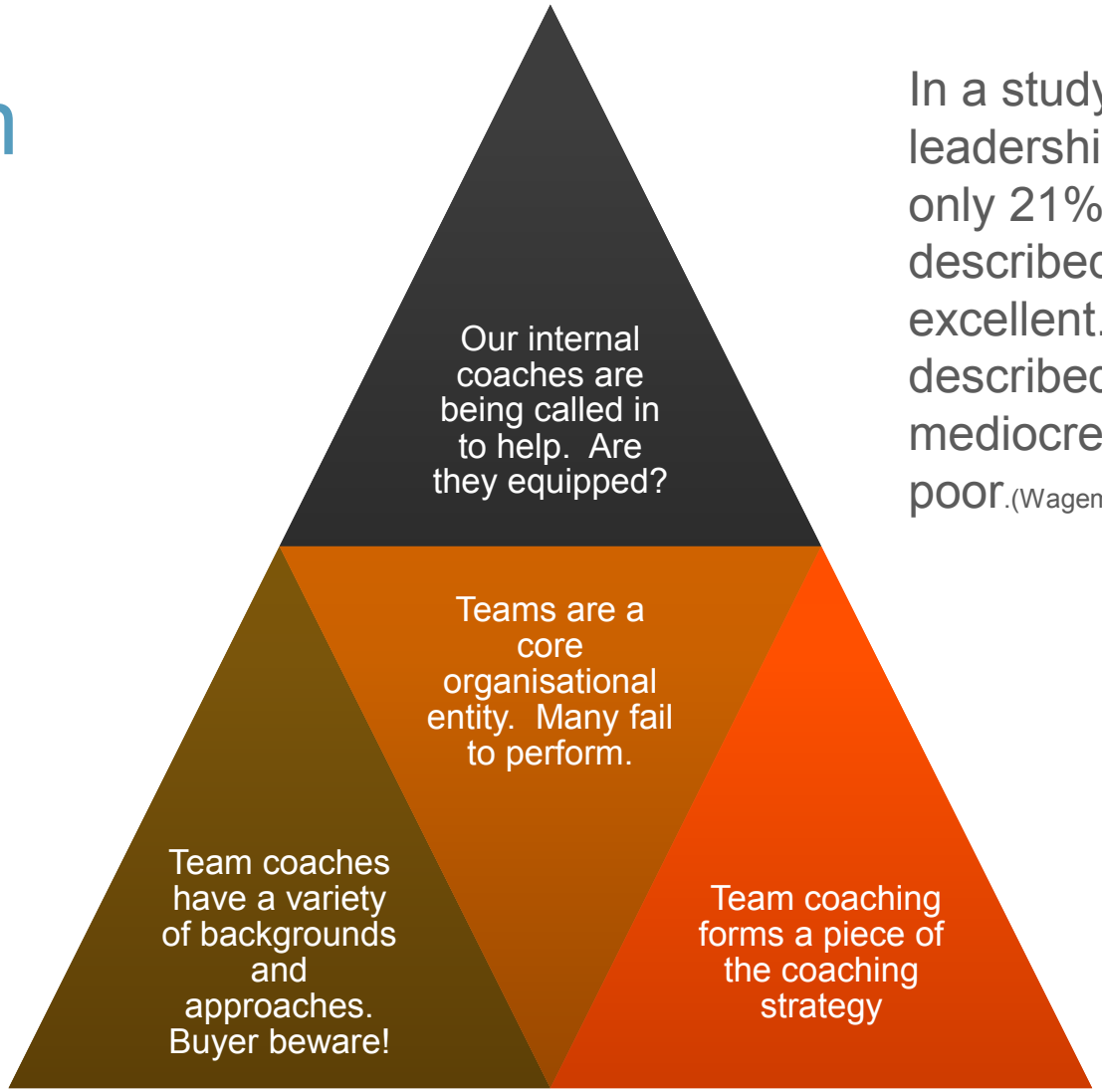
Sharing the story of my doctoral research

- Why research team coaching?
- The challenges
- The theoretical landscape
- My approach
- Your questions and reflections



Why research team coaching?

Why is team coaching relevant to HRD?



