

DISSERTATION

HOW MANAGERS PERCEIVE COACHING THEIR DIRECT REPORTS FOR
PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

HOW MANAGERS PERCEIVE COACHING THEIR DIRECT REPORTS FOR PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

This study was conducted to discover if coaching direct reports for performance improvement was currently happening in organizations. Using the qualitative interpretative phenomenology analysis methodology, eight participants were interviewed. The participants represented four organizations and had managerial experience ranging from four to 44 years. Participants were interviewed and presented the ten most frequently cited competencies from managerial coaching literature on cards for them to organize into a representation of their coaching process. The data analysis process encompassed data reduction and analysis of each interview that then produced emergent themes. The findings included the emergence of three superordinate themes: coaching categories for successful coaching, use of coaching competencies in performance coaching, and performance coaching and management style. Other findings included all participants using a progressive type of performance coaching. They each had unique uses of the coaching competencies and they identified some as overarching, foundational, or most important. Lastly, the participants all maintained that coaching for performance improvement was a large and integral part of their management style. Some of the implications of the study include: (a) progressive coaching is a process that can be adapted, taught, and implemented in organizations today; (b) less formal coaching conversations are happening regularly and should be encouraged; (c) consistency of coaching is important to the success of the direct reports (d) and metrics are important when coaching for performance improvement and they should be clearly established.

This study demonstrates that managers coaching their direct reports for performance improvement is happening and successful.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First acknowledgements must go to my committee who never gave up on me. Through some very concerning times, they always gave constructive feedback and encouragement. My original advisory, the longest member of my committee, Dr. Gene Gloeckner, provided many roles for me: adviser, coach, confidante, challenger, and booster. The second longest member and my co-advisory Dr. Leann Kaiser became my savior in terms of her expertise in qualitative research. When she initially joined the committee, I had no idea how valuable she would be to me as I changed methodologies. Additionally, I'd like to acknowledge Kelli Clark who keeps all graduate students on track which is very valuable and appreciated.

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Finally, I'd like to acknowledge my eight study participants. I'm so appreciative of the openness and willingness to share their lived experiences with me. I learned so much from them and their reality.

DEDICATION

This dedication has gone through several iterations in my mind as I progressed through my dissertation journey. Those iterations were based on the reasons for pursuing this PhD and have included gaining a PhD so I could continue to teach as an adjunct of choice by universities, proving to myself and others that I could achieve this goal, and adding to my credibility as a consultant in my retirement years. But little did I know that my true inspiration and dedication would come near the end of my journey.

Sean William Hurley, my grandson, entered this world on September 18, 2017. He was immediately taken to the NICU at Rocky Mountain Children's Hospital. I was summoned by my son to come and meet my grandson, as his chances for survival were precarious at best. My son found a sign for Sean's room in the NICU. It said, Fight on Brave Warrior. I knew in that first moment of seeing him that I too must fight on. I wanted to demonstrate for Sean the strength to never give up that I wanted for him. He became my inspiration. To this day, we both fight on and never give up. He faces many more challenges in his life, but I know he too will never give up living his best life. This work is dedicated to you Sean, my brave warrior.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

During the beginning of the 21st century, organizations and human resource development (HRD) experienced a myriad of challenges, including shifts in labor markets (Cascio, 2014, p. 108), unstable economic conditions, diminished “overall investment in organizational HRD” (McGraw, 2014, p. 102), and global implications with the expansion of the Internet (Cascio, 2014). In an article on trends in HRD, McGraw (2014) envisioned a “a clear movement toward performance-based practices” (p. 109), resulting in the manager’s responsibility for “employee learning and development and improving employee performance” (Ellinger, Ellinger, & Keller, 2003; Evered & Selman, 1989; Liu & Batt, 2010; Segers & Inceoglu, 2012). With the role of performance management shifting from HRD to the manager, managers coaching for performance improvement has become one of the most popular tools and interventions to emerge in HRD. According to Longenecker (2010), “for a manager to produce sustainable long-term results, they must demonstrate real skill at coaching the people who report to them” (p. 32). Similarly, Lindbom (2007) posited that management wants “a management team consistently working in concert to coach their employees and prepare them for success now and in the future” (p. 102). However, though managers are encouraged to coach their direct reports for performance improvement, there is a paucity of managerial coaching and HRD literature exploring the phenomena of managerial coaching for performance improvement occurring in the workplace today.

Statement of the Research Problem

Though the literature has identified coaching as a “worthy and acquirable management skill” (Mace & Mahler, 1952) and also a “management function” (Evered & Selman, 1989, p.

32), there is a paucity of literature to support that managerial coaching is occurring in organizations today. A study by A. Gilley, Gilley, and Kouider (2010, p. 62) revealed that only 30 out of 485 participants (6%), consisting of MBA and PhD students from 3 universities' organizational development programs, "always" coached their direct reports. Participants who "always" and "usually" coached their direct reports resulted in a total of 131 (29%); whereas, participants who "rarely" and "never" coached their direct reports totaled 201 (41.4%). Finally, participants who "sometimes" coached their direct reports equaled 153 participants (31.6%). These results from A. Gilley et al.'s study showed that coaching direct reports was not happening regularly even though it was often the organizations' expectations of managers. Additionally, though A. Gilley et al.'s study indicated the frequency of coaching, it did not address how the managers were coaching or what competencies they were using in their coaching interactions.

Further review of the managerial coaching literature showed limited studies on managerial coaching and the coaching competencies used during coaching interactions. In 2003, Ellinger et al. studied coaching behaviors of managers with employees' satisfaction. In 2005, McLean et al. developed an instrument for measuring managerial coaching skills. Of the 20 published dissertations during 2000-2009 on *ProQuest* regarding managerial coaching, only one dissertation, Wenzel and Cropanzano (2000), looked at attributes and skills of managers coaching their direct reports. Though Wenzel and Cropanzano gathered critical coaching characteristics from the literature, the focus of the study was only on four competencies of managerial coaching: analyze issues, build relationships, lead courageously, and listen to others (p. iv).

More recently, searching the *ProQuest* database using the terms "managerial coaching" and "abstract" resulted in a total of 40 dissertations on managerial coaching from 2010-2018;

twenty-two studies were eliminated as irrelevant or duplicates. Only 18 studies/dissertations discussed how managers viewed or used the various competencies of managerial coaching. Six dissertations took the use of managerial competencies (behaviors and skills) into account as part of their studies; however, they did not study managerial competencies exclusively. Some of the dissertations focused on return on investment (P. Cooper, 2018), deficiencies in manager coach training (Boeker, 2011), employee engagement (Pascal, Lowman, & Kantor, 2018), effect on in-role behavior of direct reports (Hahn, 2016), and supports and barriers to managerial coaching (McLaughlin, 2016). Of the 18 applicable studies three were qualitative, 11 were quantitative, three were Delphi studies and one was mixed methods. There was a lack of qualitative studies during the period of 2010-2018 exploring the lived experiences and realities of managers coaching their direct reports for performance improvement and the competencies used during those coaching engagements.

The role of the manager is changing, and the responsibilities of performance improvement that previously belonged to either learning and development or human resources development now often resides with the manager (Ellinger et al., 2003; Evered & Selman, 1989; Liu & Batt, 2010; Segers & Inceoglu, 2012). This study sought to explore the lived experiences of managers coaching their direct reports with the coaching competencies espoused by the literature. This study examined two areas in detail: how managers perceive their lived experiences of coaching their direct reports for performance improvement, and what competencies (skills and behaviors) are being used in coaching engagements with managers' direct reports.

Theoretical Framework

This study focused on the lived experiences of managers using the intervention of coaching for the performance improvement with their direct reports. This discussion begins with the study's theoretical underpinnings, or "a skeletal structure for the explanation of real-world phenomena" (Adams, Hester, Bradley, Meyers, & Keating, 2008, p. 113). In 2014, *Advances in Human Resource Development* published an entire issue on HRD and coaching. In the introduction to the issue, Ellinger and Kim (2014) addressed "the current calls in the literature for more theoretical grounding" in HRD (p. 132). The theory of this proposed research begins with a discussion on the general systems theory and moves to a discussion on open systems theory and then to organizational theory which is an open system. Organizational theory further explains systems operating in businesses whose participants participated in the research. Participants utilized managerial coaching theory to explain how direct reports learned to improve their job performance. This theory section ends with a proposed list of 10 competencies as variables derived from the literature to explore if and how managerial coaches are using them as part of their coaching engagements.

For this study of managerial coaching for performance improvement, the current theoretical grounding evolved from and is supported by various theories stemming initially from a systems theory. Von Bertalanffy (1950), one of the founders of systems theory, defined systems theory as "a complex of interacting elements" (p. 143) existing of "open" and "closed" systems. Open systems refers to "exchanges of energy, matter, people, and information with the external environment," and closed systems refers to an exchange of energy (Mele, Pels, & Polese, 2012, p. 127).

For this study, open system theory was used to explore organizations' "ability to adapt to change in environmental conditions" (Mele et al., 2012, p. 127). Emery and Trist (1960) identified organizations as socio-technical organizations with two main components of (a) people and (b) technology and machines (as cited in Mele et al., 2012, p. 128). Kast and Rosenzweig (2019) posited that "system theory does provide a new paradigm for the study of social organizations and their management," and furthermore, it offers "a fundamentally different view of the reality of social organizations and can serve as the basis for major advancement in our field" (pp. 457–458). Some of the vertebrae of the theoretical spine are more well developed than others, as is the case with organizations and management theory. This researcher focused on managerial coaching as it becomes part of expanding management theory.

HRD theory and management theory as a subset of open system theory are used to understand and explore the functions of organizations. HRD theory is best described by Swanson (2001) as a compilation of three theories: economic, psychological, and systems (p. 102). HRD supports and interacts with both areas of the organization that Emery and Trist (1960) described: (a) people and (b) technology and machines (as cited in Mele et al., 2012, p. 128). HRD theory easily integrates with management theory as management theory "plan[s] structural adjustments to guarantee the survival of the whole system (organization), constantly formulating new interpretations of the business scenarios in order to . . . sustain long lasting performance" (Mele et al., 2012, p. 131).

Adult learning theory and human performance technology are subsets of HRD theory and contribute to understanding the sustainability of the organizational system. Dean (1996) posited that there are at least six contributing theories to the human performance technology theory:

communication, human development, learning, management, sociological, and systems. These theories are detailed in the literature review.

Coaching theory and managerial coaching theory are subsets of adult learning theory and human performance technology, both of which support the organizational goals and ensure the “human” part of the system operates smoothly and efficiently. For example, once an employee within the organization has been trained, it falls to the HRD and performance improvement specialists to ensure the employee’s performance supports the continued survival of the organizations. To explore the phenomena of managers coaching for performance improvement, this researcher used managerial coaching theory which incorporates organizational theory, economic theory, psychology, adult learning theory, human performance technology, and management theory (Campone, 2008; Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2014; Ellinger, Beattie, & Hamlin, 2014; Evered & Selman, 1989; Hagen & Peterson, 2014; Hamlin, Ellinger, & Beattie 2008; Maltbia et al., 2014; Megginson & Clutterbuck, 2004;).

Ten competencies were extracted (skills and behaviors) from the literature on managerial coaching theories that served as variables for the exploration of if and how managerial coaches were using them as part of their coaching engagements. Competencies are defined as “a cluster of related knowledge, attitudes, and skills that affects a major part of one’s job; correlates with performance; can be measured; and can be improved (Parry, 1996, p. 58). The 10 frequently cited competencies of managerial coaching include (in descending order of frequency): supportive environment, providing feedback, analysis of concerns/evaluations, communicating, Leader expectations/performance expectations, goal/solutions focused, creating a learning environment, provide resources, listening, informing and advising. Mele et al. (2012) posited that “managers have to plan structural adjustments to guarantee the survival of the whole system” (p.

131). The study explored managers' lived experiences using these 10 competencies extracted from the literature to coach their direct reports for performance improvement. The literature in Chapter two presents a number of additional theories posited by various authors related to both coaching and human performance technology. The three theories, systems theory, organizational theory, and coaching theory providing the framework for this study were distilled from this literature as most appropriate for this research project.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the proposed dissertation:

1. How do managers perceive their lived experiences of coaching their direct reports for performance improvement?
2. What competencies (skills and behaviors) are being used in coaching engagements with managers' direct reports?

Definitions

Definition of terms are presented in the same order as the literature review: coaching, managerial coaching, and human performance technology. Though many and varied definitions were encountered throughout the literature search, the definitions presented here are considered the operational definitions selected for the purposes of this study.

Table 1.1

Operational Definitions for Study

Term	Definition
Coaching	ICF defines coaching as “partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential” (International Coach Federation [ICF], 2018).

