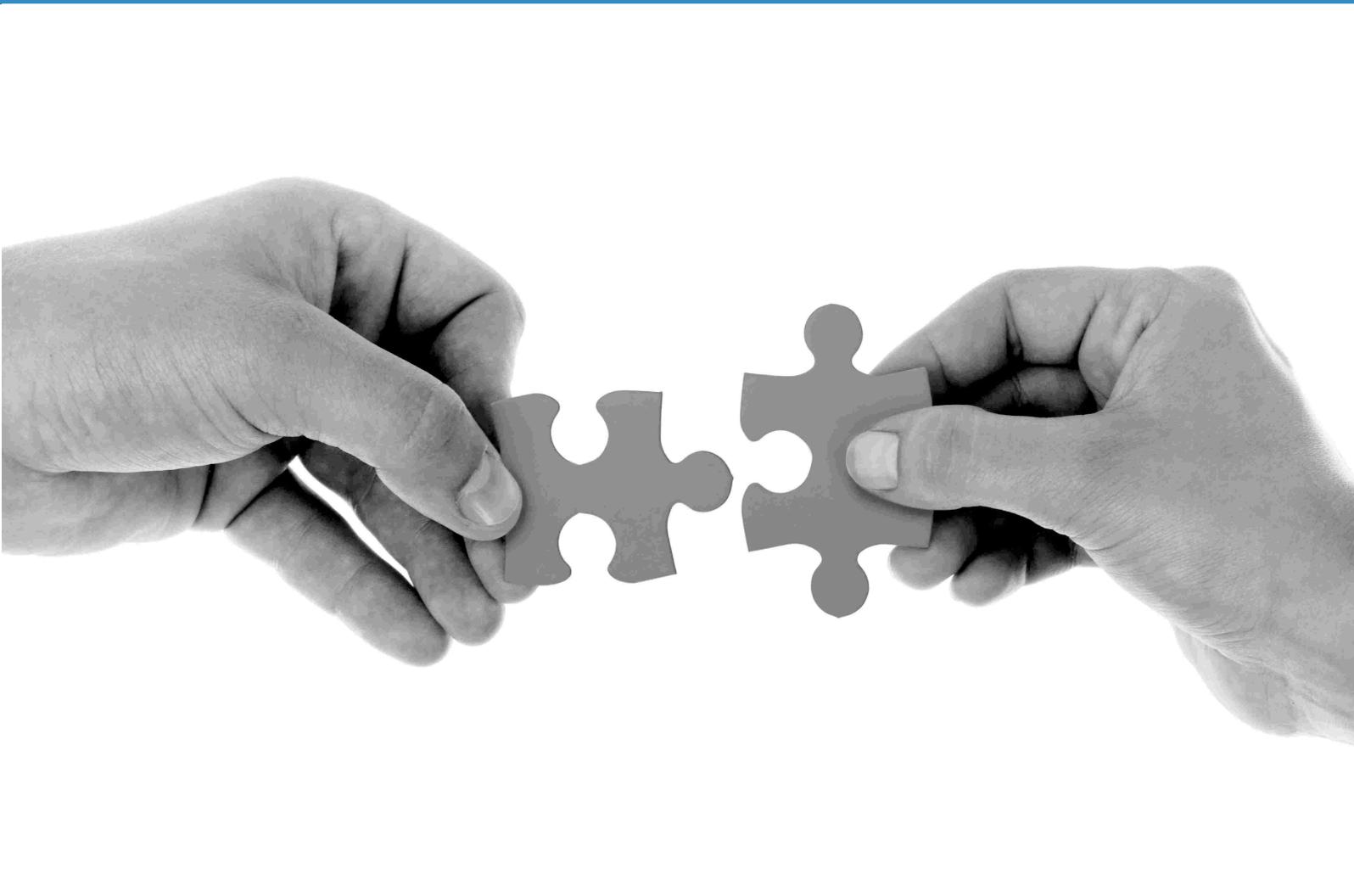


Unconscious Coaching Using Non Verbal Communication



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by Matt Hudson

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Abstract

Educators should know how their actions impact the learning of their student (Hattie 2012). This research reviews the role of a business coach as a facilitator of learning and the impact of their non-verbal communication. It is estimated that 93% of the message we send to others is nonverbal (Mehrabian 1972). Therefore, to correctly understand and determine the impact of communication, recognition of the entire verbal and non-verbal message is critical.

This research was undertaken with nine coaches facilitating a standard coaching model, and highlighted their continuous nonverbal communication, of which they were largely unaware. A subsequent literature review revealed the importance of this form of communication and demonstrated the range of below conscious (or subconscious) signals that constitute verbal and non-verbal communication. Together, verbal and non-verbal elements shape the message being delivered.

As the majority of existing research in this field is quantitative, knowledge of how individuals communicate nonverbally in a real setting is lacking. Thus, an active research based study was embarked upon, whilst utilising an interpretive, qualitative approach, to uncover the level and scope of non-verbal behaviours used within coaching sessions.

Results demonstrated a strong consistency across all coaches studied and consequentially the relevance responding to below conscious (non-verbal) communication within the coaching session. The data shows that by engaging a client within a conscious feedback loop of their own below conscious markers, the coaching appears to have a greater impact upon the client. The statistics also show that there is a need for further training so that coaches can further enhance their professional skill set.

Overall, these findings are in need of more research, to support a greater understanding of the impact of facilitating individuals at a below conscious level using Unconscious Coaching.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

This section outlines the guiding hypothesis, introduces key terms used, and clearly elicits the rationale behind the focus of the research.

The author seeks to demonstrate the impact of non-verbal communication when brought into the client's awareness during coaching dialogue. Current coaching models rely heavily upon the content of verbal dialogue, which if (Mehrabian 1972) is correct, equates to a mere 7% of the total communication. This study regards this as the limitation necessitating the need to undertake this research.

The literature and research on coaching is advancing simultaneously as the profession itself continues to expand. However, current models, used in common coaching practice, indicate that there is limited research on the utilisation of below conscious or non-verbal communication within the coach/client dialogue. This is the specific area within the author's coaching practice that will be researched (Fillery-Travis and Lane 2006; CIPD 2011; Williams 2012). It is becoming clearer that non-verbal communication or below conscious communication is important, whether from the perspective of the coach or the client/coachee. Otherwise, there is the propensity for miscommunication within the coaching relationship. This risks the client's potential not being fully realised. This is why the author feels that incorporating unconscious coaching or harnessing non-verbal communication in a coaching session will make a significant difference. This researcher postulates that the current limited understanding of non-verbal communication in coaching practices and the dearth of literature is a missed opportunity and potential risk.

Background

The author was born with otosclerosis (conductive deafness) and functions in his coaching dialogues by lip reading and the observation of non-verbal communication. This is why the author is seeking a less auditory based and a more inclusive listening process that would recognise, utilise and understand the whole of the client's communication.