In a study of 120 leadership teams only 21% were described as excellent. 79% described as mediocre or poor.(Wageman et al 2008)

Research aims and objectives

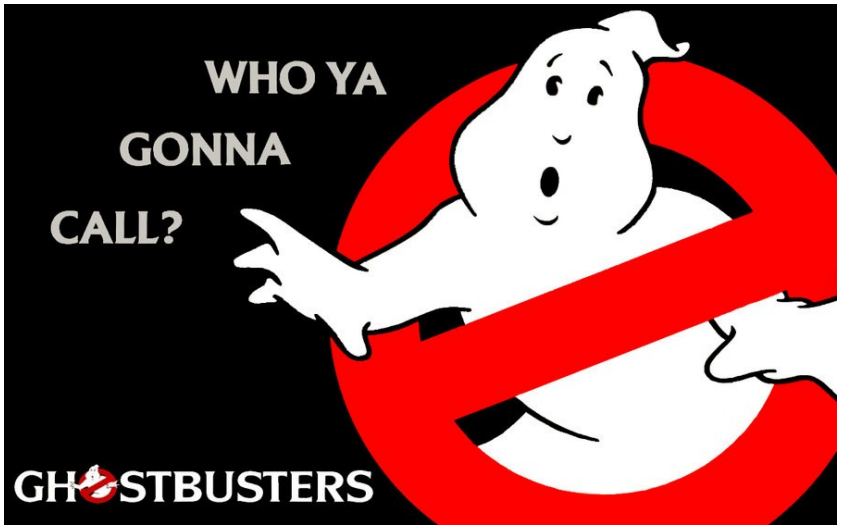
- What is the purpose of team coaching; what outcomes are we seeking?
- What is going on in a team coaching intervention? How do we decide what to do?
- Is team coaching distinctive from other team-based interventions? What can we learn?
- How does the experience of 1:1 coaching inform my team-coaching practice?

The challenges

- The fields of group theory, team effectiveness and team based interventions are extensive.
- Language is inconsistent.
- Draws concepts from across multiple disciplines
- Need to distinguish coaching team as a whole vs coaching in group context
- Teams are complex dynamic systems