Managerial Coaching	“The explicit and implicit of intention of helping individuals improve their performance in various domains, and to enhance their personal effectiveness, personal development and personal growth” (Hamlin et al., 2008, p. 291).
Managerial Coaching Process	“[A] developmental activity in which an employee works one-on-one with his or her direct manager to improve current job performance and enhance his or her capabilities for future roles and/or challenges, the success of which is based on the relationship between the employee and manager, as well as the use of objective information, such as feedback, performance data or assessments” (Gregory & Levy, 2010, p. 111)
Human Performance Technology	A powerful collection of techniques, procedures, and approaches intended to solve many and varied problems involving human performance in an organization.
Competencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Motives: The things a person consistently thinks about or wants that cause action. 2. Traits: Physical characteristics and consistent responses to situations or information. 3. Self-Concept: A person’s attitudes, values, or self-image. 4. Knowledge: Information a person has in specific content areas. 5. Skill: The ability to perform a certain physical or mental task (Spencer & Spencer, 1993, pp. 9–11).

Study Limitations and Delimitations

The study was delimited to persons with the title of manager (or equivalent title) in the Denver, Colorado area. The purposive selected managers were delimited to those with a minimum of three to five years of experience in management and have direct reports reporting to them. Additional delimitations included interviewing participants in their location of business and in an area that provided privacy for the participant or a location of the participant’s choosing.

Limitations that may have affected the study included whether the managers actively included coaching as part of their management style and whether the managers have had any

coach training, leadership training, or performance improvement training. Another limitation of the study was the length of time a participant manager had worked at the organization. The final limitation was whether the participants took the competencies they had not used and indicated that they did use them in their coaching engagements.

Significance of Study

There is a paucity of research on the lived experiences of managers taking on the role of manager coaching for performance improvement. The significance of the study is that in the last 20 years, no study has explored the lived experiences of managers coaching their direct reports for performance improvement and no researcher has reviewed the literature to distill the various researchers' work into the 10 frequently cited competencies. The 22 studies and articles were distilled down to 208 competencies by leading researchers that included Grant, Cavanaugh, and Parker (2010), Ellinger et al. (2003), and Beattie, Kim, Hagen, Egan, Ellinger, and Hamlin (2014). From the 208 competencies, the researcher chose 10 of the frequently cited competencies. The outcome of this research's exploration of lived experiences helps determine to some extent if and how these competencies were used by today's managers as they coached their employees and adds to the literature on coaching competencies. Resulting themes extracted from the data of the manager interviews clarify what is working in managerial coach and leadership training and what is not working. Finally, through the interview process, managers may find clarity and understanding of the process they personally use in coaching for performance improvement, specifically as it pertains to the competencies they may or may not recognize in their coaching of direct reports.

Researcher's Perspective

This researcher's practitioner knowledge has accumulated from a 20-plus year career in HRD. It was observed that often HRD professionals and learning and development specialists were repeatedly sought by frantic managers who requested that their direct reports be "fixed" or "their performance" be improved. There were no classes available to fix this performance issue without the participation and further coaching provided by the actual manager. This led to a frustrating situation for the everyone involved: the HRD professional, the manager, and the struggling employee. Managers were often aware they needed to coach their direct reports for performance improvement; however, they were unsure of the processes, skills, and time required to effectively accomplish the expected outcomes.

Finally, as the coach is "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them" (ICF, 2018) during the coaching engagement, so this researcher partnered with the participants in a thought-provoking and creative process as they described their thoughts and feelings about coaching their direct reports, specifically for performance improvement. This researcher felt uniquely qualified due to her extensive background in HRD, learning and development, and coaching to take this journey with the participants and look forward to discovering and interpreting their insights.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The need for literature reviews in education and psychology disciplines is due to the “increased number of personnel and the accompanying information explosion in these disciplines” (H. M. Cooper, 1988, pp. 104–105). H. M. Cooper’s (1988) observation was especially applicable to the literature reviews on HPT because HPT came into prominence in the early to mid-20th century. Coaching can be traced back to Socrates, the Ancient Greek philosopher from 470–399 BC and Homer, the Ancient Greek poet who wrote the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Since then coaching has come in and out of favor over time; however, most recently coaching has increased in popularity as a management intervention in the late 1990s and the early 21st century. The purpose of these literature reviews on coaching, managerial coaching, and HPT was to reconceptualize the topic of managerial coaching and its use in answering the research questions. Torraco’s (2005) reconceptualizing included,

A new way of thinking about the topic reviewed in the literature. Reconceptualization is undertaken when the current conception of the topic is acknowledged as out of date or otherwise problematic and critique and reconceptualization of the topic is needed. (p. 412)

This literature review on coaching, managerial coaching, and HPT is presented and organized in the temporal or historic perspective of the evolution of each topic. “Reviews with temporal or historical structure present literature according to a timeline of the origins and development of the topic and how this is represented in the literature” (Torraco, 2005, p. 414). This researcher deemed this organizational perspective appropriate because of the recent rise of coaching and performance improvement in importance to organizations. All three topics reviewed, coaching, managerial coaching, and human performance technology, were used in various ways in professional and business settings, leading to examination of resources and

references of varying types. Throughout the literature reviews, consistency was maintained by using the same areas: the historical background, definitions, underlying theories, models for each topic or discipline, and search criteria for each literature review as shown below in Figure 2.1:

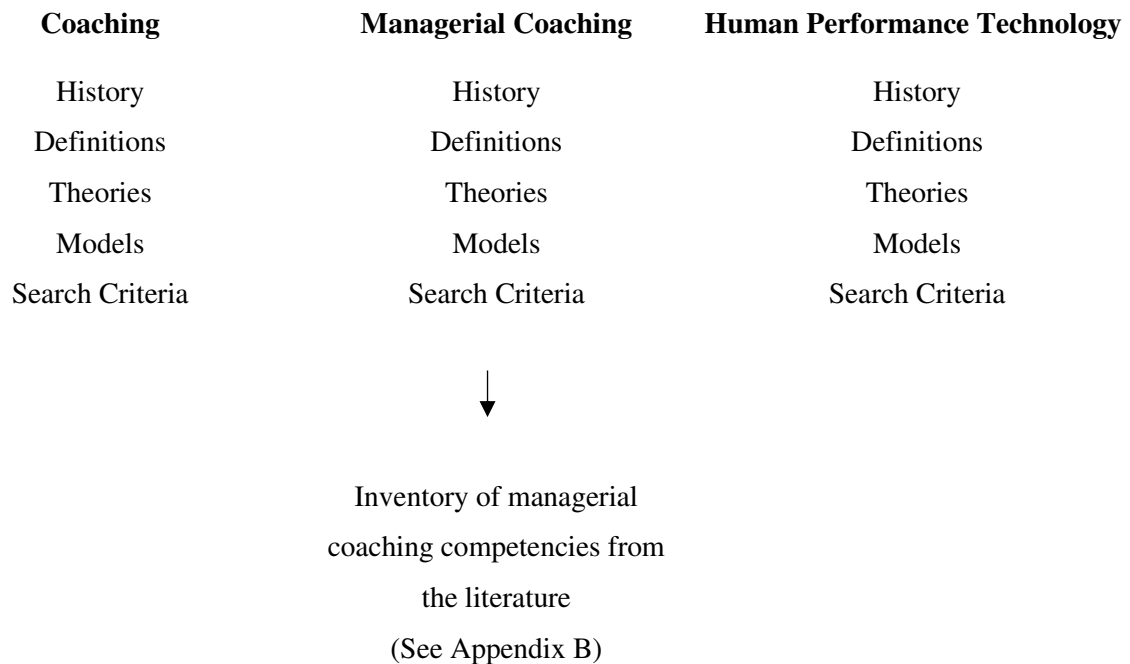


Figure 2.1. Conceptual map of literature review. Based on research questions and literature review for this proposed study.

Coaching and Managerial Coaching

The research questions included in Figure 2.1 guided the literature review. Coaching and managerial coaching were key components of the literature review.

History of Coaching

Though coaching has garnered much popularity in business and organizations in the late 20th and current 21st century, it is a discipline dated back to ancient Greece. Hughes (2003) suggested that the earliest reference was made by the poet Homer in his poem *The Odyssey*. In

the poem, Mentor was a character selected to oversee the raising of Telemachus, son of Odysseus. Mentor represented two roles:

First, that of a regent, a person of deep trust who can safely hold the space for another . . . Second, the elder teacher who can instill knowledge in another, particularly knowledge from an elder, a person of wisdom, to another person about the other person's journey of discovery of self. (Hughes, 2003, p. 1)

Brunner (1998) connected coaching to the work of Socrates and Socratic dialogue. Brunner asked the question: "Would coaching be the modern version of the Socratic dialogue" (1998, p. 516)? Remenyi and Griffith (2009) stated that similar to Socrates, who engaged individuals in the market place of Athens, people (i.e., coaches, managers, mentors) today similarly engage others both with the outcome focus of "learning through discovery" (p. 156). Remenyi and Griffith also stated their interpretation of how Socratic dialogues are used today:

1. Engage in the co-operative activity of seeking answers to questions and to understand each other through the exploration of concrete experiences.
2. Encourages participants to think independently and critically and reflect on that thinking.
3. Build self-confidence in the individual's own thinking.
4. Answer a philosophically oriented question and to endeavor to reach consensus.
5. Deepen individual insights and understandings and, ideally, arrive at a shared postulate on the problem at hand, built up from personal experiences. (p. 156)

De Haan (2008) made a comparison of the Socratic dialogues with current coaching practices:

In coaching conversations, the coach is focused on facilitating the coachees' learning and development and tries to take care that the coachees take care of themselves. The aim of coaching is to improve the coachees' performance by discussing their relationship to certain experiences and issues. (p. 5)

Garvey, Stokes, and Megginson (2014) pointed out that the next reference to coaching, several centuries later, occurred in the *Oxford Reference Online* (2006) that referred to the 1849

English language novel *Pendennis* by Thackeray. The passage described university students returning to the university in a horse drawn carriage, and one said to the other, ““I’ve come down with a coach from Oxford. A tutor, don’t you see, old boy”” (p. 21). Later in the 17th century, the term coaching was associated with supporting university students and academic achievement (Garvey et al., 2014, p. 21). Garvey et al. said that by the 19th century, “writings on coaching focus on the performance and attainment, originally in an educational setting, but also in sport and life” (p. 26), including boating and rowing skills and cricket.

Campone (2008) explained that the phenomena of coaching appeared to have a rebirth during the period of 1955-2003 (p. 93). In a chapter entitled “Connecting the Dots: Coaching Research—Past, Present and Future,” Campone explained that during this period, coaching began “defining purposes and practices, and articulating early models borrowed from other fields (p. 92). Campone further posited that coaching for the current era (2003-2007) contributed toward more scientific protocols and incorporates more disciplines including both academic and practitioners (p. 95). For the future of coaching, Campone pointed out:

Without a solid body of research, the practice of coaching lacks substance and definition: it is a “ghost” of consulting psychology, organizational development, and other root disciplines. Coaching research provides coaches with a distinctive set of models and language for the work we do and the evidence that allows us to make sound professional decisions in the application of models. (p. 92)

Campone cited two different but well-cited sources for looking at coaching in research-based literature: Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson’s (2001) article in *Consulting Psychological Journal* and Grant’s (2011) extensive annotated bibliography. Additionally, Campone (2008) stated that the first peer-reviewed article on coaching appeared in the *Harvard Business Review* in 1955 and addressed coaching as a “development intervention with engineers moving into management positions” (p. 95), and the first “doctoral research on coaching appeared in 1967” (p. 95).

Definitions of Coaching

In 2008, Hamlin et al. conducted an extensive study on definitions of coaching found in both “academic and practiced-based journals” (p. 290). In this study, Hamlin et al. also included various coaching books, book chapters from coaching books, and human resource development books with coaching sections and chapters. They identified 37 different definitions and classified them based on commonalities in their purposes and processes, producing a composite conceptualization from the literature on coaching. Four areas were identified: coaching, executive coaching, business coaching, and life coaching. The processes and purposes for all four identical for each definition: the process was a one-to-one facilitative/collaborative process and the purposes were to achieve a goal, whether personal or business related (Hamlin et al., 2008, p. 295).

There are many definitions of coaching, and coaching origins are varied: academic, practitioner, and professional associations. Table 2.1 includes the additional coaching definitions from associations/professional organizations and practitioners:

Table 2.1

Organizations/Association and Practitioner Definitions of Coaching

Organization/Association	Definition
International Coach Federation (ICF)	ICF defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. (ICF, 2018).
European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC)	The EMCC recognizes that there will be many types of coach/mentoring taking place and these will need to be defined when more detailed standards are produced (European Mentoring & Coaching Council [EMCC], 2018).