The author has struggled for many years to underpin his own personal pedagogy, as often times, his client work would appear to be tacit and non-transferable. However, the author feels that this non verbal communication is a transferable skill, and is embarking on this research to test his hypotheses.

Problem Statement

All verbal communication is supported by non-verbal communication proposes (Ekman 1985) the research psychologist who discovered micro expressions, which are minute movements of the face. This discovery, according to (Henley 2009), would lead Ekman to work for the next forty years in San Francisco, at the University of California's department of psychiatry, where he has

shown Darwin's theory; that the ways in which we express our emotions are both instinctive and general.

Besides illustrating the significance of this mode of non-verbal communication in a coach-client dialogue, this study targets how the use of this skill can be brought to the disposal of the majority of coaches. By coaches being made aware of the potential the unconscious mind offers the client during the session, the coaching process offers a greater impact by providing deeper insight.

This study lays its foundation on the belief that if a coach is to help a client to the very best of their ability, then the coach needs to develop a greater understanding of their client's non-verbal communication. (Bandler and Grinder 1975) put forward that an individual's behaviour could be better "reflected in the way a person says something rather than in what he says." (Bandler and Grinder 1975)

Research Objectives

(Denscombe 2011) advocates that research objectives should be clearly defined. Hence, this study was centred entirely on mode of communication, namely non-verbal or below conscious communication, and especially geared towards its use by coaches. Referencing relevant literature, this research aims to prove that coaches need to develop their capacity for harnessing the non-verbal communication of their clients. In summary, the objectives of the study were defined as follows:

- To incorporate below conscious aspects of communication within the client session.
- To develop a deeper understanding and awareness of non-verbal communication.
- To encourage coaches to utilise and elicit non-verbal communication within the client's dialogue.

Hypothesis

Based on the aims and objectives of the study, the hypotheses or premises were formulated to provide a guiding value to the achievement of the study objectives. The hypotheses were stated as follows:

- Most of the coaches are not aware of the non-verbal or below conscious form of communication.
- The coaches have not fully exploited the potential of unconscious communication.

Delimitations and Limitations

In any kind of study, there are shortcomings and strengths that are expected in the course of feasible research and data analysis. All research projects can be flawed to some extent. These challenges were identified and defined in two categories namely: delimitations and limitations.

Delimitations

The study was based on action research that allowed this researcher to exercise maximum influence on his area of practice.

This study encouraged the creation of new knowledge through action research.

Limitations

Prejudice may arise as a result of excessive involvement of the researcher in the course of the study as it is based on action research.

The participating coaches may have their own beliefs to defend in the course of the feasible research.

Definition of Key words

Unconscious Communication: The communication that either a client or coach portrays without their knowledge through body movements or gestures that can be interpreted or harnessed by an observer.

Coach: A teacher, instructor or a professional charged with the responsibility to provide direction, and instructions to facilitate the skills or well being of an individual or a client.

Client/Participant: In the context of coaching, it refers to an individual that receives the training or dialogue to assist them in their lives or ways/activities.

Unconscious Coaching: The process of coaching whilst utilising the below conscious, non verbal communication of a client within a coaching dialogue/session.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

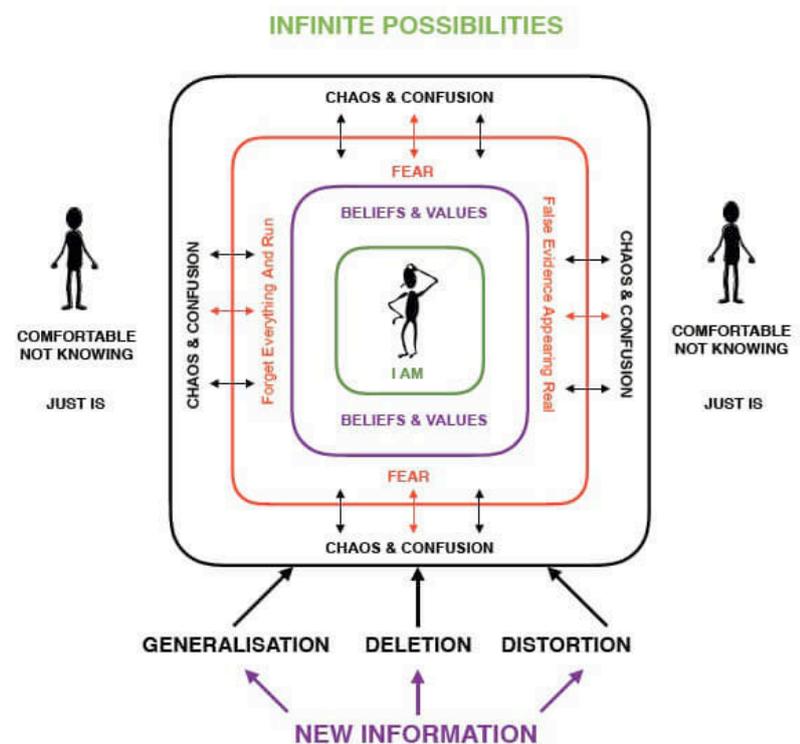
This section of the dissertation discusses relevant literature associated with the coaching industry and especially the aspect of non-verbal or below conscious communication. It places emphasis on the background of unconscious coaching or Non verbal communication and associated issues. It regards the incorporation of Non verbal communication into the coaching process as paramount to maximising the impact for the client. With the aid of extended support, such as a trainer or coach, with the appropriate skills and knowledge, to better utilise the coaching dialogue. It reviews literature on principles of communication, significance of unconscious coaching, the unconscious mind and other related literature.

Unconscious Coaching

Following the substantial growth in the coaching industry, attracting revenues approximated at \$2 billion in the year 2012 (ICF 2012), it has become evident that this sector is becoming increasingly lucrative and important in the world economy. Therefore, the author believes a greater emphasis must be placed upon the professional praxis of the coach; in particular, the coaching dialogue aimed at the below conscious and Non verbal communication process within the coaching session.

(Korzybski 1958) argues that every person has his or her unique configuration of whatever they intend to say or portray, and that understanding the non-verbal cues facilitates the dialogue or understanding of the unconscious mind of the client. Positing that 'The map is not the territory it represents' (Korzybski 1958) could have been talking about coaching. Each session on the surface is similar in structure but then, each individual client's map of their internal world, is uniquely different and personal.

Likewise, the territory of the coaching process is itself a subjective environment being created by both the coach and the client. (Korzybski 1958). By incorporating a feedback loop from the coach to the client highlighting the client's non-verbal communication in the moment that it occurs, the coach may be able to help their client to recover parts of their map that are outside of their awareness; thus the client becomes more aware of their whole communication.