The dynamic team as open system indicating elements of team effectiveness

You need a team intervention



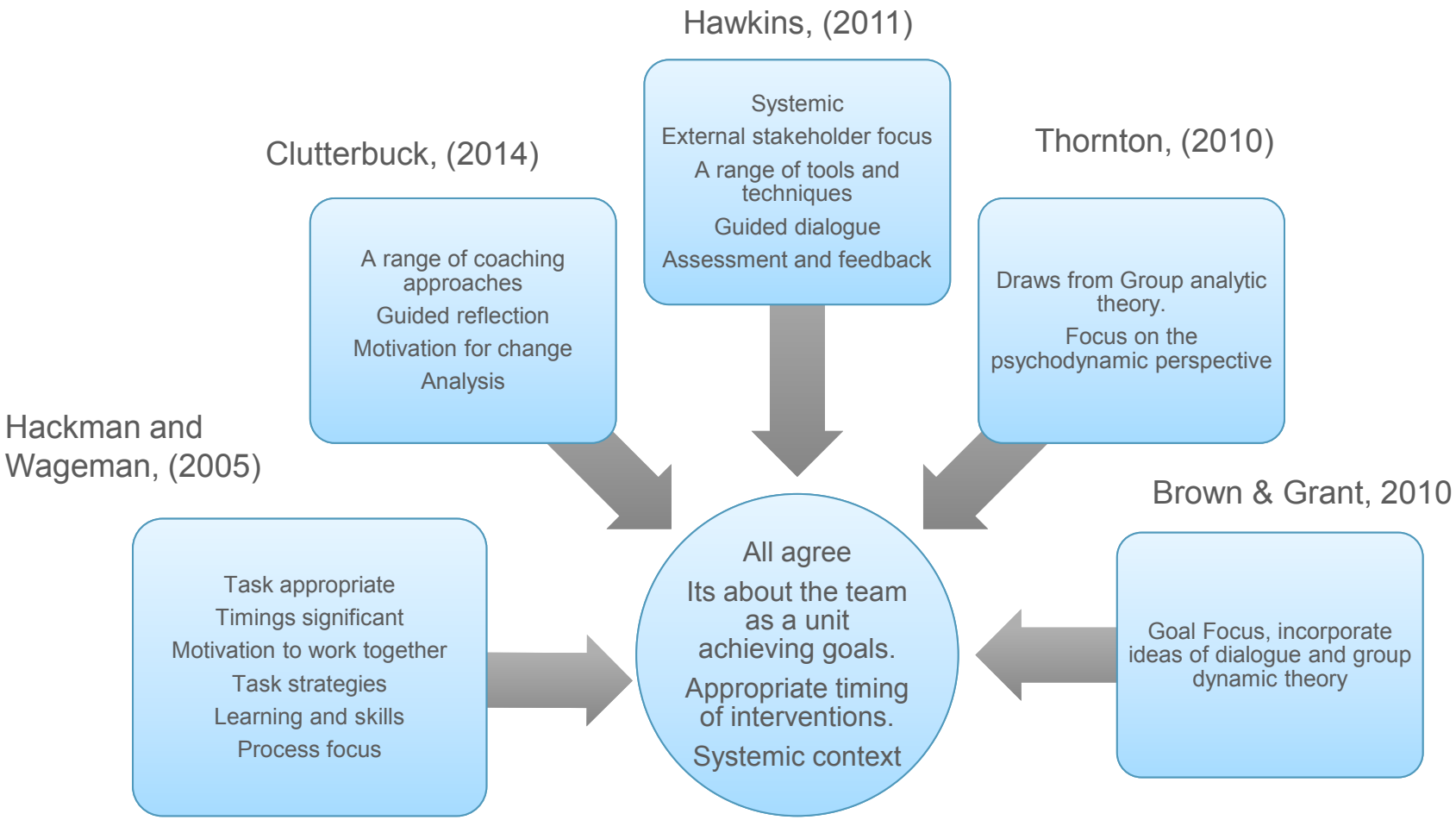
Team development
Facilitator
Process consultant
Expert in group dynamics
Action researcher
Action learning expert
Cooperative inquiry expert
A team coach

Team development: Wheelan, 1994
Facilitation: Schwartz, 2002
Process Consultation: Schein, 1969, 1987, 1999
Action research: Reason & Bradbury,(2008)
Action Learning: Revans, (2011)
Cooperative Inquiry: Heron, (1996)
Team Coaching: Thornton, (2010) Hawkins, (2014); Clutterbuck, 2014

What is team coaching?

- There is very little written about team coaching that draws from a theoretical or empirical basis.
- Hackman and Wageman 2005 (only empirical paper)
- Scholarly practitioners include:
  - David Clutterbuck
  - Peter Hawkins
  - Christine Thornton
  - Anthony Grant & Saul Brown