Worldwide Association of Business Coaches (WABC)	“Business coaching is the process of engaging in regular, structured conversation with a ‘client’: an individual or team who is within a business, profit or nonprofit organization, institution or government and who is the recipient of business coaching. The goal is to enhance the client’s awareness and behavior so as to achieve business objectives for both the client and their organization” (Worldwide Association of Business Coaches [WABC], 2018).
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Practitioners	Definition
Peters and Austin (1985)	“Coaching is face-to-face leadership that pulls together with diverse background, talents, experiences and interests, encourages them to step up to responsibility and continued achievement, and treats them as full-scale partners and contributors” (Peters & Austin, 1985, pp. 325–326). Additionally, Peters and Austin (1985) stated that “coaching is the process of enabling others to act, building on their own strengths” (p. 328).
Fournies (2000)	“The face to face process, called the coaching discussion, is to redirect an employee’s behavior to solve a performance problem: to get the employee to stop doing what he or she shouldn’t be doing or to start doing what he or she should be doing” (2000, p. 156).

These various definitions have the following commonalities: self-improvement, improved performance (personal and organizationally), development of people, achievement, and relationships between coach and coachee.

Theories of Coaching

Just as there are numerous and varied definitions of coaching, there are equally as many underlying theories of coaching. A review of some of the more prominent theories follows:

“The interdisciplinary nature of the theoretical base of coaching creates practical approaches that are strongly influenced by organization-friendly theories, and fields such as counseling,

psychotherapy, and philosophy” (Cox et al., 2014, p. 139). Cox et al. (2014) continued by saying that often coaching theories are described as being “atheoretical and underdeveloped empirically” (p. 139). They went on to illustrate the disciplines and subject areas that “underpin the practice of coaching” (Cox et al., 2014, p. 146).

In 2014, *Advances in Human Resources Development* journal dedicated its entire issue to the growing phenomena of coaching in both the practitioner and academic worlds. Some of the most renowned scholar practitioners contributed to this edition: Ellinger, Kim, Cox, Bachkirova, Clutterbuck, Maltbia, Marsick, Ghosh, Beattie, Hagen, Egan, Hamlin, and Peterson. The articles covered several topics of interest to both HRD professionals and academics: theories, genres, executive coaching, organizational coaching, managerial coaching, action learning coaching, coaching scales, and how all of these come together for HRD.

In this 2014 issue of *Advances in Human Resources Development* journal dedicated to coaching, Cox et al. (2014) suggested that coaching is at the center of three concentric circles: coaching relationship and process, coach and client as individuals, and context. Within and overlapping the circles, various disciplines and theories are identified, ranging from social science, philosophy, counseling sociology, education, training, to HRD. In the same issue, Maltbia et al. (2014) used the analogy of a tree to present the varying theories and models that grow from the roots or theories of adult learning, neurosciences, management education, sports psychology, and organizational behavior and behavior sciences. Bachkirova, Spence, and Drake’s (2017, p. 29) figure presented coaching at the heart of the circles surrounded by the many of the same disciplines as Cox et al. and Maltbia et al.

From the HRD prospective, the same basic theories seemed to repeatedly present varying forms of psychology, organization development, adult learning and development, philosophy, and management theory. These theories apply directly to this study of managerial coaching direct reports for performance improvement.

Models of Coaching: Processes

The number of coaching models is very close to the number of definitions for coaching. A few are actual models, but there are equally numerous processes considered models. Lennard (2010) described a model as “an intellectual device that highlights the key elements of a process and their interrelationships” (p. 3). With this description in mind, Lennard (pp. 7–13) reviewed some of the leading models, including the GROW model by Whitmore (1992). In *The Complete Handbook of Coaching*, (Ellinger et al., 2014, pp. 19–361) posited that most models are attached to a theoretical approach, which in most cases distills models down to a process. An example would be comparing Goodman’s (2015) process of (a) ask for meaning; (b) building a new perspective; (c) creating a bridge; and (d) developing action to the Grow model of G–goals, R–reality of current situation, O–options or action strategies to accomplish goals, W–will or what will the client do (p. 223)? Other models are discussed under managerial coaching.

Search Criteria for Coaching

The literature review for this coaching section was based on an annotated bibliography done by Grant (2011) that spanned research from 1937 to 2009 and was later updated to include 2011. This researcher used the same delimitations as Grant: *PsycINFO* and *Business Source Premier*. *ProQuest Dissertations* for *Dissertation Abstracts International* was used because *Dissertation Abstracts International* was no longer available. Additionally, the same search parameters as Grant (2011) were used: workplace (coaching), executive (coaching), and life

(coaching). During the search, one additional delimitation was that these words needed to be present in the abstract of each peer-reviewed article. Every article was reviewed by date in descending order from January 2011 to December 2016.

Table 2.2

Combining Executive Coaching, Workplace Coaching and Life Coaching Search Results From Academic Source Premier, Business Source Premier, and PsycINFO

Article Totals	Model Totals	Qualitative Totals	Quantitative Totals	Mixed Methods Totals
29	15	20	24	4

The following results from *ProQuest Dissertation* searches used the terms “executive coaching,” “workplace coaching,” and “life coaching” combined:

Table 2.3

Combining Executive Coaching, Workplace Coaching and Life Coaching search results from Proquest Dissertations

Qualitative	Quantitative	Mixed Methods
157	82	28

Finally, a summary of all the searches used to supplement and replicate Grant’s (2011) summaries across all types of searches and all databases are combined in Table 2.4.

Table 2. 4

All Searches and All Databases Combined

Article Totals	Model Totals	Qualitative Totals	Quantitative Totals	Mixed Methods Totals
29	15	178	106	32

For the purposes of this study, the most interesting outcomes were from the “workplace coaching” even though workplace coaching can refer to varying situations in the workplace.

Managerial Coaching

A subset of general coaching is managerial coaching which is part of the domain of inquiry of the study and directly identified in the research questions. Though part of general coaching, managerial coaching roots does not have the lengthy legacy of general coaching and primarily goes back to the early part of the 20th century.

History of Managerial Coaching

Grant’s (2011) annotative bibliography used terms like “executive coaching” and “workplace coaching” as two search criteria, and it seemed plausible that workplace coaching could be both executive coaching and managerial coaching. Managerial coaching can be broken down further to performance improvement coaching and development coaching.

One of the earliest references expanding the meaning of coaching into the realm of management was DeBower and Jones’ (1914) chapter in the book *Modern Business* published by the Alexander Hamilton Institute. In this text, DeBower and Jones specifically referred to the training and coaching of salesmen. They detailed the actual coaching process of the new hire accompanying the veteran (coach) and how the investment made using this prescribed process of training salesmen far superior and most certain to produce and retain good salesmen as opposed to hiring them and immediately putting them into a territory (p. 421). After completing the classroom sales training, new salespeople were turned over to the territory manager for “field coaching” (p. 416). DeBower and Jones’ work (1914) had a definite influence on the early part of the 20th century as many of these practices are still being used in training new hires in organizations today.

During this same period of the early 20th century, Taylor published *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911a) which was the beginning of human performance technology (HPT), the improvement of the performance of direct reports by developing a systematic process created by both the direct reports and the management. Later models of HPT included both coaching and feedback as part of the models.

Decades later, coaching as a tool in business was presented in *The Growth and Development of Executives* (Mace, 1950). Mace (1950) addressed the need for the development of executives (specifically in manufacturing) resulting in part from the depletion of “capable middle management personnel to the armed services and the almost complete termination of the flow of competent young people into the lower levels of organizations” (1950, p. 4). Today, business/industry face a similar situation with the retirement of the majority of executives from the Baby Boomer generation 1943-1963 (Stanton, 2017, p. 260), and a growing population of millennials reaching the workforce; however, it will be awhile before Millennials can reach the same peak of employment as the Baby Boomers did in 1997 at 66 million (Fry, 2018). This could potentially affect the management pipeline for organizations.

Evered and Selman (1989) aligned managerial coaching with sports coaching: “The more outstanding player the more likely they are to have an ongoing and committed relationship with a coach” (Evered & Selman, 1989, p. 21). The coach enables the player to see what they cannot see for themselves (Evered & Selman, 1989, p. 23). Evered and Selman further viewed coaching as becoming a new management paradigm where coaching was the core managerial activity verses the paradigm of managerial “control” (Evered & Selman, 1989, p. 16). This aligned with the work of Taylor (1911a) who posited that management and direct reports must share in a systemic process to produce the greatest productivity (p. 37). Evered and Selman

stated that management should be about “enabling the people in a group or team to generate results and be empowered by the results they generate” (1989, p. 18).

Evered and Selman (1989) referenced their earlier concept article (published in 1986) in *Organizational Dynamics*, which contained a section that presented the history of coaching, and specifically, “coaching as a management function” (1989, p. 32). In this section, they credited Mace and Mahler (1952) as first identifying “coaching as a worthy and acquirable management skill” (Evered & Selman, 1989, p. 32). Other than the work of Mace and Mahler, Evered and Selman identified a gap in managerial coaching literature from the 1950s to the 1970s. At the end of the section, Evered and Selman mentioned several practitioner concept books in the management world as influential and “must reads” (p. 32), including Fournies’ (1987) *Coaching for Improved Work Performance* and Peters and Austin’s (1985) *A Passion for Excellence*. Peter and Austin’s book was the second non-fiction business book to take the #1 position on the *New York Times* non-fiction bestseller list. Peters and Austin’s (1985) second book dedicated an entire chapter to coaching. It is worth noting that there is a definite correlation between practitioners’ concept pieces, theories, and models and academic empirical studies. A pattern of practitioner concept/model books should be viewed as an important part of the timeline of managerial coaching.

Grant’s (2017) historic timeline for managerial coaching was similar to Campone’s (2008) past and present discussion of coaching. Grant saw three generations of managerial coaching: first generation during 1990–2000, second generation during 2000–2010, and third generation during 2010–future. The focus of each generation evolved beginning with the first generation: performance management. Performance highlighted the first generation, and Grant referred to the well-known Jack Welch management style in which Welch would terminate the

bottom 10% of performers throughout the company (2005, p. 42). This led managers to strive to improve their low performers to an acceptable standard which included taking the managerial command and control stance. Emphasis was placed on the performance review conversation that managers needed to coach their direct reports through.

The second generation of 2000-2010 emphasized the “leader as coach” (Grant, 2017, p. 5) with the emergence of consultants and organizations offering to bring proprietary training programs to the organization. This training usually involved how to conduct a formal coaching session and relied on models that emphasized that by asking the coachee the right questions, the coachee would discover the answer. This approach was taken from the generation of life coaching, and many managers found it difficult to schedule these types of formal sit-down sessions with their direct reports.

The third generation presented by Grant (2017, p. 7) was far more flexible and focused on the “complexity and uncertainty” (p. 7) of today’s fast paced work environment. According to Grant, the era of managers dictating performance improvement interventions, including time for formal weekly, monthly, quarterly reviews, or lengthy annual performance review has passed and given way to a new way of coaching: The quality conversation framework, which is discussed more in the following section.

Definitions and Types of Managerial Coaching

When using the term “managerial coaching” for research, the term could be interpreted from two different directions: (a) managers receiving the coaching or (b) managers coaching their direct reports. Hagen (2012) stated the distinction between the two and found managers receiving coaching as executive coaching: “In manager-as-coach, the acting manager or supervisor plays the role of coach in coaching an individual; in executive coaching, a more

senior individual is being coached, usually by an external professional coach in order to improve personal performance” (p. 19). Though executive coaching is an important part of HRD, it was not the focus for this research study, so those managers who fell into the category of managers receiving coaching were eliminated from the research of the literature.

Hagen and Peterson’s *Coaching Scales* (2014) study selected Ellinger et al.’s (2003) definition of managerial coaching: “Managerial coaching takes place internally within an organization, occurs between a supervisor and direct report(s), and is designed to improve performance through facilitation of the direct report’s learning” (p. 223). Hagen and Peterson further explained that “this process can take place in dyadic and team contexts” (Hagen & Peterson, 2014, p. 223).

Gregory and Levy (2010) reviewed several definitions of direct report coaching from various researchers (Evered & Selman, 1989; Graham, Wedman, & Garvin-Kester, 1993; Heslin, 2006; Hunt & Weintraub, (2002); Kinlaw, 1996; Yukl, 2002) to create their own definition.

Gregory and Levy said that direct report coaching is,

a developmental activity in which an employee works one-on-one with his/her direct manager to improve current job performance and enhance his/her capabilities for future roles and/or challenges, the success of which is based on an effective relationship between the employee and manager, as well as the use of objective information, such as feedback, performance data or assessments. (2010, p. 111)

Additionally, Gregory and Levy referred to this type of coaching as “employee” (p. 111) coaching, or direct report coaching, rather than managerial coaching.