Virginia Satir is acknowledged by (Andreas 1991) as 'one of the most powerful and effective therapists of the twentieth century' (Andreas 1991). (Satir, et al 1991) proposed that Non verbal communication is a matter of being congruent and choosing to be oneself. When one is out of congruence it can be witnessed via an affect or one's non-verbal communication. She sees congruence as a way of conveying information, suggesting that when we communicate we have at least three choices:

"Using incongruent words and congruent affect
Using congruent words and incongruent affect
Using congruent words and congruent affect"
(Satir, et al 1991)

The non-verbal communication can be gestures, facial expressions, head, hand and eye movement, among many others to lay emphasis on what a person is saying. (Ekman 1985) refers to these movements as illustrators and continues further to define their importance in reading the client's unconscious communication. By not utilising Non verbal communication, the essence of the message, like the baby, may be thrown out with the bath water. The frequency with which non-verbal communication occurs, should therefore emphasize the importance of this element to be incorporated within coaching dialogue; thus facilitating a greater impact and more effective communication.

The author is of the opinion that coaches maybe failing to realise the great potential that exists in unconscious communication or below conscious, non-verbal communication. (Satir et al 1991) believed that being able to read a client's or participant's non-verbal communication, rather than what they are saying alone, would lead to deepening the understanding for both the client and the coach. Following the great interest being generated in the coaching industry, unconscious coaching is an evolving process that is, the author proposes, to be of assistance to the majority of professional coaches. That does not imply that the unconscious mind and its mechanisms are new fields, although the art of harnessing its full potential is the core driver of this research.

When most researchers have focused on non-verbal communication, it is as that which incorporates the use of sign language; there is a paucity of information surrounding coaches studying the unconscious non-verbal communication or cues of their client to derive meaning from it.

The literature surrounding coaching suggests that coaching has no universal definition. Many scholars have put forward their own definitions, some suggesting, and even highlighting, the need for unconscious interventions or bringing the client's unawareness into their awareness. (Fillery-Travis and Passmore 2011) provide the most relevant definition. They suggest coaching is:

"A Socratic based dialogue between a facilitator (coach) and a participant (client) where the majority of interventions used by the facilitator are open questions which are aimed at stimulating the self awareness and personal responsibility of the participant."

(Fillery-Travis and Passmore 2011)

The literature suggests that bringing below conscious or Non verbal communication into the client's awareness is a pivotal part of the coaching experience.

Within the context of this study, the term unconscious coaching denotes the activity of training and or facilitating one to realise his or her own non-verbal communication. In this way, the client, with the aid of a professional coach, will be able to connect to a greater sense of wholeness and self-worth (Satir et al 1991).

Climate for Learning

If a participant/learner does not feel safe enough to speak up when they do not understand something, learning may be impaired, or indeed learning will take place but without having the intended result. It is therefore imperative that the practitioner/educator creates 'a warm, trustworthy and empathic climate' (Hattie 2012), for the student's/client's. The reasoning being that if the participant/learner feels okay then they will be more open to seeing failure as an opportunity for growth. Teachers, like coaches, have a duty to 'seek out misconceptions, misunderstandings and lack of knowledge' ... and perhaps acknowledge... 'Learning thrives on error' (Hattie 2012).

In order that the teacher/coach can ensure a 'cognitive change in the student' then 'deliberate interventions' that are 'meaningful and challenging experiences' aligned with 'progressive development' and able to 'maximise the feedback are required.' (Hattie 2012)

Milton Erickson the 'internationally acclaimed, leading practitioner of medical hypnosis' (Bandler and Grinder 1975) who's work appeared to be un-reproducible, was subject to a research project to uncover the psychiatrist's tacit knowledge. The researchers were able to capture and codify the once systemic into a systematic process of psychiatric techniques. Whereupon, at its core, the study suggests that the hypnotist 'must be sensitive' and acquire the 'ability to identify and utilise' the 'client's model of the world', (Bandler and Grinder 1975)

The use of 'Socratic based dialogue' and 'open questions' referred to within the definition of coaching given, concur with the ethical framework and model used by (Mukherjee 2008; Erickson et al 2010; Williams 2012). Therefore, a specific type of dialogue, namely Socratic, is used to bring the client's unawareness or unconscious into the client's awareness or consciousness (Kristal 2009; Williams 2012).

The author intimates that this framework may not be going far enough to help the client, as it revolves solely around the verbal dialogue, representing only 7% of the total message. Whereas, up to 80% of our interactions with others are non-verbal and driven by our subconscious mind (Satir et al 1991; Zani et al 2011; Navarro 2013).

Communication Awareness

By making the coach more aware of this communication, the coach may have a greater impact within the client session, thus helping the client to move forward with their presenting problem more quickly and with greater autonomy. This drive to know my impact upon a client or student would be concurrent with the findings of (Hattie 2011).

Historically (Freud 1964) hypothesised that, the unconscious was similar to a safety deposit box deep within the brain where negative feelings and damaging emotional experiences were suppressed and repressed. Consequently, by stimulating greater self-awareness the client's unconscious forces maybe released (Freud 1964; Frank 2003; Williams 2012).

Perhaps Freud's legacy has left many in fear of the unconscious mind? This may explain why the spoken word is still a prominent mode within the coaching paradigm. Whereas, (Gorton 2005) states in the American Journal of Psychiatry that Milton H. Erickson believed the unconscious should be "Viewed as a reservoir of creative potential that can be a source of wisdom" (Gorton 2005).

(Erickson et al 2010) created bespoke therapy or coaching sessions for every client. He developed this particular client centred approach to test his hypothesis, that the client already held the resources within themselves, to help themselves (Bandler and Grinder 1975; Satir et al 1991; McDermott and Jago 2003).

Consequently, the Ericksonian model aligns with (Rogers 1951) and many other person-centered approaches to helping people; in that there is a facilitated dialogue which aims to stimulate the unconscious or engender greater self-awareness and personal responsibility of the participant.

(Palmer and Whybrow 2005), argue that only coaches with a psychological background are professionally and ethically trained to engage the client within this "dialogue". (Law 2005) would have us believe that counselling and therapy have their place within the people helping field, but the skills; knowledge, ethics and attitudes of coaching psychologists are different (Law 2005). The author does not have a psychological background but seeks to strengthen his ontological stance via this research.

In order to gain success as a coach across a broad client spectrum one needs to develop an appropriate mode of communication for each client, which 'emphasises the uniqueness of human beings' (Aldridge and Rigby 2001).

If this is achieved, it encourages teamwork and will more readily attain the laid out objectives of the individual. It is therefore prudent that any particular coach should acquire the principles of effective communication. Perhaps by realising the importance of Non verbal communication, the coach could place greater significance on the application of this during sessional work. The coach may be able to use feedback loops within the coaching dialogue, as the non-verbal message is trusted over and above the verbal (Satir et al 1991; Zani et al 2011; Navarro 2013).

Unconscious Connection

Unconscious coaching requires the ability of a coach to link with a client at a much deeper level. This entails the capacity to observe, understand and effectively utilise the activities of the unconscious mind, through various ways; eye contact, voice variations, tones and shifts in physiology, (see Satir et al 1991; Ekman 1985; Navarro 2013). This awareness may equip coaches with additional tools to understand or attain a deeper insight of the client's intentions.