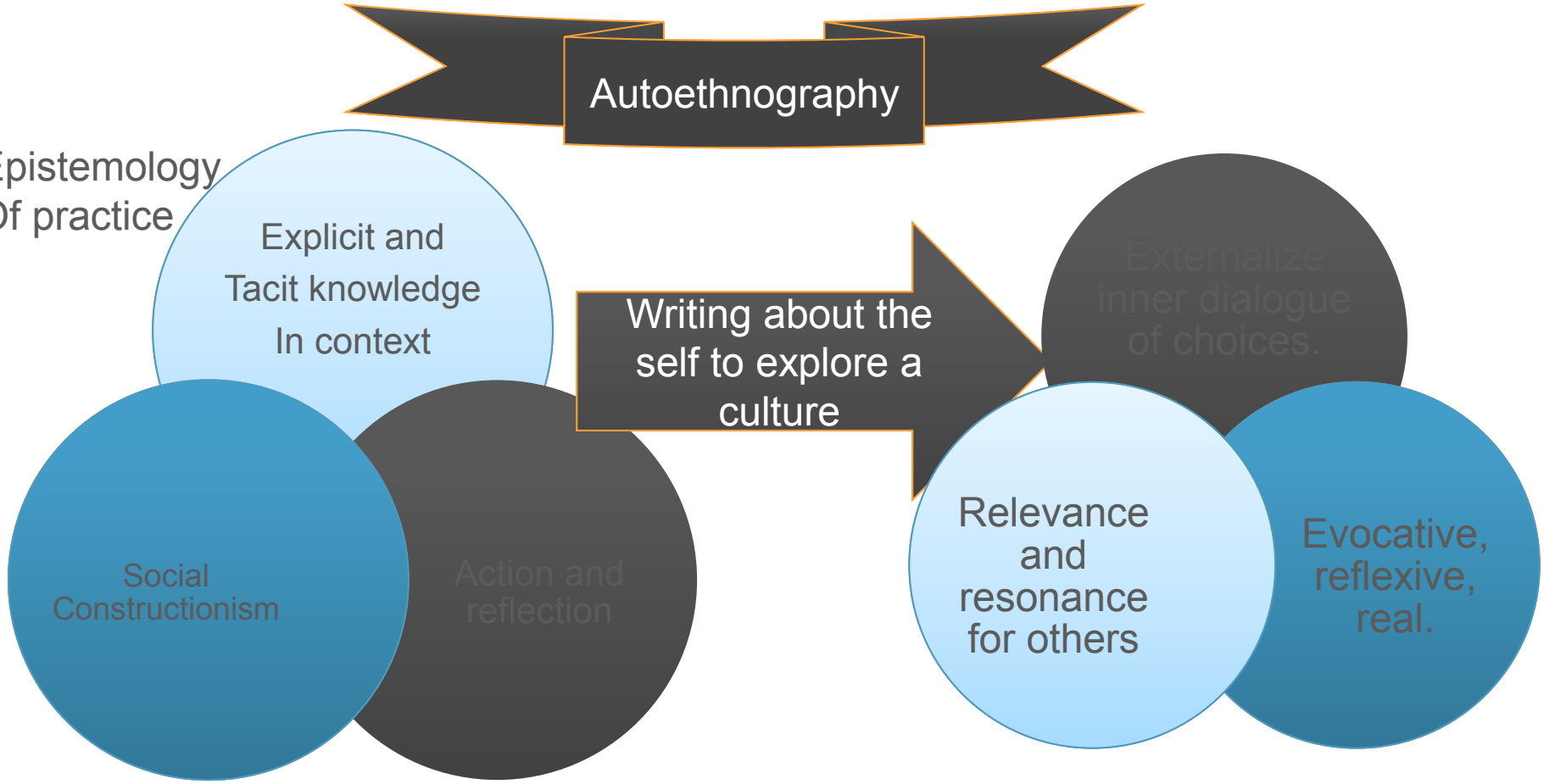
Perspectives on team coaching



Issues with team coaching literature

- Practitioner led
- Underpinning theories not always apparent
- Volume of tools and techniques can be overwhelming
- Does not incorporate contemporary research on team learning processes
- How do I apply vast range of available knowledge to my practice?