Grant et al. (2010) posited that there is “some debate as to whether the ‘manager as coach’ should be included within the category of formal workplace coaching” (p. 129). Grant et al. went on to say that “‘impromptu or ‘corridor coaching’ by managers is an example of the use of coaching skills in the workplace, rather than formal workplace coaching” (p. 129).

Western (Bachkirova et al., 2017, p. 52) suggested that today's managerial coaches are shifting their focus from coaching the individual to a role focus which introduces the organization to the coaching relationship. The coach/coachee relationship has changed into the coach/client (organization)/coachee relationship. Western further questioned whether the role of manager will remain relevant or perhaps the new term will be leader, with managers and leaders becoming synonymous. Most recently, Dixey and Hill's (2015) study showed, like Hunt and Weintraub (2002) and Grant (2010), that most managers preferred an informal conversational style of managerial coaching. Grant (2017) further posited that today's workplace coaching (, p. 7) is highly agile and flexible, focused on quality conversation not goal focused manipulation, cognizant of the complexities of change, and "seamlessly" fused/joined with the "organization's language, brand, culture and values" (p. 7).

Ellinger (2013) cited Beattie's (2002) study to distinguish characteristics of exemplary managers from management: "thinking, informing, empowering, assessing, advising, being professional, caring, developing, and challenging" (p. 311).

Theories and Models of Managerial Coaching

Both theories and models of managerial coaching were lacking in the literature; however, many of those theories identified are applicable to managerial coaching theory. Managerial coaching is often recognized as part of the more general theories of coaching. Cox et al.'s (2014, p. 146) identified several underlying theories that apply to managerial coaching: social psychology, organizational psychology, training, human resource development, and leadership development. Maltbia et al.'s (2014, p. 169) tree analogy defined the roots of coaching as being in adult learning, adult development, management education, organizational behavior, and behavioral sciences. Lastly, Bachkirova et al.'s (2017) concurred with both Maltbia et al. and

Cox et al. and in many of the theoretical underpinnings of psychology, adult development, organizational psychology, leadership theories, organization studies, learning theories, education, and training. This literature review showed that most researchers chose the theory that they most identified with or wanted to build upon with their research. Ellinger et al. quoted Kilburg (1996), stating that “the scientific basis for these applications is extremely limited at this time” (as cited in Ellinger et al., 2014, p. 136). More recently, Dahling Taylor, Chau, and Dwight (2016) highlighted three theories that managers should base their coaching on: the FIT theory (how feedback influences performance), the social cognitive theory (behavioral modeling), and the goal setting theory (p. 869).

Just as with theories, there are numerous models of coaching with many proprietary to consultants and organizations; however, many contain some basic components. Lennard (2010) posited that a coaching model “organizes a framework of ideas about coaching, and highlights key elements of a coaching process” (p. 61). Gallwey (2000) put forth one of the recent models, “the inner game model” (p. 17). The model originated in sports (i.e., tennis) as Gallwey found a way to eliminate the bad, disruptive self-talk going on in the tennis players minds and to focus on specific elements of the game like speed of the ball, direction of the ball, and height of the ball. The model was presented as “*Performance=potential–interference*” (p. 17; emphasis in original).

Whitmore (1992) developed the GROW model which is probably the best known model used in general coaching and workplace coaching. Whitmore worked with Gallwey on training sessions of Gallwey’s model, and subsequently, decided to create the GROW model. GROW is an acronym for G–grow, R–reality of the current situation, O–or action strategies to accomplish the goals and W–will or what the client will do (Whitmore, 1992). The literature often

referenced the GROW model which is used in various types of coaching, including managerial coaching.

The International Coach Federation (ICF), one of the preeminent organizations for coaching certification, did not specify a specific model to use; however, they ascribed their core competencies that if utilized in order, represent a process. The core competencies included (a) setting the foundation, (b) co-creating the relationship, (c) communicating effectively, and (d) facilitate learning and results (ICF, n.d.). The ICF oversees the accrediting of many coach training programs to ensure consistency among content areas of coaching programs.

In 2015, Dixey and Hill's study attempted to reveal "how managers make sense of this that will inform their accounts of what their role of coach means to them and how they experience it" (p. 79). The study was a qualitative study of six managers and revealed that above all, most managers prefer "an informal, conversational style of managerial coaching" (p. 80). This study delved even deeper to discover managers' perceptions on the various competencies, behaviors, and skills identified from the literature.

As stated earlier, Grant (2017) focused on the future of workplace coaching and developed this into what is known as the quality conversations framework (p. 9). Grant illustrated four types of quality conversations today's managers might have on this continuum of generations of coaching conversations: (a) 1st generation—collaborative conversations held daily to stay current on what is happening; (b) 2nd generation—corridor coaching of quick three to five minute conversations recognized as opportunities to coach, and with the right questions, move the actions forward; (c) 3rd generation—informal coaching which is 10-15 minutes and goal oriented to reach decisions on next steps; and finally, (d) 4th generation—formal coaching of 30

minutes or so incorporating more of generation one and two approaches and using more formal models and purposes (pp. 9–10).

Search Criteria for Managerial Coaching

Using the search terms “managerial coaching” and “abstract” in the databases of *Academic Search Premier*, *PsycINFO*, and *Business Source Premier* produced 40 articles from January 2010 to December 2018. Twenty articles were eliminated as irrelevant to the subject or duplicated in more than one database resulting in 20 viable resources.

Table 2.5

Managerial Coaching in Academic Source Premier, Business Source Premier, and PsycINFO

Articles	Models	Qualitative totals	Quantitative totals	Mixed methods totals
6	0	2	12	0

Using the terms “managerial coaching” and “abstract” in the *Proquest* database between January 2010 and December 2018 produced 40 dissertations. Of the 40 dissertations, 22 were eliminated as irrelevant to the subject leaving 18 viable resources.

Table 2.6

Managerial Coaching in Proquest Dissertations

Qualitative	Quantitative	Mixed Methods
3 studies 1 case study 1 interview of 14 managers plus 1 interview of focus group of 17 managers 1 interview of 6 managers	11 studies 273 participants electronic survey 327 participants electronic survey 524 participants multi-rater assessment 191 participants electronic survey 111 participants electronic survey 186 participants electronic	4 studies 3 Delphi studies 1 qualitative plus quantitative

survey
 343 participants electronic
 survey
 145 participants survey
 104 participants survey
 7,749 participants (5,746
 employees
 2,003 employees archival
 data
 203 participants survey

As part of the literature review on managerial coaching, this researcher did an inventory of the competencies (skills and behaviors) identified in the literature beginning in 1950 through 2014. To this researcher's knowledge from the literature review, no compilation of managerial coaching competencies had been done. For this study, competencies referred to both skills and behaviors identified as part of managerial coaching. This researcher identified 18 academic studies/articles that specifically described coaching competencies and four practitioner resources identifying managerial coaching competencies. From the initial survey of competencies, 208 were extracted from academic journals/studies and from practitioner sources. After allowing for identical or similar competencies, this researcher was able to narrow the competencies down to a total of 116 altogether. From the 116 separate competences, the researcher identified the 10 most often referenced competencies. Those competencies, in order of most to least references, are included in Table 2.7:

Table 2.7

Ten Most Frequently Referenced Competencies in Literature

Competency	Definition	No.
Supportive Environment	Supporting all aspects of the direct report in the workplace by expanding their expertise, offering opportunities to grow and learn, acting as a	16

	sounding board, and motivating them to do their best performance.	
Providing Feedback	Feedback should be informed and timely. Feedback should be clear and constructive and open for discussion. Creating a collaborative plan to move forward.	16
Analysis of Concerns/Evaluation	Objectively review all available data written, verbal, and direct observations.	14
Leader Expectations/Performance Expectations	Communicate early and often the job and personal expectations and give specific guidance on those expectations (Graham et al., 1994, p. 87). Show them the importance of meeting those expectations.	9
Communicating	Open between manager and direct report, two-way communication, communicating in person and through various electronic means.	9
Listening	Concentrate on what they are saying, avoid interrupting, demonstrate alertness and interest (J. W. Gilley & Gilley, 2007, p. 42).	8
Goals/Solutions focused	Help direct reports define then write a specific, measurable, achievable and timely solution plan (J. W. Gilley & Gilley, 2007, p. 51).	5
Creating a Learning Environment	Organizing meetings and activities, using learning plans, and creating formal and informal opportunities to help employees grow and develop.	5
Providing Resources	Removing barriers and providing many types of materials and assistance.	4

Informing and Advising	Assisting direct reports by helping them to integrate into organization and team culture, informing them of career paths available, counseling them in communication and interactions they have with others.	4
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Note. Please see Table B.1 in Appendix B for the literature that was referenced to glean the 10 most frequently cited competencies.

Human Performance Technology

Human performance technology (HPT) can be found in many fields, such as human resource development (HRD), human resource management (HRM), organizational development, learning and development, performance engineering (Gilbert, 1978), and performance technology (Ainsworth, 1979). Though HPT has been a field of study for many years, since Gilbert's seminal work in 1978, this area continues to evolve. This section of the literature review examines this evolution including theories, models, and how HPT is viewed in today's environment.

History of Human Performance Technology

The origins of performance technology began with Taylor (1911a) who was by training a mechanical engineer. Taylor approached the subject of performance with the eye of an engineer but also from a management perspective. Taylor's overriding concern was productivity of the worker and belief that management shared equally in the pursuit of productivity which ultimately led to the organization's profitability. Towne, a colleague of Taylor's, wrote in the introduction to Taylor's seminal book *The Principles of Scientific Management* (Taylor, 1911a) that to be productive, workers needed to be observed, recorded, analyzed, and compared in relation to wages, supplies, expense accounts, and anything else relating to the cost of the products (p. 6). Taylor focused on improving the workplace performance of direct reports using a systematic

process in which the worker and the management shared equally in the responsibility of being productive (p. 37). Taylor's work continues to be relevant in today's world of goods and services as the goal of organizations is to be profitable to their stakeholders.

Gilbert (1978) added to the study of HPT following Taylor's book by 67 years in the book *Human Competence* (1978). Irlbeck (2002) credited Gilbert for coining the term "performance technology" (Irlbeck, 2002, p. 88) for using the concepts of human competency or performance engineering, and for creating the behavior engineering model (BEM). Gilbert based many principles of scientific management on Taylor's (1911a) four principles of scientific management:

1. They develop a science for each element of a worker's work, which replaces the old rule-of-thumb method.
2. They scientifically select and then train, teach, and develop the worker, whereas in the past he chose his own work and trained himself as best he could.
3. They heartily cooperate with the worker so as to insure all of the work being done in accordance with the principles of the science which has been developed.
4. There is an almost equal division of the work and the responsibility between the management and the workmen. The management take over all work for which they are better fitted than the workmen, while in the past almost all of the work and the greater part of the responsibility were thrown upon the men. (p. 36-37)

There is an almost equal division of the work and the responsibility between the management and the worker. The management takes over all work for which they are better to fitted than workers.

Building on Taylor's (1911a) systematic approach to a direct report's work, Gilbert's (1978) focus evolved to looking at the underlying cause of the performance issue. Gilbert identified two basic causes for poor performance: the individual's "behavior repertory" and "environmental supports" (p. 92). Gilbert emphasized the importance of looking at the cause of the performance issues; whereas, Taylor looked at management's need to support workers in their positions. Gilbert's model became a building block of HTP by using a diagnostic approach. Based on the significant contributions Gilbert made to performance improvement, many consider Gilbert the "father of human performance technology" (Dean, 1992, p. 13).

The work of Skinner (1954) greatly influenced Gilbert who accepted an invitation from Skinner to study with Gilbert at Harvard; however, Gilbert realized a better fit was in "the world of work, not the halls of ivy" (Dean, 1992, p. 16). Skinner's work in behavioral psychology, specifically in educational technology, through the development of small step instruction and extensive feedback laid the ground work (Stolovitch & Keeps, 1999, p. 26) for Gilbert (1961). In 1961, Gilbert published the *Journal of Mathetics* which became the foundation for instructional technology. Mager (1975) also built on Skinner's work with an approach to programmed instructions, task analysis, behavioral objectives, and criterion referenced evaluation. Mager focused on instructional design technology by stressing to designers the importance of stating that outcomes must be identifiable, observable, and measurable. Mager's principles are still in practice in learning and development today. Taylor, Gilbert, Skinner, and Mager all believed it was critical that the worker know expectations and that the worker be given instructions along with the tools necessary to be successful.