The coach will also be able to perceive the barriers and challenges limiting progress in the professional or personal lives of their clients. This is particularly useful when a client is not able to verbalise or share various issues affecting their lives, owing to the problem being outside of their consciousness (Rogers 1951; Bandler and Grinder 1975; Satir et al 1991; Erickson et al 2010) concur.

This literature (Rogers 1951; Bandler and Grinder 1975; Satir et al 1991; Erickson et al 2010) suggests that the client has all of the resources they need on the inside to reach an ecological conclusion. If this is the case, then it advocates allowing the clients to find the solution for themselves.

However, (Cavanagh 2006) sees this as an 'overly client-centric approach', arguing that:

"Sometimes no matter how long we ask, the solution does not emerge because it is not 'in' the client, nor are the raw materials available for it to emerge via a process of questioning." (Cavanagh 2006, p.337).

This researcher maintains, along with (Rogers 1951; Bandler and Grinder 1975; Satir et al 1991; Erickson et al 2010) that, a deeper understanding of the client's unconscious communication is called for. This, the literature puts forward, would lead to a mutually beneficial outcome, not only for the client, who is aided in the recovery of a deeper understanding of their non-verbal communication, but also the practitioner who will be simultaneously developing the mindset and learning of the coach. This person centred approach recommended by (Rogers 1951) proposes

"The organism has one basic tendency and striving – to actualize, maintain, and enhance the experiencing organism." (Rogers 1951).

Therefore, if the approach prescribed by (Rogers 1951) was used, it would argue that the clients should be given the autonomy to self direct their own search for meaning and self-actualisation. The stimulus for change and development would be driven by the Practitioner-Client relationship, which would be built upon trust, warmth and positive regard.

This humanistic approach would ask the coach to encourage the client to explore the whole of their being. The directive coaching paradigm put forward by (Cavanagh 2006), where the coach should offer a solution, is less likely to have the answer for the client as the answer has come from the coach's 'map of the world' which is not the same 'territory' as the client's 'map of the world.' (Korzybski 1958).

(Stober and Grant 2006) would rather a coach was able to ask the right questions as opposed to telling a client what to do. The person centred approach to coaching, however, would reject there being a right question, seeking instead more of a non-directive, non-questioning approach.

The client may, in fact, have the answer within themselves and all of the resources that they need to create positive change in their lives, (Rogers 1951; Bandler and Grinder 1975; Satir, et al 1991; McDermott and Jago 2003; Fillery-Travis and Passmore 2011; Williams 2012). The coach needs to be skilled enough to observe non-verbal communication and to feedback to the client as and when it occurs, thus enabling, the client to become 'morefully human'(Satir, et al 1991).

There is always a counter argument. This researcher believes that an exploration of the counter argument, at this juncture, is both relevant and justified.

The person centred approach to coaching is built upon the premise (Aldridge and Rigby 2001) that the theory is non-directive. It suggests that by placing the client at the centre of the work, over a period of time, a relationship will develop between the coach and the client, which will be based on 'empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard' (Rogers 1951, p.487; Aldridge and Rigby 2001)

The humanistic process as mentioned, takes time and (Aldridge and Rigby 2001) suggest that this approach may be 'limiting' if you are the type of person who prefers a 'directive approach'. It has also received criticism for being overly 'optimistic' and 'anti-intellectual', even though the theory is supported by 'significant amounts of empirical research' (Aldridge and Rigby 2001).

Perhaps Whitmore, the man whose company is 'the foremost provider of coaching, leadership development and performance improvement in the workplace globally' (Vera 2013), deserves the final space within this literature review. 'There is no one right way to coach' (Whitmore 2009) continues... traditional silo or linear thinking' can no longer fit within the twenty first century and it is the 'capacity' for 'a whole-system approach' which has come from the field of personal development. He proclaims coaching as 'creating the conditions for learning and growing.' (Whitmore 2009).

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

Methodology refers to a set of principles and guidelines that lead to accurate, valid, reliable and acceptable research. Having identified the need for exploratory research to test the author's hypotheses, the author now gives his reasoning for the approach he chose to justify his actions. Possible approaches are discussed to demonstrate why utilising a mixed methods style, where the majority of the findings are qualitative and the minority quantitative, within a practical action research methodology is beneficial.

Reasoning Behind Chosen Methodology

The author works within the world of one to one coaching where communication and facilitation is key to helping clients in a totally confidential process. In order for the author to test his hypothesis he would need to look beyond the confines of his own practice, and engage other coaches to take up the gauntlet of change in their own pedagogical approach.

The author acknowledges that quantitative research would have some merit as it measures and collects facts, 'predetermined research questions', statistics and 'conceptual frameworks', (Punch 2005).

This can moderate obscurity by changing opinions into quantifiable categories. Examining hypotheses to clarify the variation in the subject variables or forecast outcomes once types are identified. (Denscombe 2011)

However, the author was working with human beings and their subsequent Non verbal communication, emotions and behaviours, in the setting of the coaching environment; when separating effects in a rigorous way, empirical data can translate into less meaningful information. At the same time, working in laboratory conditions may not transfer to the real life setting, which the research requires, (Trickey and Topping 2004).

(Bell 2010) suggests that a qualitative perspective was a better match for this research as it focused on 'understanding individual's perceptions of the world' (Bell 2010). This view underpins the author's own pedagogical approach whilst he still felt the need to further enhance the research. Phenomenology would appear to be a perfect fit as Denscombe (2011) highlights it as being subjective, rather than objective; description (more than analyses); interpretation (rather than measurement); and agency (rather than structure). It would also work well with a small- scale research. However, Denscombe (2011) continues that this approach usually focuses on unexciting stuff; the author's research would be far from it.

The author needed to improve his epistemological view, demonstrate this to his peers, and then create some sort of continual-improvement loop, to inform and direct the process. This would require a more rigorous methodology than that of phenomenology.

Action research was the next methodology to review: this approach allows the researcher/practitioner to generate 'his own living theory of practice' (McNiff and Whitehead 2009) 2009), it also addresses a practical problem, is part of a continuous development cycle, and the research feeds back into practice (Denscombe 2011).

There are three approaches to action research:

1. **Technical:** Where the practitioner relies on the researcher as a facilitator. Aiming to progress educational or management practice.
2. **Practical:** Targeting the practitioner's understanding, effectiveness and professional development. Practitioners are encouraged to be self-reflecting whilst using practical deliberation.
3. **Emancipating:** Aiming to encompass both Technical and Practical whilst encouraging transformation and change within the current environment and the system itself.

(Zuber-Skerritt 1996)

The literature suggests that for this small-scale study, practical action research was the most appropriate methodology. (Bell 2010) informs that action research is not a method or technique, it is applied research and its results normally add value to the art of teaching or teaching methods.