My identity as a scholarly practitioner

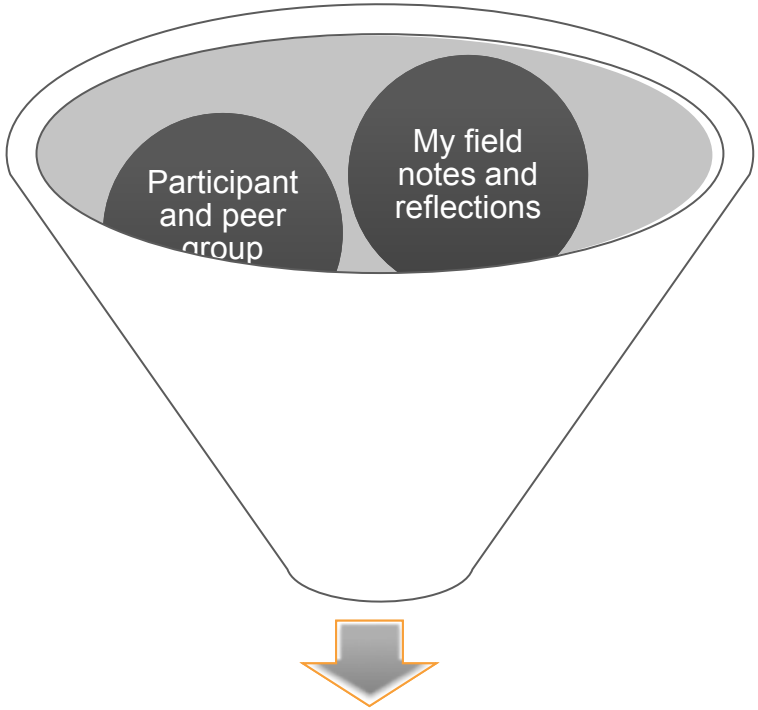


My research project

Two Cooperative Inquiry Groups

Two operational teams in two organisations

Analysis phase



What is going on?

Identify themes, tell the story, make knowledge explicit with theory artifacts, metaphors and reflexive transparency.

Potential contributions

- To conceptualize a framework of team coaching that integrates diverse theoretical perspectives and disciplines.
  - Develop my own practice
  - Enable me to develop team coaching capability with others

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Thank you !

- Your reactions, questions...

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Initial observations

- Context plays a significant role
- Coach needs to be aware of different perspectives - time, context, relational, goals
- Importance of contracting
- Use of the self in the group

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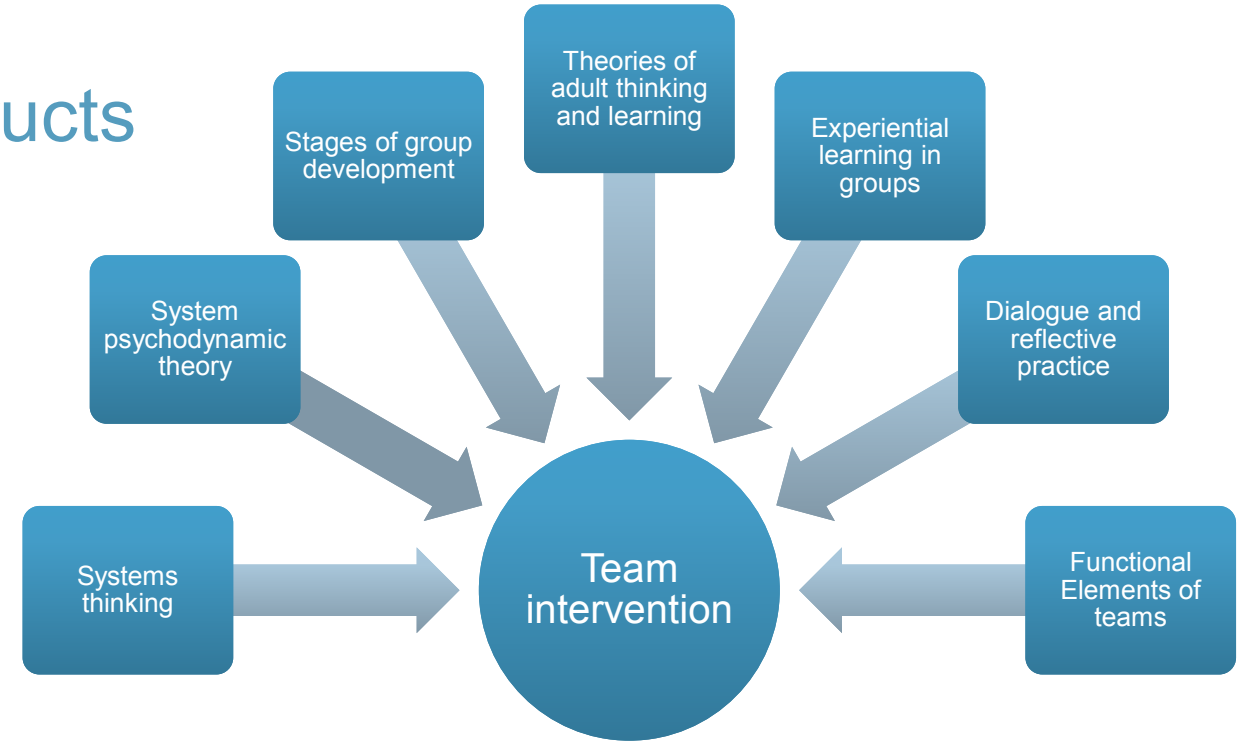
Root Constructs