Following Mager's (1975) work, Ainsworth (1979) focused on performance objectives and outcomes and connected them to performance technology (2002, p. 7). Ainsworth sought to

rely less on the learner “in an attending and receiving mode, storing a carefully sequenced instructional routine” (p. 4), which was prominent and based on Skinner’s (1953) work. Instead, Ainsworth wanted to rely more on a place “where the learner manipulates the informational environment and learns from interacting with it” (p. 4). Ainsworth’s approach of letting the learners control their own learning was new and experimental, and thus, the designers began to design training as “working with and not on the learner” (p. 7). Ainsworth also believed instructional development was about the individual and also about “materials [that] are an essential part of a rich resource environment” (p. 7). Ainsworth was clearly influenced by Gilbert’s model of looking at the resources (i.e., environmental) aspects of performance.

Though Taylor (1911a) looked at HPT as a systematic process, Jacobs (1988) brought a more developed systems approach to HPT. Jacobs proposed that using the systems approach was “relevant to professional practice for at least two reasons: it serves as general orientation on how to think about problems and a source of specific practices to solve those problems” (p. 3). Jacobs also contended that the HPT domain is based on varying general theories including those from “communications, learning psychology, management science and economics” (p. 5). Jacobs proposed that applying systems theory to HPT was comprised of three components: management functions, performance systems development functions, and human performance systems.

Under human performance system components, many of those components have links to several performance improvement coaching skills and behaviors (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; Ellinger et al., 2003; A. Gilley et al., 2010; Graham et al., 1994). These authors included varying components of knowledge, specific skills, motivation, behaviors, and consequences of performance and feedback, all of which are crucial in workplace related performance issues.

Jacobs' (1988) design of the human performance system, inputs processes, and outputs exhibited similarities and comparisons to the work of Swanson's *Analysis for Performance Improvement* (1994) in the system flow for work tasks. Swanson called this the system spine (p. 198).

In 1995, Dean wrote a paper based on the results of the study that questioned "the dissemination of information about HPT and the availability of training through which to learn about it" (p. 69). The second question posited by Dean was, "How is HPT being implemented in the organizations that are using it" (p. 69)? For Dean's study, the sample was taken from the 1994 roster of the National Society of Programmed Instruction (NSPI) using a randomly assigned survey. The NSPI 1994 membership roster had almost 6500 members, including academics, internal practitioners, and external consultants. Of these members, 34% were in positions that traditionally provided training as the solution for performance problems. Dean's results led to recommendations that are still relevant today, including more emphasis on measurement, more participation of academics to increase HPT research, more education for line and operations managers about HPT, and more work to encourage greater integration of HPT within all aspects of HRD (pp. 90–93).

In 1999, luminaries in the field of human performance technology made great strides by compiling the *Handbook of Human Performance Technology* (Stolovitch & Keeps, 1999) which was co-published by the International Society for the Performance Improvement (ISPI). The handbook continues to serve as a reference for other academics and practitioners in many related fields because it contained the writings of many luminaries such as Brethower (2004), Dean (1995), Gilbert (1978), Jacobs (1988), Mager (1975), Rosenberg and Kaplan (1982), Rummler and Brache (1995), and Swanson (1994).

Theories of Human Performance Technology

The studies of HPT include models; however, not all models contain relevant research studies because they are not appropriately supported by a theory. Swanson (1994) stated, “You can have a model and no theory, you can have a theory with no model, and you can have a theory accompanied by a supporting model. A model is not a theory” (p. 15). Additionally, many articles did not tie models to underlying theories. According to Torraco (1997), “A theory simply explains what a phenomenon is and how it works” (p. 115). Many of the studies reviewed in this literature review either presented a model without testing its validity/reliability or presented models built upon another model with no appropriate reference to the studies and models. Swanson’s position, “backed by research and experience, is that the analysis phase, and its requirements of organization diagnosis and expertise documentation, is the most critical phase of the performance improvement process” (p. xiii).

In *Performance Improvement Pathfinders* (1997), Dean stated:

Performance improvement draws from a number of different but closely associated areas of study to develop and adapt the theories and practices necessary for a high-performing workforce that works in productive workplaces where direct reports perform meaningful work. (p. 10)

Dean’s list included the following theories: communication theory, human development theory, learning theory, management theory, sociological theory, and systems theory (p. 10).

This HPT literature review focused on the most significant and frequently cited theories: systems theory and behavioral psychology theory. Brethower (1999), as cited in the *Handbook of Human Performance Technology* stated, “General systems theory and behavioral psychology (theory) provide a knowledge base for Human Performance Technology” (Stolovitch & Keeps, 1999, p. 67). The general systems theory allows for people with different specializations to work together with other people that have different specializations for a common goal. The systems

theory can be applied in varying systems including physical, biological, electronic, governmental, heating, communications, family, social, sociotechnical, and ecosystems. Brethower also described the following seven principles of systems: (a) open systems, (b) information processing, (c) guided systems, (d) adaptive systems, (e) energy channeling, (f) environmental intelligence, and (g) subsystem maximization (Brethower, 1999, pp. 69–70). Systems theory has many contributors, including Banathy (1968), Mager (1997), Jacobs (1988), and Senge (1990), all prominent scholars in the field of HPT, instructional system design (ISD), and HRD.

Behavioral psychology is also an important contributor to HPT because behavioral psychologists are unique in how they identify and study variables that can be used to improve performance of specific people in specific places at specific times (Brethower, 1999, p. 72). Skinner, author of *Science and Human Behavior* (1953), *The Science of Learning and the Art of Teaching* (1954), and *About Behaviorism* (1974), is often referred to as the most influential psychologist of the 20th century. Skinner is also known as the leading exponent of behaviorism, the belief that behavior as a response to external stimuli. Skinner invented the operant conditioning chamber (the Skinner box) to study the effects of reinforcement and the learning machine, the forerunner of programmed instruction, which operate on the principle of reward for demonstration of comprehension. The aforementioned variables of behavioral psychology can be seen as an extension of Taylor's (1911a) work because Taylor advocated that worker and management collaborate to identify and determine how work could effectively and efficiently be done. The identified variables, based on their particular research, can then be modified and improve performance (Brethower, 1999, p. 79).

Behavioral psychology also supports principles about the individual and the environment. The law of effect states that actions leading to an immediate positive consequence are likely to be repeated (Brethower, 1999, p. 73). This principle can be applied to the design of systems for motivation, recognition, supervision, and compensation. Brethower (1999) suggested another principle be used along with behavioral psychology for learning and performance: conceptual learning. “Conceptual learning requires direct interactions with multiple examples and non-examples” (Brethower, 1995, p. 30); meaning, true learning comes when concepts become real through examples that the learner relates to for understanding and interacts with the law of effect based on positive effects on the learner’s part. This principle is often observed in a training engagement: The learner can recite words, ideas, or processes they have been presented, but the learner is unable to transfer those words, ideas, and processes to their jobs. Dean (1996) stated the importance of ongoing HPT research to support learning: “The relevance of research in HPT enables organizations and institutions to apply theories in the context of work, which allows the individual to positively contribute to productive performance” (p. 1).

Swanson’s (1994) performance improvement theory is another approach to HPT where Swanson suggested that one theory is not satisfactory, but rather a proposed “three legged stool” (p. 16) comprised of economic, systems, and psychological theories. Swanson’s combining of other theories into one theory differed from other scholars (e.g., Banathy, 1968; Mager, 1997; Jacobs, 1988; Senge, 1990) who suggested that just one theory is suitable. Swanson’s reasoning for the three theories was that the driving force in organizations is survival. First, economic theory is important as it is vital to the very survival of the organization (p. 16), and Swanson described it “untenable” that economic was often not even mentioned in well-respected organization development books (p. 17). Next, Swanson proposed system theories which is

viewed as “purpose, pieces and relationship that can maximize (or destroy) systems and subsystems in the organization” (p. 16). As previously stated, systems theory was espoused by many others in HPT (e.g., Banathy, 1968; Mager, 1997; Jacobs 1988; Senge, 1990). Finally, the psychology theory accounts for the individuals’ part of the theory and contributes to their actual productivity along with the organization’s culture (Swanson, 1994, p. 16). Swanson’s three-legged stool theory allows the organization to review all aspects that may be affecting their poor performance. An example might be a non-profit organization which cannot survive without a concerted effort of the organization to raise funds to keep them viable in their area of service. This example reflects both the economic (how funds keep their doors open), systems (how they are organized), and psychology (how volunteers, fund raisers, and direct reports work together to sustain their clients and each other).

Models Used in HPT

Just as there are many, varied theories that apply to HPT, so are there an equal number (if not more) models applied to HPT. “There is no single HPT model that can be universally applied to all business environments and problems” (Wilmoth, Prigmore, & Bray, 2014, p. 22). Some of the more prominent and frequently referenced models, such as the Gilbert’s (1978) behavior engineering model, Swanson’s (2001) system model of performance improvement, Rummler and Brache (1988) model of performance, and most recently, the ISPI 2012 Model (2012), are referenced in this study.

Gilbert’s (1978) behavior engineering model consists of six factors related to behavior engineering. Three of the factors that influence performance are environmental and three factors reflect on the individuals’ work. Gilbert addressed both individual and environment; however, Gilbert initially focused on fixing the environment of the workplace and then on the individual.

Swanson (1994) stated that “performance is the valued productive output of a system in the form of goods or services” (p. 27). Swanson further explained that producing quality outputs for customers is the primary reason for the existence of any organization (p. 27). Of note are some of the commonalities that Swanson’s model encompasses: ISD’s ADDIE model (assess, design, develop, implement, and evaluate) and Gilbert’s (1978) environmental principles (information, instrumentation, and motivation).

Rummler and Brache’s (1995) model focuses on nine performance variables which includes three levels: organizational, process, and job/performer. According to Rummler and Brache, all three levels need to be considered in addressing an organization’s performance problems. For the purposes of the proposed study, the job/performance level will be isolated, which emphasizes the performer. “A linear logic begins with input to the performer, who then performs thus creating output, which results in consequences” (Wilmoth et al., 2014, p. 18). Rummler and Brache’s six factors that affect human performance include performance specification, task support, consequences, feedback, skills/knowledge, and individual capacity.

The International Society of Performance Improvement (ISPI) model was first developed by Deterline and Rosenberg (Conway Dessinger, Moseley, Van Tiem, 2012) and published by the ISPI in 1992. Following the original model, changes and additions were made to the model in 2001 and 2004, with the latest adaptation to the model completed in 2012. ISPI has adopted this latest model from Conway Dessinger et al. (2012) to represent the organization based on feedback from both practitioners and academics (p. 10). This new model incorporated analyzing performance, designing or selecting appropriate performance improvement interventions, developing interventions, managing change, and evaluating results (p. 11). The name of the

model was also changed from human performance technology (HPT) model to performance improvement/HPT model.

Search Criteria for Human Performance Technology

This section of the literature review examined HPT to discover the origins, theories, models, past studies, and methodologies used in studies and current literature in this field. The following search engines were used in the review: *EBSCO*, *PsycInfo*, *Psychology and Behavioral Sciences collection*, and *Proquest Dissertation*. The following peer reviewed journals were reviewed: *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, *Human Resource Development Review*, *Advances in Developing Human Resource*, and *Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology*. *Performance Improvement Journal* was also reviewed because it was indexed as an “academic journal”; however, on the ISPI website it is described as “[an] acclaimed journal geared toward practitioners of performance technology in the workplace” (Performance Improvement Journal, 2016). The searches were delimited (not including seminal work) to reviewing existing publications between January 1, 2000 and December 2016.

The initial review process used the following appropriate terms in the search (all using “abstract” in the “select a field”): “HPT” AND “organizations,” “human performance technology” AND “organizations,” “performance improvement” AND “organization,” and “human performance technology” AND “studies.”

Of “HPT” and “Organizations” dissertations search, results produced 22 results. Three were not applicable based on content and 19 were evaluated. Results were as follows:

Table 2.8

Managerial Coaching in Proquest Dissertations

Qualitative Methods Total=14	Quantitative Methods Total = 1	Mixed Methods Total=4
Experimental design–1		Practical action

Think aloud–1	A longitudinal time series, post- test only, non-equivalent control group, sample size 2, 614 hourly employees and 190 salaried employees	research–1
Action research–2		Intervention on human performance technology (HPT) 30 selected participants
Exploratory–2		
Personal narrative inquiry–1		
Content analysis–1		Embedded design–1
Case study–3		
Model creation–1		Model comparisons–1
Reciprocal ethnography–1		Exploratory–1 survey follow up interviews
Interpretive design–1		
Grounded Theory–1		

The next search was for articles published in the *Journal of Performance Improvement* searched using the terms “HPT” AND “organizations.” Nineteen results were produced: five were not applicable based on content; however, 14 articles were evaluated. Results were as follows:

Table 2.9

HPT and Organizations Articles and Studies in the Journal of Performance Improvement

HPT Article Total=4	HPT Models Total=8	HPT Studies Total=2
Editorial–1	Models discussed	Qualitative
Process outlined	Model explanation	15 experts–international;
Using HPT in military different	Models working together	8 consultants;
Linking HPT to financial results	Model creation–2	7 practitioners;
	Maturity model described	Gathered themes
	Design model for HPT	Quantitative
	Organizational alignment model	American Society for Quality and ISPI surveyed 2,000 respondents from discoveries survey to

develop common definitions and common principles

Note. All articles came from the *Journal of Performance Improvement*, which, according to the ISPI website, is “an acclaimed journal geared toward practitioners of performance technology in the workplace. Learn from hands-on experiences with models, interventions, ‘how-to’ guides, and ready-to-use job aids, as well as research articles” (Journal of Performance Improvement, 2016).