The practitioner was not only in a good position to better understand the problem, but moreover, he was able to alter his practice as the process went along, in a cyclical fashion. Since the research was of a practical nature, targeting change as an integral part of the cyclical feedback process (whereby the initial findings fed forward to give more possibilities) for change to be implemented by pro-active practitioners, (McNiff and Whitehead 2009; Denscombe 2011).

In order to further enhance the research, qualitative researchers sometimes draw upon quantitative techniques and vice versa, pending the data that they require. (Punch 2005). Therefore, a questionnaire would be used as part of the data collection method (Denscombe 2011).

The audience targeted in this scenario included; counsellors, psychologists, coaches and teachers. The educational change in the context of the researcher is enhancing coaching sessions through harnessing the full potential of below conscious or non-verbal communication.

The author also preferred the action research as the processes and analysis of data are aligned to the insights gained in the course of research. It is indeed imperative to note that action research is a cyclic process requiring the researcher to accomplish certain processes to ensure it is subjective. See figure 3.1 below for the entire process.

Research Strategies

In order to realise a successful study in which the aims and objectives are achieved, (Denscombe 2011) firmly states that the use of proper research strategy is mandatory. The author outlined his strategies on four aspects of the study, namely; population sampling to identify the right population, data collection process, research ethics, and data analysis.

Population Sampling

This practical action research identified a population sample that would facilitate the study based on solid factors. The population had to be familiar or aware of the below conscious or non-verbal communication. It utilised a group of coaches who were aware of this and therefore formed a good foundation for this research study. In lowering biasness in the selection of the research participants, the researcher considered using impartial procedure that had a person, residing outside of the researcher's area of influence, to pick the participants. In that way, personal influence of the researcher on the direction of the research was limited (Denscombe 2011).

Research Ethics

The research conformed to all conventions of standard research ethics and followed the format proposed by (Bell 2010), which the author adapted to fulfil his needs:

- Informal discussion with head of group to obtain agreement in principle.
- Refined the area of focus, statement of objectives of the study and prepared the project deadline.
- Discussions with head of group, peers and mentors.
- Made slight improvements to the original project outline, with a consideration of the methods to be used.
- Formal submission of the project outline to head of group, giving a total confidentiality guarantee and a breakdown of how the research would be carried out.

The group was informed of the nature of the Action research and the author explained to them that the research would be carried out ethically with regard to their personal details remaining anonymous. The group activity was carried out sequentially:

1. They interviewed each other using the standard SMART Model (Doran 1981).
2. The researcher observed their interviews and gave feedback.
3. The group had an interactive demonstration of best practice.
4. They went through steps 1 and 2 again; the researcher captured their responses in a questionnaire.
5. We had a group discussion.
6. A month later, the group were re-contacted, to see if they were still using the methods. Their responses were captured within the same formatted questionnaire.

Research Variables

The variables of this study were framed from literature on coaching, the unconscious mind, non-verbal communication and associated activities. It is worth noting that these variables laid emphasis on the process of unconscious coaching, its benefits and applicability. These variables formed the basis for framing the interview questions and they were greatly targeted at answering the objectives of the study.

Likert Scale

In order to add to the validity of the research, a series of questions were asked of the coaches, within a questionnaire; the questions would be rated using the Likert Scale. The scale is readily used to discover strength of feeling or attitude; it is set on a five-point scale where 1 is low and 5 high. The limitations are that they only show order and the risk of reading too much into the results is to be avoided. (Bell 2010).

Data Collection

There are numerous methods of data collection though every method is associated with its unique perspective or context to be considered. (Bell 2010; Denscombe 2011) discuss these various methods of data gathering stating their merits, demerits, and providing the applicable environments. The data collection methods used in this study was interviews and questionnaires. This corresponded to action research methodology as it entailed the researcher demonstrating the technique of unconscious coaching, engaging the research participants in an interview and capturing their thoughts in a questionnaire.

Interviews

Merits

It is appropriate for small groups.

It entails comprehensive and detailed data collection.

First hand information with low chances of biasness as it is based on reasons/ critics.

Satisfactory responses.

Demerits

Strenuous to put down the data as it involves retrieving it from spoken words or audio tapes.

Hard to organise and facilitate.

The demerits of the interview drove the author to utilise simple questionnaires in order to save.

Time and add some quantitative data to support triangulation of the findings.

Observations

Although observations are an integral part of the action research process, giving a firsthand account of what actually happened can be difficult, (Denscombe 2011), as we all may have the same '*map*' but we all experience a different '*territory*' (Korzybski 1958). Having weighed up the pros and cons of this particular data collection method, the scale of the research and the time involved to use participant observation to its greatest intent, the author opts for the unstructured observation.

Unstructured observation is an '*open-ended*' style where the observational data and its analysis will '*emerge later*' via the process of the research (Punch 2005).

Questionnaires

Although questionnaires would be used, there were several ethical and practical points to cover before their deployment. (Denscombe 2011) advocates the recipient of the questionnaire should be given information about the sponsor; is it individual or institutional research? The purpose; what is it for? How will it be used? Taking care that the explanations given do not lead the respondents to a line of reasoning. Contact details and address of the person that requires the completed questionnaire. Re-assure respondents that the standard code for social research applies to the study. Reiterate to the respondents that all of their responses and input must be voluntary. Thank the respondents for participating in the research, (Denscombe 2011).

Data Analysis

The analysis of data in research is usually aligned along the nature of methodology or type of model adopted for the study. This study having been based on action research and interview resorted to using simple analysis to test if the objectives of the study were achieved. The responses from the interviewees were input into a frequency table with the variables as the column heading and the names of the respondents, replaced by numbers (1-9) as the row headings, to afford even more confidentiality for the participants. The data entries were made for each interviewee under each variable column (table 5.1 a). It is worth noting that the analysis was performed after retrieving the data from the questionnaires and counter checking for any errors. The study used frequency data analysis, descriptive analysis and measures of central tendency to analyse the collected data. The analysis was done in such a way that facilitated the achievement of the objectives of the study.

CHAPTER 4: The Research Findings

This chapter sets out clearly and systematically the main results of the research. There is clear discrimination made between major findings, interpretation, and inference made with rigour, validity and insight.

The author has been working in professional practice for twenty years and has an international client base for one to one coaching, business consultancy, and as a trainer of coaches. Over the past five years, the author has had many discussions with his peers, and mentors reference the Non verbal communication of clients which is estimated to account for 93% of communication, (Mehrabian 1972).

The following specifies the methods adopted to conduct the action research process; Group activity 1; Interview 1, Observation 1, feedback 1, of current coaching process and questionnaire 1; Group activity 2; Interview 2, Observation 2, feedback 2 of future coaching process, questionnaire 2 and Group activity 3.

All participants had received an invitation to take part in the research as per the agreements made in conversations with the head of training. The room was set up so that the author would be able to see everyone during the process. The author was introduced to the participants and began his introduction.