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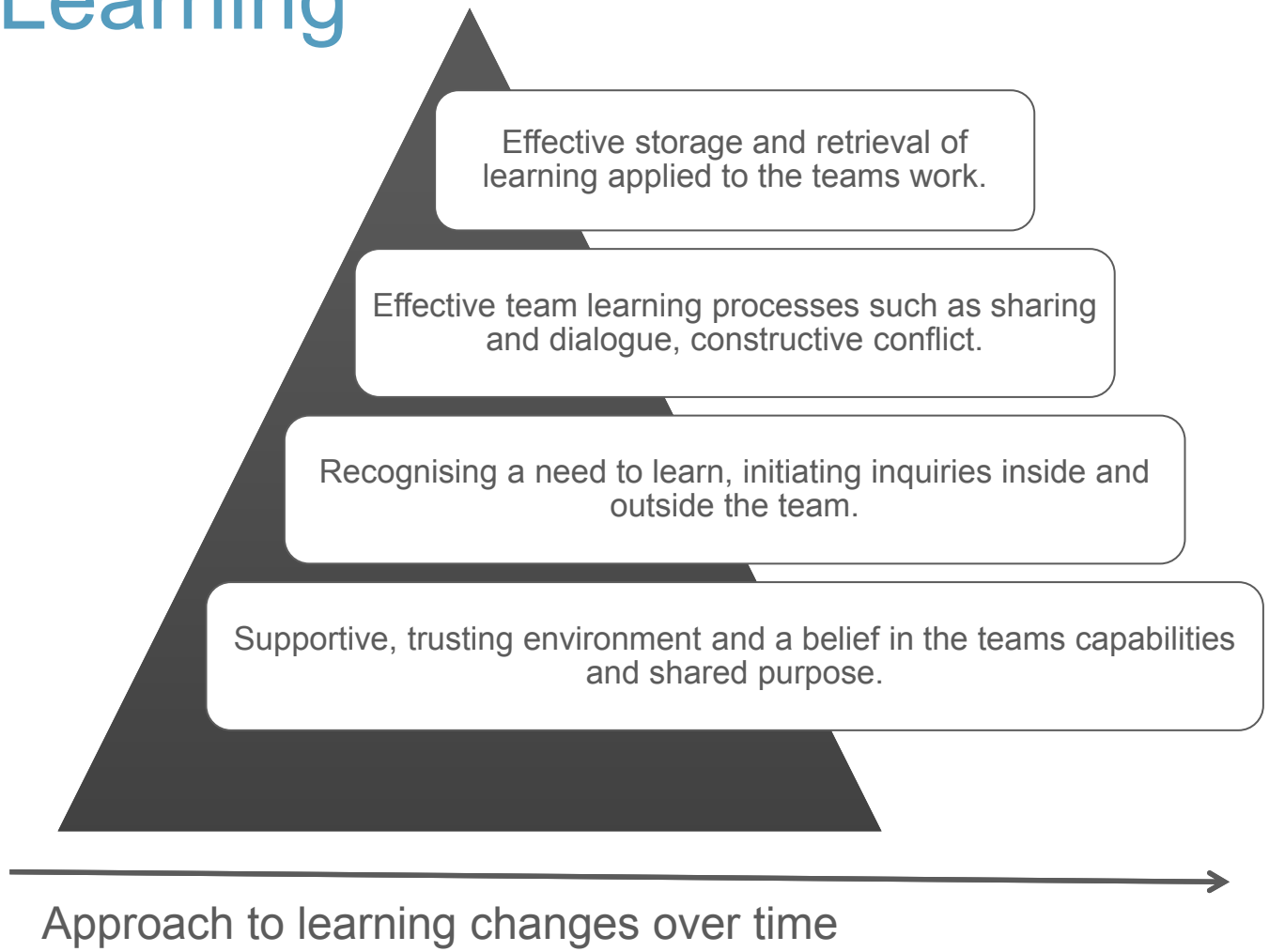
Team Learning