Further searches were conducted using the search terms “human performance technology” AND “studies” in peer-reviewed journals. The following search results were produced 30 articles: 13 were eliminated based on content, and 17 were evaluated. The results were as follows:

Table 2.10

Human Performance Technology and Studies from Peer-Reviewed Journals

Article Total= 1	HPT Models Total=4	Qualitative Method Total=8	Quantitative Method Total=2	Mixed Methods Total=2
Article suggests the need for more research-based studies	Model applications without reporting Model development	Suggested design for case study–1 Based on model–2 Case studies–5	Survey, pre/post test scores, observations; no data except ROI Survey to 300 universities, 690 respondents; descriptive statistics	1 study–697 participants from 24 countries; surveys, interviews, and focus groups. 1 study–23 phone interviews; themed online survey–67 respondents

Next search was conducted using the terms “performance improvement” AND “employees” AND “organizations” in peer-reviewed journals. The search results produced were: 25 articles, nine eliminated based on content, leaving 16 to be evaluated. Results are as follows:

Table 2.11

Performance Improvement and Employees and Organizations in Peer Reviewed Journals

Article Total=8	HPT Model Total=4	Qualitative Method Total=1	Quantitative Method Total=3
Opinion pieces–6 Proposed study–1 Book review–1	Improvement–2 Scorecard–1 Cost savings–1	Exploratory on communities of practice–% of improvement	Simulations–939 participants; descriptive statistics Survey–2 rounds, 526 project managers; descriptive statistics Random sample–120; no statistics

Note. This search was different because of the variety of per-reviewed journals represented in the results: *Annals of the University of Oradea, Economic Science Series, Review of Management, Innovation & Creativity, Global Business and Organizational Excellence, Knowledge and Process Management, Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, Journal of Construction and Engineering, Journal of Organizational Behavior Management, Journal of Healthcare Compliance, Organization Science and Human Resource Development International.*

This next search was conducted using the terms “HPT” AND “Managers” in peer-reviewed journals. The results were as follows: four articles, one eliminated based on abstract content, and three remaining were eliminated due to duplication in other searches.

The final search was conducted in the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* only. The same parameters as other searches were used and yielded only one study. The study was a quantitative methods study examining 939 online work simulations. Descriptive statistics were only reported in the results.

In summation, total searches produced 97 results of which 31 were eliminated given inapplicable content or duplications (3). An additional 19 were dissertations were also eliminated due to inapplicable content. The remaining 47 were evaluated with the following results:

Table 2.12

HPT/Performance Improvement Final Results of All Searches

Qualitative Studies	Quantitative Studies	Mixed Methods Studies	Articles	Models
10	6	2	13	16

Note. The articles consisted of book reviews, opinion pieces, proposed studies and methodologies (qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods). Models consisted of proposed models, revised models, combined models, and observed models. None of the modes had research data attached to them.

The review of articles (not including dissertations) for this paper showed that 43% of the articles included empirical data. Of the articles, 21% were qualitative, 13% were quantitative, 4% were mixed methods, 28% were articles, and 34% were models. This sampling indicated further research would be recommended to increase empirical studies. The HPT qualitative studies were the most commonly used methodology and most widely incorporated variety of methods for data collection. Additionally, and of utmost interest to this researcher, the study anticipated obtaining participants' personal perception of what it meant to managers to coach their direct reports for performance improvement.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the context to support the research questions on HPT, coaching, and managerial coaching. All three literature reviews were done in a temporal or historic perspective illustrating the evolution of each discipline. Each literature review was divided into the following sections: history, definitions, relevant theories, models, and search criteria used in

each discipline. HPT has emerged as a discipline and has many applications in business and organizations today. Coaching was explored from its origins in Greek and Roman times and then traced to the rise of coaching as a discipline. Further distillation focused on managerial coaching as organizations have embraced coaching in two forms: executive coaching and managerial coaching.

As part of the managerial coaching literature review, peer reviewed articles were reviewed and reviewed a second time specifically for the skills and behaviors used by each author. A total of 22 articles/studies were reviewed, which culminated in 208 identified competencies (skills and behaviors). After itemizing those separate competencies, 10 competencies were identified as the most frequently mentioned competencies in the literature (see Appendix B). These 10 competencies became the basis for analyzing how managers coached their direct reports for performance improvement. To this researcher's knowledge, a study had not been conducted that focused on the lived experiences of managers using the 10 identified competencies derived from the literature.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

As stated previously in the research problem in chapter one, no recent qualitative studies were identified that delved into the lived experiences of managers coaching direct reports for performance improvement. This chapter provides an overview of the research methodology for this qualitative study. The research design and rationale, population, and sampling procedures for securing participants, discussion of measures, trustworthiness, and the procedures for data collection and analysis are included in the following sections.

Research Design and Rationale

Creswell (2007) identified four paradigms that are appropriate for qualitative researchers: post positivism, constructivism, participatory, and pragmatism. This researcher's philosophical assumptions were based on their views of ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (how reality is known), axiology (role of values), and methodology (approach to inquiry) associated with each paradigm (Creswell, 2007, p. 21). Constructivism is often interchanged with interpretivism because within this paradigm, researchers seek to construct knowledge as opposed to finding knowledge (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 9). This researcher's epistemological view as a qualitative researcher was describing, understanding, and interpreting the lived experiences of participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 20). This qualitative study, through a semi structured interview protocol, explored with participants their phenomenon of co-creating a coaching engagement with their direct reports using their own words, looking to understand each participant's reality as they engaged in this coaching process. This study generated data that can be used by academic researchers to understand what the reality of managerial coaching is and to allow practitioners to understand what works well in managerial coaching as they pursue

selecting or revising a program of coach training for their managers. This study explored in depth the competencies managers used as they co-created an effective coaching engagement with their direct reports.

Creswell (2007) placed social constructivism in the same paradigm as constructivism/interpretivism because social constructivism focuses on an individual that “seeks understanding of the world in which they live and work” (p. 24), and this provided an ideal framework for the research on managers coaching their employees. Social constructivism allowed for the researcher to co-create with the participant (epistemology) which was similar to a manager co-creating through the coaching process the direct report’s the plan for performance improvement.

This social constructivism paradigm led to the methodology of phenomenology (Creswell, 2007, p. 36) for this study and was appropriate for seeking a deep and more detailed understanding of how managers experienced the phenomenon of coaching their direct reports for performance improvement. This researcher invited the participants to share what they experienced as managers in a conversational style of interview through the use of individual semi-structured interviews which encouraged the participants to share, in their own words, their thoughts and feelings on the phenomenon of managerial coaching. This methodology allowed this researcher to ask follow-up questions of the participants and to use probing questions to gather further rich data of the “sense-making” of their coaching experiences.

The following research questions were the basis of the inquiry:

1. How do managers perceive their lived experiences of coaching their direct reports for performance improvement?

2. What competencies (skills and behaviors) are being used in coaching engagements with managers' direct reports?

Table 3.1

Social Constructivism Within Interpretive Framework

Interpretive Framework	Ontological (the nature of reality)	Epistemological Beliefs (how reality is known)	Axiological Beliefs (role of values)	Methodological Beliefs (approach to inquiry)
Social Constructivism	Multiple realities are constructed through our lived experiences and interactions with others.	Reality is co-constructed between the researcher and the researched and shaped by individual experiences.	Individual values are honored and negotiated among individuals.	More of a literary style of writing used. Use of an inductive method of emergent ideas (through consensus) obtained through methods such as interviewing, observing, and analysis of texts.

Note. Table modified from Creswell's (2007, p. 36) adaptation of Guba and Lincoln's (2005) work.

Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry

Five methodologies are derive from the interpretive (constructivist) framework because “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). Those five principle research methods of qualitative inquiry are narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnographic, and case study (Berg, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Glesne, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Moustakas, 1994). This researcher's recent peer reviewed articles and studies

(2010-2018) on managerial coaching found that the quantitative methodology of surveys was used, as documented in the literature review in chapter two. This researcher desired to hear directly from the participants, expressing in their own words, their lived experiences with managerial coaching and the competencies they employ. The research methodology of descriptive phenomenology was used, but more specifically interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), with the intent to interview managers in the natural setting of their organizations regarding the phenomenon of coaching for performance improvement. This methodology and this researcher's practitioner experience with managerial coaching permitted the ability to hear in the participants' experience in their own words, but it will also allow examination and interpretation subtleties to be revealed by the participants by using the coaching techniques of asking questions and probing for more information with follow-up questions. Using the qualitative approach of interpretive phenomenological analysis, this adds to the qualitative studies in managerial coaching and lends itself to answer the "how" and "why" of the phenomenon, thus, revealing a deeper understanding of the participants' sense making of the phenomenon of coaching.

Phenomenology and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

A phenomenology study "describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007, p. 76). Moustakas (1994) posited that the aim of phenomenology is to determine what the experience means to individuals, to provide comprehensive descriptions of those experiences, and then to derive a universal meaning from those experiences (p. 13). Participants were interviewed who had all experienced the phenomenon of coaching their employees and had used systematic procedures for narrowing down the interviews into detailed description of the essential qualities of the participants

experiences—the “how” and “what” of the phenomenon. Participants were identified to interview regarding their coaching practice in the workplace, and the interview questions specifically addressed in depth the “how” and the “what” of their practice of coaching.

Smith, Flowers, & Larkin (2009) were early advocates for interpretative phenomenology analysis (IPA) as a qualitative approach. Additionally, Smith et al. stated that IPA “attempts to understand other people’s relationship to the world are necessarily interpretative, and will focus upon their attempts to make meaning out of their activities and to the things happening to them” (2009, p. 21). Alase (2017) posited that “IPA allows for multiple individuals (participants) who experience similar events to tell their stories without any distortions and/or prosecutions” (p. 11). The goal of IPA for this study was to “understand the innermost deliberation of the lived experiences” of research participants by “exploring” or “investigating” in relation to and with the participants (Smith et al., 2009, p. 46). This exploration and investigation of the participants’ lived experiences was greater in IPA due to the “bonding relationship that the approach allows for the researchers to develop with their research participants” (Alase, 2017, p. 9) and the co-creating of the lived experiences.

Both phenomenology and interpretative phenomenological analysis focus on the lived experiences of those participants experiencing the phenomenon; however, there was a difference in the analysis. In most (descriptive) phenomenology, the quest is to produce an inductive analysis. Inductive analysis looks to the text and its distillation regarding the specific evaluation objectives of the researcher; in other words, the researcher is interested in how the data relates to the researcher’s objectives. Interpretive phenomenology analysis produces in-depth, rich descriptions of how the phenomenon has affected the participants and the actual lived of the participants (Alase, 2017, p. 12).

Other aspects that differentiated IPA from phenomenology were hermeneutics, the theory and practice of interpretation, and idiography, the study of the particular or individual cases. The hermeneutic circle (Smith et al., 2009, p. 27) espouses that the researcher move back and forth between any part, and this was applicable to the interview process and also the interpretive process. As part of this study, the interview questions and follow-up questions moved back and forth for both the researcher and the participant to clarify the participant's understanding of the coaching phenomenon. Following the interview, the researcher reviewed the transcripts to look for different ways to interpret the data. This allowed a deeper understanding of the participant's meaning making; furthermore, this researcher's personal experience with the coaching phenomenon enabled a deeper sense making of the participant. This experience included many successful performance improvement coaching engagements with various employees and designing training classes that included a coaching component as part of the training. Additionally, follow-up meetings with managers regarding on-going coaching of their direct reports have been conducted. This researcher acknowledges the similarities between "coaching" and the interview process of the IPA researcher. Grant (2017) suggested that coaching employees is about asking the right questions and allowing the coachee to discover the answers for themselves, and the same can be said of a IPA interview. Questions led the participants to find their own voice and words to make their own meanings of the questions and follow-up questions. It must be noted that "questioning" was mentioned as a competency from the inventory of the literature on managerial coaching but was not used specifically in the card sort process. Just as a business coach creates a "collaborate process" (Hamlin et al., 2008) with the coachee, the IPA the interviewer or researcher co-creates the meaning making of the participants' lived experiences. Coaches should not manipulate their direct reports toward the

coach's goal, but rather, allow the coaching conversation between the coach and the coachee to be collaborative toward a coachee's goal. The same can be said of the manager coaching their direct reports; it should be a conversation to be guided by the direct reports' collaboration on a performance improvement plan. These commonalities made IPA the appropriate choice approach for this research study.