The author informed the group that the entire research project conformed to the conventions of standard research ethics. Their participation in the research was voluntary, it was made clear to the participants they were free to decline to answer any questions that may be put to them and/or retract any of their information at anytime. The participants were assured that their personal details would be excluded from the research to allow them peace of mind and confidentiality (Bell 2010; Denscombe 2011).

SMART Goals

The researcher then invited the coaches to form groups of two and coach each other using the SMART model (Doran 1981). This is a goal-setting model that is in common use and would give the researcher a benchmark, as to where the coaches are presently within the use of their coaching dialogue.

The coaching began and the author was able to wander around the room listening and acknowledging the coaching process being applied. Although the coaches had all undergone training within the area of below conscious and Non verbal communication, all were simply applying the spoken words of the exercise, without drawing the client's attention to the non-verbal communication present during their interaction. The observations that the author made were needed to see if the coaches were taking into account the client's non-verbal communication during their session or not, this would inform the author's analyses later (Punch 2005).

To give a clear example, client 1 was shaking her head from side to side ever so slightly, whilst saying 'yes'; her goal was specific. This would concur with (Satir *et al* 1991; Ekman 1985; Navarro 2013), whereby the client is using congruent words and simultaneously using incongruent affect. In other words, the client is not congruent with the task and the coach, even though she/he has had formal training within the area of non-verbal communication, he/she was not feeding back any non-verbal communication to the client. Therefore, the client is not being made aware of 93% of their communication (Mehrabian 1972). This appears to correspond with the author's original hypotheses:

- Most of the coaches are not aware of the non-verbal or below conscious form of communication.
- The coaches have not fully exploited the potential of unconscious communication.

Without exception, all participants made varying degrees of hand gestures, shoulder shrugging, arms waving, facial expressions, shift in voice pace, tone and timbre, in order for them to convey their whole message. These actions are of the utmost importance in reading the client's non-verbal communication (Satir *et al* 1991; Ekman 1985).

The participants provided current certification of their qualifications to validate that they were at a minimum standard. Yet, the author observed no visible or verbal evidence to prove that this was the case during the first coaching session.

Teaching the Techniques

As the participants had all attained the necessary qualifications to be a part of the research, the author now had the standards from which to demonstrate to the group the process of utilising below conscious and Non verbal communication within the coaching dialogue.

The author asked for a volunteer to come out to the front of the class so that he could show the group how to apply the process. The volunteer was coach 7, as used in the questionnaire. The author thought it prudent to point out to the group that no personal information needed to be shared, as the coach needed only to focus on the client's process of below conscious non-verbal communication.

Coach 7 sat and the author asked her if she had completed her SMART Model. She nodded and the author asked her, was her goal Specific, (Specific being the 'S' within the model), and she again nodded. This time, her nod was different to the first nod when she said 'yes' to having completed the model. The author fed back this information to her, as this is what he had witnessed and perceived that it was important. The author needed to have coach 7 connect with this information. Coach 7 looked at the author with what the author believed to be a puzzled look on her face. "Your face looks puzzled?" The author said, questioningly. Coach 7 said that, "she hadn't really been sure about her specific goal and as such, "was just going through the motions of the exercise". She looked a little embarrassed, so the author quickly smiled and encouraged her that this was absolutely fine. The environment was such that the student is comfortable '*exploring errors*' (Hattie 2012).

The author continued with the SMART model, and each time coach 7 made below conscious or non-verbal communication, it was fed back to her, thus demonstrating how to utilise the Non verbal communication feedback loop. At the end of the exercise there was a group discussion and feedback on what had taken place, and how it was for the client.

The author asked if the coaches could see the difference and if they would they be prepared to use the new approach within their next practice. A practical problem is part of a continuous development cycle, *'research feeds back into practice'* (Denscombe 2011).

Now the groups were faced with a practical problem of their own. The author could fully appreciate that this was a big ask of the individual coaches, reassuring them that if they didn't want to do it they could back out, or just stay with what they knew.

Coach 6 said "I'm afraid that I might get it wrong," and another couple of coaches nodded. The author smiled and said, "Hopefully that will happen..." (Then he paused,) "... some of the greatest discoveries in our history have come from OOOOOPS!" She grinned back and said "Then it's okay." The group chuckled, they were in an optimum state of mind for learning; the group was *'using congruent words with congruent affect'* (Satir *et al* 1991).

Then the group went into their pairs again to practice, this time using the non-verbal communication feedback loop within their coaching dialogue.

The author observed that the coaches were now feeding back the non-verbal communication to their clients, as per the demonstration that they had just observed. Some did so quite easily and appeared confident whilst others were making it quite obvious that they were doing something other than coaching by constantly staring at the client.

Interpretation and Understanding

Then we came back together and we discussed this as a group. One of the participants asked "what does this hand gesture mean?" Another asked, "What does it mean when they look to the left or the right?" The author explained that it was not for us to give meanings to the client's Non verbal communication, but merely to feedback this communication to the client. This reply gave cause for a debate, whereby the author pointed out that the client's map is the client's and the coach's map is the coach's (Korzybski 1958). Any attempt on behalf of the coach to give an explanation of a non-verbal communication that is being presented by another person could not be an exact match or a correct answer. The only answer is that of the client, as it is they who must exist within their 'territory' (Korzybski 1958). The group were happy with this clarification.

The author then mentioned to the whole group that it would be easier for them to notice their client's non-verbal communication if they were using peripheral vision, or in other words, they resisted the temptation to stare. As the author said the word *'stare'* he opened his eyes wide and stared at the coaches, without blinking for about one minute, to give the coaches a ridiculous sense of what some of them were doing. Spontaneous laughter came from the group and in the style of Erickson, the author was sensitive to the coach's model of the world, and the group was leaning forwards in their chairs, eager to listen, watch, learn and practice. (Bandler and Grinder 1975).

Now the group had an explanation, they had observed a demonstration and had experienced the process themselves as both the client and the coach. It was time now to hit the pause button and reflect upon what we had done. What were the implications to their practice now that they were aware that there is yet another way to coach?

Consideration must be given to the possible effects on the coaches when having to consider the possibility of another way of carrying out their work, and perhaps even another way of being their work?

A silence came over the room and the group fell into contemplation for what to seemed to the author to be an age, rather like waiting for the elevator to come or standing over the kettle as you wait for it to boil. Then, inside the author, a feeling stirred; the author's hypotheses appeared to be coming to life outside of him and his method was beginning to be recognised by his peers as a potentially useful process. The author hadn't realised the power behind the action research process. In this, albeit short reflection, the author felt totally connected with the coaching group and his peers.

As the group reoriented back to the present, coach 2 said "I Feel somehow and in someway more." There were many knowing nods and smiles, not least of all from the author.

At this point, the group took a tea break and during this time volunteer clients arrived who had been invited to attend the study to provide the coaches with a client group, specifically for the research. The author was ensuring 'deliberate interventions' that are 'meaningful and challenging experiences' whilst steadily progressing the coaches knowledge and maximising the feedback; to encourage 'cognitive change' within the coaches (Hattie 2012, p.16).

The volunteer clients were taken through the same protocols of confidentiality and ethics as the coaches. This time the coaches worked in triads, this method of working would add another progressive step to the rich feedback loop, which the coaches were now engaged in. The set up allowed coaches to move from being coach to observer and give each other peer feedback, which we would review in a sub group, consisting of the author and two coaches and then in the main group as a whole (Hattie 2012).

The feedback from the volunteer clients was similar to that of the coaches, prior to them being given the unconscious coaching technique. "I felt you were really listening" said one, and another responded with "It's as if you were in my mind." This feedback was directed to the coaches, this way they could acknowledge that they were utilising the process in the way the techniques were intended to be used.

The volunteer clients were thanked and they left, knowing that they would have another coaching session in approximately four weeks time.

The coaches then gave individual feedback to the whole group in a round robin. The author needed to know how the coaches had experienced working with this tool and engaging in non-verbal communication feedback loop. "It is very hard to not ask questions." "There is so much non-verbal communication going on... how do you know what to deal with?" A very good question thought the author, and he replied: "The scientific tried and tested method is usually best." "What is that?" asked coach 4. "Guess and test," the author responded with a chuckle, to which the group shared a little humour, thus helping to dispel any fear of the unconscious (Freud, 1915) that may be hiding.

The humour shared would also keep the process real and in the moment. The author was presenting to the group how to trust, be genuine, and maintain positive regard. Which would match the humanistic approach put forward by (Rogers 1951).

The author then administered a questionnaire to capture the thoughts of the individual coaches using a Likert scale, where 1 would be poor and 5 would be excellent.

The group arranged to meet again in 4 weeks to continue the learning cycle of the practical action research. During this time the author entered the feedback from the questionnaire into an excel computer program to analyse the results (Denscombe 2011; Bell 2010).

One month later the group met again and the author once more elicited the thoughts and feelings of the coaches during a group discussion. As before, the outcome of the session was captured in a questionnaire.

CHAPTER 5: Analysis and Conclusions

This chapter analyses and discusses the results obtained from the study with the aim of adding more meaning to the data. The data from this study was analysed following a simple structure that entailed frequency tables and measures of central tendency such as mean and standard deviation. The results of the study are in accordance with the aims and objectives stated prior to the commencement of the action research. It gives critical analysis of the data and derives the implications it has on coaching practise. In that regard, the discussion of the data eventually leads to conclusions drawn from the study and subsequent recommendations to practitioners and researchers.

Implications of the Research Findings

The feasibility study saw 9 participants who were all coaches with awareness of below conscious or non-verbal communication, who had willingly accepted to participate in the research. For the sake of confidentiality, the participants in this study were not named and for the purpose of data analysis, they were numbered from 1 to 9.

Moreover, the following abbreviations Q1, Q2, Q3 up to Q10 correspond to the questions constituted for the questionnaires, referenced in Table 3.3 a.

The data collected from the questionnaires appear below in (Table 4.1 a).

Table 4.1 a: Raw data from the questionnaire and interview forms

Based on the raw data indicated in table 4.1 a, the following metrics were computed using a spreadsheet.

Table 4.1 b: Measures of central tendency

Table 4.1 b. indicates the score of each variable based on average and standard deviation. The minimum and maximum under each variable were also identified.

Graphical Representation of the Data

In making the interpretation of the data weightier, the results were represented in charts corresponding to the variables. With the aid of bar charts, it was easier to make an interpretation of the data. All charts are available in Appendices.

The participating coaches were asked to give their perception of: How was the intro to Unconscious Coaching? (Variable Q1 or question 1). From table 4.1 b above it is appears that this variable has the best aggregate score of 4.7, with an averagely low standard deviation of 0.74. It seems that, according to the evidence, the introduction to unconscious coaching was above good, which by the Likert scale was 4.0.

From Q1, it appears that the introduction to unconscious coaching was well received. Participant 3 and 4 have been working in the field for more than five years and have greater knowledge of below conscious and Non verbal communication, which may account for their scores. The response could also be an indication that the author's presentation may have some gaps within the introduction that need filling. The results of survey 2 demonstrated an improvement with every respondent scoring 5. (Coach 3 did not make the session.)

On the second variable Q2, the ability to answer questions about unconscious coaching was gauged. From the table 4.1 b, infers that questions asked during the coaching sessions were answered relatively well; an average score of 4.2. This indicates the questions were well answered. Figure 4.1 b, concurs with these findings. The results indicate that they were satisfied that their questions had been answered. In questionnaire 2, one month later, the coaches had time to evaluate the process which seems to have resulted in an improved score.

The score of 4.4 for the variable Q3, would seem to indicate that the unconscious coaching process was considered to be helpful. It is also evident from the group discussion that the coaches had continued to use the techniques in their practice. This would appear to concur with the feedback received during the final observation. The author uses the word final here to draw a conclusion to this research. However, the development cycle is a continuous journey and the author has gone through the action research twice more since the original data was collected, and will continue to gather additional evidence.

The coaches were displaying a 'sensitivity' towards their 'client's model of the world', which would be a contributing factor according to Erickson (Bandler and Grinder 1975). There was no shift in the results between the two questionnaires.

The unconscious coaching process appears easy to apply and implement in a coaching session, as shown in table 4.1 d, which shows an average response of 3.0. The response to this question is encouraging, as the author would anticipated a lower score. The coaches were able to pick up the process and run with it. This could also indicate that the author introduced the techniques favourably to the group. Possibly the author's particular efforts to ensure, 'a warm, trustworthy and empathic climate' (Hattie 2012), may have been a contributing factor to aid the student's learning. The scores decrease slightly in questionnaire 2 which could suggest that the process requires more practice and training to embed the learning.

The results from table 4.1 e, an average score of 4.6 shows that there is a very high likelihood that the coaches will continue to use the unconscious coaching process in their practice. As with the previous question the Q4 the scores decreased which again suggests the potential need for further training and development or a longer gestation period to embed the theory into practice.

The author encourages giving the learners 'deliberate interventions' and 'challenging experiences' which, hopefully, will inspire the coaches to integrate this process into their practice. (Hattie 2012)

Only 80 % of the respondents gave feedback in table 4.1 f. Coaches 3 and 6 did not respond. Coach 2 scored low. All other respondents (6) gave a response of above 3. This translates to an average score of 3.6, showing that in spite of a reduced response, the coaches appear to have gained insight during the coaching session. Erickson however, suggests that, 'like the magician', the coach's 'intention is not to inform but to distract, so that his purpose may be accomplished' (Bandler and Grinder 1975). In other words, the change may be happening on a level that the client is not yet aware of. Q6 from questionnaire 2 one month later concurs with this as the scores have increased; perhaps the coaches have had enough time for their insights to take place.