IPA also has an idiographic focus that commits to the detail of a systematic thoroughness in interpreting the individual data of each interview. Idiography applied to the purposeful selection of the participants of the study. Each participant shared in common that they were managers with three to five years' experience who coached their employees for performance improvement. Idiography does not dismiss generalizations, but takes them from the particular purposeful participants and develops those commonalities more cautiously (Smith et al., 2009, p. 29). This idiographic focus was ideal for the study of this manager coaching phenomenon.

Participants

The sample for this study was purposeful and convenient as deemed appropriate for an IPA study by Creswell (2007), Merriam and Tisdell (2016), Alase (2017), and Berg (2009). This researcher used personal "special knowledge or expertise" (Berg, 2009, p. 50) to select the organizations and participants for this study. Various industries were selected based on contacts with people within those industries and organizations: investment banking, mortgage financing and telecommunications. Within these various industries, my contacts referred me to individuals to invite to be interviewed without knowing them personally. In a previous interview pilot, this researcher found that the relationship with a participant distracted the interview process; therefore, it was deemed appropriate to interview participants not previously known to maintain a more professional and focused interview. The industry contacts assured this researcher that the

participants recommended have had some knowledge or training for coaching their direct reports in performance improvement. As an IPA researcher, knowledge and experience with the coaching phenomenon is known, but not with the participants. As advised by Smith et al. (2009), the selected participants formed a homogeneous group by nature of their title with direct reports and number of years as managers. Specific to this study, the participants were required to have the title of manager (or equivalent title) and at least three to five years of experience as a managing with direct reports. A minimum of three to five years' experience was specified because a new manager is generally concerned with more administrative responsibilities of their positions. Hill (2019) stated that many new managers need to adjust their understanding of their roles and responsibilities, learn how to build effective cross-functional work relationships, understand how and when to use individual and organizational resources, and finally, learn to cope with the inevitable stresses of leadership. For many, it is a big jump from individual contributor to manager with much greater responsibilities; therefore, managers with a minimum of three years' experience in working with direct reports were chosen.

The participants were from variously sized organizations in the Denver and Fort Collins area and were publicly traded or privately held corporations. These two larger organizations tended to have specific learning and development on management and leadership which often included either feedback or coaching training. There was a strong likelihood that these managers would have had exposure to one of both of these types of training. The smaller organization was a mortgage company that had made a commitment to a coaching culture within the organization. The Denver metropolitan area or the Fort Collins area was essential for face-to-face interviewing due to the researcher's location; interviews took place in the participants' workplace and last between 60 and 90 minutes.

Interview Protocol

The interviewing protocol contained demographic information, open-ended semi-structured interview questions, and note taking space to record any observations. The researcher had created the interviewing protocol sheet based on the work of Creswell (2007), Merriam (2016), and Berg (2009). The interview questions were based on the research questions; however, there were follow-up questions:

1. What can you share with me about coaching your direct reports for performance improvement?
 - a. What does that look like in terms of time?
 - b. What does that look like in terms of frequency with individual direct reports?
 - c. What does that look like in terms of your overall management style?
2. Of these cards I'm presenting to you, what competencies (skills and behaviors) are you using coaching engagements with your direct reports? (I will lay out on the table in front of the participants 10 cards, arranged in alphabetical order, each will have one of the 10 competencies on it.)
 - a. Of the competencies (skills and behaviors) presented to you, how would you arrange them? You can arrange in any manner you chose. (Researcher will photograph their arrangement of the competencies and will photograph any changes made to their original arrangement.)
 - b. Why have you arranged them as you have?
 - i. Tell me about the arrangement you have made with the cards.
 - ii. What, if any, is the significance of the arrangement you have chosen?
 - iii. What can you describe or tell me about each one of these competencies?

- c. What can you describe or tell me about each one of these competencies?
- d. How often do you use these competencies in your coaching engagements?
- 3. What results have you seen from your coaching engagements with your direct reports?
- 4. Overall, after talking about your coaching of your direct reports, what are your thoughts about coaching your direct reports for performance improvement?

Data Collection

Following Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the study, this researcher utilized data collection of individual interviews with those identified in the sample. An important part of the data collection process was to have each participant receive an introductory letter (via email), a statement of consent, and a written guarantee from the researcher that participants' identity would remain anonymous to all but the researcher. The introductory letter sent via email (see Appendix E) included information about the study, described the interview as part of the study, explained participants' rights to stop the process at any point, and noted the anonymity commitment of the researcher. The email also noted the requirement that participants have a minimum of three to five years of managerial experience with direct reports. Lastly, the email asked for their participation and a phone number to contact them directly to answer any questions they may have. Please see appendices D and E for the introductory letter and the statement of consent which included a brief description of the study, details of their participation, their right to refuse participation or to stop when they choose, and how their information will be protected.

Merriam (2016) suggested having an interview guide with the open-ended questions, and Berg (2009) suggested using a five-step approach to interviewing participants. Creswell (2007) advised that the researcher have a written interview protocol containing the study name, date and

time of the interview, place of the interview, names of interviewer and interviewee, position of the interviewee, brief description of the study, and a list of open-ended interview questions. This researcher utilized a detailed interview protocol posited by Creswell (2007), which gathered more pertinent data (demographic) at the beginning of the interview and then moved into the interview questions. This process of beginning data gathering, such as general demographic information, was a way of establishing a relaxed and informal atmosphere and then transition to the actual interview questions. This early rapport with the participant was designed to encourage the participants to be more transparent with the researcher as to their thoughts and actions regarding their coaching engagements. Finally, Creswell suggested a note area for the researcher to use for notations during and after the interview. The interview protocol is in the Appendix C.

The interview was recorded on two digital devices; therefore, participants were made aware in the statement of consent that the interview was recorded. Once the interview was complete, the recording was sent to a transcription service with a list of “transcription rules” to ensure the transcriber had a clear understanding of the researcher’s expectations (Jacoby & Siminoff, 2007, p. 45). Participants were not referred to by name during the recorded interviews to protect participants’ anonymity from the transcriber and any others who may have contact with the participants’ data. Once the transcribed interview was returned, the researcher reviewed the original recording to the transcribed interview for accuracy. That same recording was be stored by the researcher in a safe place known only to the researcher. The transcription of the interview was then given to each participant for them to review and approve.

Data Analysis

In analyzing IPA data, the researcher’s focus is primarily on how the participants attempt to make sense of their lived experiences with the phenomenon being studied. There is no exact

format for the researcher to follow on analyzing this data; rather as Smith et al (2009) stated IPA analysis “directs our analytical attention towards our participants attempts to make sense of their experiences” (p. 79). Additionally, Smith et al. also felt there is “no clear right or wrong way of conducting this sort of analysis” (p.80).

Though no exact format exists for IPA data analysis, Smith et al. (2009) suggested that a heuristic circle for analysis is advisable which allows the researcher to move back and forth between any part; this is applicable to both the interview process and the interpretive process. This allows the researcher the flexibility in using their steps in the analysis. The five steps advocated by Smith et al. include the following: (a) reading and re-reading, (b) initial noting, (c) developing emergent themes, (d) searching for connections across emergent themes, and (e) moving to the next case. Jacoby and Siminoff (2007) espoused a three-step procedure for content analysis: immersion, reduction, and interpretation. Finally, Alase’s (2017) generic process of three cycles of continuous narrowing until only “extremely few words”(p. 16) remain from the narrative. This researcher used a combination of both Smith et al., Jacoby and Siminoff, and Alase’s process for analysis of the data collected.

This researcher was immersed in the data by reading and re-reading, but also by listening and re-listening to the digital audio recordings. The first chance to listen was immediately following each interview. To ensure the interview was captured in its entirety, two recording devices were used during the interview. After the completeness of the interview was captured, the primary digital device was stored in a locked cabinet and the other device was erased. Next, the recording was relayed to the transcriber without any reference to the participants’ names in the recordings.

Once the written transcript was returned by the transcriber, this researcher carefully checked the transcription with the original audio recording. Once minor corrections were made to the transcription, the corrected document was sent to the individual participants to be member checked. Having received no feedback from any of the participants, the documents were considered final.

The next suggested step was to make initial notations, as suggested in Smith et al.'s step two. Even prior to reviewing the transcripts, this researcher took notes on the interview protocol sheet on impressions of the participants or special notes that would help in interpreting meaning from the interview later. The transcripts were put into a format of three columns with the actual transcript in the middle column (see Figure 3.1). The format allowed for notes to be made on emergent themes and notes on possible superordinate themes.

<p><i>Be detailed the 3 groups emerged</i> GROUPING</p> <p><i>replicate actual plots</i></p> <p><i>Later in interview he says if you don't do these first three things you'll never get to the others</i></p>	<p>Q: So would you say - would you say this is a section of what you do? You just mentioned -</p> <p><i>Points to Top Group</i></p> <p>A: Yeah, I think this is kind of - this is all about the <u>environment</u> that we in. I think this is about <u>identifying what the challenge is or what the problem is, or what it is we are not achieving or whatever the case may be.</u> And then this, this is when we move into the <u>solution stage or the possible solution stage.</u> Would be with these groups. So to me these are kind of the three groupings I see these as.</p> <p>Paul's Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening Creating a Learning Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicating Goal/Solutions Focused <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of Concerns/Evaluation Providing Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing Resources Leader/Performance Expectations Informing and Advising <p>Q: Let me take another picture. See what I mean, it sort of clarifies it as you go along. You start to really ... Okay. Great. Can you, you sort have already gone over this and discussed each of these. You talk about supportive listening, communicating. How does creating a learning environment fit into up here?</p> <p>A: Well, I feel like I need to learn where they are at. And I think they</p>	<p>So he has divided the cards into three group:</p> <p>First group: establish the relationship and the trust. Cards are: Supportive environment, Listening, Creating a Learning environment, Communicating</p> <p>Second group: identify the challenge or problem. Cards are: Goal/Solution Focused, Analysis of Concerns Evaluations</p> <p>Third group: solution stage or possible solution. Cards are:</p> <p>Providing Feedback Providing Resources Leader/Performance Expectations Informing and Advising</p> <p>Learning Environment means "learning where they are at...I think they need to learn where I'm at. And kind of the why behind what will ultimately be the goals we are going to set and those types of things."</p> <p><i>Then 3 competencies emerge in other parts as most important</i></p>
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Figure 3.1. Three-column format of participant interview. The first reading in this three-column format allowed for highlighting of important phrases and words that were thought to be key in the participants' responses. Notes were made in the right-hand column on those underlined phrases. In the left-hand column, recorded observations and thoughts of the participant's answers were noted that started to form themes.

After doing step two with all the transcripts, making initial notations, this researcher began to parse out individual emerging themes generated by each transcript. Step three required using the hermeneutic circle of going back and forth in the data to find those themes that best expressed the participants lived experiences and had commonality through interpretation of the researcher to yield the superordinate themes. These commonalities were listed on a separate table in order to create a list of possible superordinate themes. There were several possible superordinate themes within the data and this researcher had to pursue those that applied predominately back to the research question: How do managers perceive coaching their direct reports for performance improvement?

Trustworthiness

Creswell (2007) believed “researchers employ accepted strategies to document the ‘accuracy’ of their studies” (p. 250) and further suggests that the researcher employ more than one strategy. The strategies of peer review or debriefing, member checking, and rich, thick description were employed. This researcher returned to the literature to document support for the emerging codes. Member checking was used twice, once during the interview process to ensure the researcher understood clearly what the participant was saying and again after the interview had been transcribed to ensure it read as the participant intended. Rich, thick descriptions were included of the participants environment, of activity observed by the participant, of pictures of their competency card arrangement, and of a revisit of the raw interview as soon as possible to make any notes that were helpful during the analysis part. Rich, thick description became part of the interview protocol so notes could be made during and immediately after the interview.