Conversely, as coaches, the respondents greatly acknowledged having gained insight during the interview following the coaching session. This can be explained from table 4.1 g that shows an average score of 4.4 for variable Q7. Many of these were shared during the feedback process, which would suggest adds to the insights of the learners (Hattie 2012). There was a negligible shift in the results for this question.

The chart 4.1, shows an average score of 4.2 for variable Q8. This appears to confirm that all the coaches agree with the unconscious coaching process being beneficial to both the clients and the coaches.

The figures for Q8 have slightly raised which may suggest that the coaches have completed practical examples with clients of their own and have experienced benefits from the approach.

The results shown in figure 4.1 i, of 2.8 for variable Q9, seem to show that the respondents did not have much knowledge of unconscious coaching before the session. This appears to support the author's hypotheses that:

Most of the coaches appear to be unaware of the Non verbal communication.

The coaches have not fully exploited the potential of unconscious communication.

This may be the reason for the response given by the coaches, prior to gaining an awareness of unconscious coaching. Only three coaches, namely 3, 4 and 5 had any previous awareness of Non verbal communication, which may simply mean that they were already mindful of the potential of the process.

The scores for the second questionnaire were lower which could mean that the coaches are more aware of what they are not aware of.

The results of 4.1 j, with an average score of 3.9 appears to affirm the respondents have noted a greater impact with their clients when utilising Non verbal communication within the coaching dialogue. Maybe, by becoming more aware of their client's Non verbal communication, the coaches will find the process of unconscious coaching, if supported by long term empirical studies, to be "a key precursor to the methods in coaching" (Williams 2012).

There was a slight improvement to the score for this question which demonstrates that the coaches are becoming more aware which is promising.

Data Analysis and Discussion

From the data analysis and graphical interpretation of the data, it appears that the aims and objectives of the study were achieved. The hypothesis was tested during the action research cycle and further substantiated based on the analysis of the data from the questionnaire.

With the evidence from the action research and the interview questionnaire, unconscious coaching emerges as having an impact in a coaching session. From all of the results gained from the study, apart from variable Q9, (impact of awareness on unconscious coaching) that had a low score of 2.8, all other variables had scores greater than 3.0. This is an indication of above average performance across all variables.

Initially, the author looked to incorporate the aspect of below conscious Non verbal communication in coaching. Through background research and a review of relevant literature, a gap was noted in the use of Non verbal communication in coaching, there was limited information on this. This being the case, it is likely that most coaches are not giving attention to this mode of communication. This formed the rationale for establishing the first hypothesis that most coaches are not aware of Non verbal communication. Consequently, coaches may not have fully exploited the potential of utilising the Non verbal communication of their clients within the coaching dialogue.

From the review of the data analysis it appears from figure 4.1 i-Q9, that the participating coaches were not so aware of their Non verbal communication, before the interview and coaching session. However, after being introduced to the unconscious coaching process they had a shift in their awareness. This is better illustrated by the average score before the study as 2.8 and afterwards as 3.9 (figure 4.1 l-Q9) and (figure 4.1 j-Q10).

Following this observation, it is important to review whether this awareness of the unconscious mind is of significance to a person. By showing an average score of 4.4, from table 4.1 c, for the variable Q3, the data seems to suggest that unconscious coaching practise could be very helpful. The chart intimates that all of the individuals gave above average responses (above 2.5), perhaps acknowledging that unconscious coaching maybe deemed as significant.

The variable Q6 and Q7 helped to reveal whether the sample population acknowledged the benefits of this coaching model. The respondents as clients or coaches, when asked if the unconscious coaching or the revelation of the unconscious mind is beneficial, appear to have agreed that Non verbal communication maybe beneficial (figure 4.1 h). In relation to that, both clients (figure 4.1 f-Q6) and coaches (figure 4.1 g-Q7) seem to agree that they have gained a great deal of insight.

The respondents appear to have appreciated the introduction to coaching (figure 4.1 a-q1). They were asked whether they would apply Non verbal communication in their coaching sessions. The reply to figure 4.1 e: Q5, with an average of not less than 4, would indicate that the respondents agreed that they were likely to embrace the technique in their sessions. This is also confirmed by the results on table 4.1 b, an average score of 4.6.

Subject to this, it was necessary to gauge how easy it would be to implement using the procedure on an on-going basis. This was achieved by variable Q4, figure 4.1 d, showing an average response of 3.0. The data implies that unconscious coaching is averagely easy to use and implement in a coaching session.

In summary, this study appears to demonstrate that the process of unconscious coaching is beneficial, perhaps even helpful, is easy to apply, and applicable to both a client and a coach. Moreover, the data suggests that the coaches, who volunteered to participate in the action research, found:

- It was relatively easy to utilise below conscious or Non verbal communication.
- The coaches had little prior knowledge of Non verbal communication.
- The coaches were not currently using Non verbal communication in their coaching dialogue.
- Coaches were willing to embrace this technique during their sessions.

Conclusion

From the findings drawn from this action research and supported by the data analysis, it is sufficient to conclude that:

- An introduction to unconscious coaching gives pointers for coaches to consider using Non verbal communication within their practice. This is inferred from the coaches who participated in the study (Q1).
- According to (Q3, Q6, Q7) the unconscious coaching practise appears to be helpful. This is made clear from the charts.
- The information shown on (Q4) advises that the unconscious coaching process is easy to apply.
- The data (Q5) implies that the coaches, according to the results of the study, are highly likely to adopt the technique of unconscious coaching in their future practise.
- It is encouraging that contemporary coaches and practitioners are considering embracing and utilising the Non verbal communication process.

Recommendations

Using the results from this study the author concludes that the data gathered is sufficient to make the following recommendations to the various stakeholders including; researchers, practitioners, educational institutions and related bodies;

- Coaches should endeavour to harness the potential of below conscious Non verbal communication within their sessions.

- Educational institutions should encourage and advocate the use of unconscious coaching so that they may better know their impact (Hattie 2012).
- Researchers and practitioners should consider exploiting the area of unconscious coaching as it has limited literature and has been postulated to have significant impact in a coaching session.

The author submits that the unconscious coaching process could become a new discipline within the coaching field, acting as the bridge between directive and non-directive coaching whereby the client is at the centre of the change work whilst the coach encourages the client's discovery of their Non verbal communication via the feedback loop within the coaching dialogue. The process is in accord, with (Rogers 1951; Bandler and Grinder 1975; Satir *et al* 1991; Erickson *et al* 2010) adding the extra dimension of the coach being 'partially-directive', meaning that the coach is able to ask questions that are prompted by the Non verbal communication of the client.

Evaluation

What to do differently next time? The author would begin with a much more diverse group and test the hypotheses against different cultures, to see:

- Are there cultural differences in Non verbal communication?
- If there are what are they?
- And how can any data gathered be evaluated and utilised?

When the researcher set out originally, it was to test his hypotheses. Now, he is encouraged to engage with his hypotheses at an even higher level of education and add an ever more robust foundation to the work.

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