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research means the extent to which reliable conclusions can be drawn from the research data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One way to ensure credibility was to spend sufficient time with the participant during the interview and instruct them to take all the time they needed to answer each question. Credibility of this study was accomplished by using member checking. Creswell (2007) described member checking as “taking data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants so that they can judge the accuracy and credibility of the account” (p. 252). After the interview and subsequent transcription, each participant reviewed his or her transcript for accuracy and made any adjustments presented by the participant. This was done prior to the actual coding process began. The study’s findings were offered to the participants following completion of the study.

Transferability

Transferability was done by providing “sufficient descriptive data to make such similarity judgements possible” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 298). Merriam (2016) suggested both rich descriptions or a “highly descriptive, detailed presentation of the setting and in particular the findings of a study” (2016, p. 257) and also “maximum variation” (p. 257) in the sample as part of transferability. This researcher sought to provide enough descriptive data around the details of the study as possible, including final criteria for selecting organizations, final criteria for purposively selecting participants, general details of the participants work environment, and observations made by the researcher during the actual interview. The study included three males and five female participants, from the industries of mortgage lending, investment banking and telecommunications, and with individual ages from 30 to 68. This diversity of participants

provided ample variation and demonstrated common themes across the diverse participant sampling.

Dependability

Merriam (2016) posited that qualitative studies done in the social world are “assumed to be influx, multifaceted, and highly contextual” (p. 251), which, these studies, in turn, also rely on the information given by the participant and the skill of the researcher to take that information and accurately interpret it. An interview is a moment in time. According to Barada (2013):

Because socially constructed understandings are always in process and necessarily partial, even if the study were repeated (by the same researcher, in the same manner, in the same context, and with the same participants), the context and participants would have necessarily transformed over time – through aging, learning, and moving on. (p. 229)

Therefore, according to Merriam (2016), the responsibility of the researcher is to ensure that “findings of the study are consistent with the data presented” (2016, p. 252). is the researcher sought to consistently verify the data from the participants with the participants by restating their answers or by asking probing questions to gain clarity on their thoughts and words.

Additionally, a clear audit trail was created, as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which allowed an independent reader to follow the steps taken by the researcher. This required precise documentation of the study journey in the form of a log for others to review.

Confirmability

Confirmability is used in qualitative research and is a complex and complete design for an auditor to follow in the auditing process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Regardless of the auditing procedure chosen by an independent auditor, the researcher is obliged to provide the auditor with the following material documenting their audit trail: raw data, data reduction and analysis products, process notes, materials relating to intentions and dispositions, and instrument

development information (Halpern, 1983, pp. 214–218). The researcher will produce “initial notes on the research questions, the research proposal, an interview schedule, audio tapes, annotated transcripts, tables of themes and other devices, draft report and final report” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 183) for an external auditor. This researcher’s confirmability was to keep meticulous notes on the design and development of the study from beginning to the end of the study and make them available to anyone.

Pilot Study

Before submitting the protocol to IRB for approval, this researcher performed a pilot study to examine the feasibility of the larger study by using the proposed interview protocol sheet and 10 competency cards. The interview protocol sheet included 12 demographic items and five interview questions. The pilot consisted of interviewing two managers from different industries at separate times. Both managers had considerable experience in managing and coaching direct reports. During the interview, the researcher took notes on a printed version of the interview protocol, observing their demographic information and making brief notes by each question. Both interviews were recorded using two separate recording devices, and each separate sorting of the competency cards was photographed. The pilot identified several changes to make to the interview protocol and to the competency cards to ensure a more focused approach to my research questions.

The first change was to tighten up the specifics of the demographic information by asking participants’ specific age as opposed to which generation they were in. The recording device was not turned on until the actual interview questions of the protocol commenced; however, this researcher noticed that the participants divulged helpful information during that process. For example, one participant disclosed that she learned about giving feedback during her time in the

military. Recorded admissions like this would have been helpful to have as part of the recorded interview. Therefore, this researcher came prepared with the participant names on the protocol sheet and then went through the introduction. As participants' demographic information was notated (other than their name), then the digital recorder was turned on. Follow-up questions on that information were asked if clarification or expansion on something they mentioned was needed.

During the pilot interviews, this researcher discovered the need to distinguish between performance coaching as opposed to developmental coaching for both pilot participants at different points during the interviews. For the purpose of this research, the participants needed to focus on performance improvement, not developmental improvement. During one interview, the researcher injected an opinion by stating, "In my opinion, performance improvement could be considered developmental in that you are developing the person through performance improvement. By improving their performance, you are in fact developing them to move higher in the organization." On reviewing the transcription, the researcher realized that this personal statement as part of the explanation was not an acceptable part of the interview protocol and could possibly confuse a participant.

In the pilot study, 10 competency cards derived from the literature were used which cited skills and behaviors of performance improvement coaching. The 10 competencies were the ones frequently cited in the literature. Each competency was on the front of a 3 X 5 plain index card and the definition of that competency was on the reverse side of the card. The 10 competency cards were distributed in alphabetical order and the participants were told they could arrange the competencies in any way they chose to arrange them to reflect the process they used in coaching for performance improvement. They were also told the definitions were on the back of the card

that they could turn over at any time. Directions were given, and the participants were also told that pictures would be taken of the way they laid out their cards. An unanticipated event was that they each changed the arrangement of the cards, which they were allowed to do, as they worked through the process they use. Both of my pilot participants changed their initial card arrangement twice after thinking and talking through their initial sort resulting in three separate card arrangements. Each arrangement was photographed separately. With each participant, the card arrangements were completely different. One participant arranged the cards to demonstrate the process they used in coaching. The other participant had three columns: one for “good at,” one for “okay,” and one for “needs work.” This participant placed the competency cards under the column that reflected how she felt she facilitated each competency. With both card arrangements, the researcher took notes to further explain the arrangement. This process revealed the need to take notes on all card arrangements pictures.

To begin the overall analysis of the interviews, a transcription of each interview was obtained and put into a 3-column table format: The text transcription was in the middle column, notations on the interview was in the right column designed, and emergent themes were notated in the left column. This arrangement revealed the importance of inserting the competency card photos at the appropriate places in the transcription. This eliminated the necessity of having to go back and forth between the pictures and the transcripts.

Finally, the researcher reformatted Question 2A to make it clear to the participants that this research was interested in the coaching process that they used and how they used the competencies in that process. The question was changed to the following (please see Appendix C): Of the competencies (skills and behaviors) presented to you, how would you arrange them when thinking of your coaching process?

Chapter Summary

The chapter began with the research design and the rationale used in this study. As a qualitative researcher, the epistemological view was taken when describing, understanding, and interpreting the lived experiences of participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 20) was the focus. The social constructivism paradigm of this study looked at how the participants used coaching as part of their lived experiences with their direct reports. Phenomenology and specifically, interpretative phenomenology analysis were each described; however, IPA allowed for researcher interpretation as part of the analysis of the data. This study used a semi structured interview protocol, exploring with participants their phenomenon of co-creating a coaching engagement with their direct reports using their own words, thus, looking to understand each participant's reality as they engaged in this coaching process. Additionally, as part of the analysis, this researcher employed personal knowledge on the phenomena.

Participant selection criteria was stated: managers with the title of manager (or equivocal title) with three to five years' experience in managing direct reports. An interview protocol was used with the data collection process (Appendix C). The interview protocol was revised based on information exposed during the pilot. Specifics of the actual data collection were covered including digital recording, transcription, and member checking for accuracy; additionally, safeguards to protect the participants identity were outlined.

Finally, trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were all identified as part of the qualitative analysis process. Data analysis process was outlined primarily as data reduction and analysis of each interview that then produced emergent themes from all interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to share the findings from the eight interviews conducted around the research questions set forth in chapter one. Those questions include: (a) How do managers perceive their lived experiences of coaching their direct reports for performance improvement, and (b) what competencies (skills and behaviors) are being used in coaching engagements with managers' direct reports? Sections of this chapter include participants demographics, superordinate themes and emergent themes from the participant interviews with rich descriptions for each emergent theme, and lastly, a summary of the chapter is provided.

Participants

Ten possible participants were contacted initially for this study. One was disqualified due to having only managed direct reports for less than three years, and the other possible participant indicated an initial willingness to participate but failed to set up an interview despite several attempts to do so. Eight participants (five women and three men) were interviewed ranging in age from 30 to 68 (see Table 4.1). Years of experience managing direct reports ranged from five to 44 years with a combined total of 175 years managing direct reports. All participants currently had direct reports they coached and the number of direct reports for each participant varied from two to 12. Titles of the participants included regional president, regional senior vice president, 1st vice president, managing director (2), sales manager, senior team manager, and supervisor. Three industries were represented: financial services, telecommunications, and mortgage lending. All participants had been exposed to some form of training for coaching performance improvement and were actively coaching; however, only two had specific coach training.

Table 4.1

Participant Demographics

Name Pseudonym	Gender	Title	Industry	Years Managing Direct Reports	Current # of Direct Reports
Paul	Male	Regional President	Mortgage Lending	44	10
Tom	Male	Sr. Regional VP	Mortgage Lending	22	9
Ariana	Female	1 st Vice President	Financial Services	20	8
Rene	Female	Supervisor	Telecomm	20	12
Susan	Female	Managing Director	Telecomm	15	8
Gina	Female	Sales Manager	Telecomm	23	5
Darren	Male	Managing Director	Financial Services	5	2
Melissa	Female	Sr. Team Manager	Financial Services	10	6

Additional demographic information was gathered from each participant, including their exposure to coaching/leadership training in any of five categories: seminars, classes, conferences, workshops, or other. Eight out of eight participants responded that they had taken/attended some type of training in all categories, and all but one participant stated that the various programs were delivered by third party vendors. The one participant identified an internal program called Emerging Leaders which included a coaching section.

Four of the participants were part of their organizations' sales areas; however, they represented two separate organizations. The other four participants were part of their organizations operational area and were from the same organization.

To elicit the emergent themes and superordinates, this researcher followed a combination of the processes of Alase (2017), Smith et al. (2009), and Jacoby and Siminoff (2007) of submersion in the participant interviews by listening to the interviews and by reading and re-reading, distilling and re-distilling the data. Emergent themes are a result from the larger data set of both the interview and the researcher's provisional notes reduced into a volume of detail that is then mapped into interrelationships, connections, and patterns. A superordinate theme involves combining like-with-like themes to develop a new name for those theme clusters (Smith et al., 2009). Below are the emergent themes and superordinate themes from this study's data:

Table 4.2

Superordinate and Emergent Themes

Superordinate Themes	Emergent Themes
Coaching categories for successful performance coaching	Regularly scheduled one-on-one's Specific performance coaching sessions Frequent check-ins, Formal performance improvement plans (PIPs) Success rate of participants
Use of coaching competencies in performance coaching	Most important, overarching/supporting: supportive environment, communicating, and listening, Competencies arrangements all unique, Competencies groupings all unique, Competencies used daily by all
Performance coaching and management style	Sales participants verses operational participants

Successful Performance Coaching

All of the manager participants referred to various categories of performance coaching for performance improvement that they had used. The categories mentioned by the participants included regularly scheduled one-on-ones, specific performance improvement sessions, frequent check-ins, and performance improvement plans (PIPs). All participants shared that they used these categories in a progressive way beginning with regularly scheduled one-on-ones. Additionally, the participants shared they would revisit some of the categories, depending on the performance issues, in working with their direct reports. Other participants shared that they rarely got to the formal performance improvement plan, though all were aware the performance improvement plan was available to them to use with their direct reports.

Regular Update One-On-Ones

This performance coaching is an overview of the direct report's overall performance; the session is not about a specific performance improvement issue of the direct reports. All of the participants had regularly scheduled one-on-ones with their direct reports. Most held weekly sessions; two held their one-on-ones on a monthly basis. The participants felt that these one-on-ones gave them a "heads-up" about any possible performance issue that could arise. This also gave the direct report a chance to raise any possible issue or potential performance problem that concerned them. Tom stated that he had regularly scheduled monthly one-on-one coaching time with his direct reports, which could easily morph into performance coaching:

I do one-on ones with all my direct reports and they are pretty well planned out. They have an objective, performances reviewed, not in a punitive way at all, just the reality of where they are today. So it's a snapshot of, "Hey, this is where we said we would be, this is where we are, and we still need to go there, so let's talk about how we can move forward to get there." I have them all scheduled for the first Tuesday of every month and they are scheduled 50 minutes.

Darren also met regularly with his direct reports for a minimum of an hour a month. He often used these sessions to get to know his direct reports and assured them he was there to help them should a performance issue arise. He stated:

My style is that if someone is on my team and reporting to me, then it's important to me to get to know them. Their challenges and their aspirations—at work and also outside of work. I like to have a really strong relationship with the individual on the team. That goes in open communication. So, reaching a point where you might have to coach them for performance, I say, “I want to coach you to help you be successful because I care about you as a person.”

Like Darren, Rene often used her one-on-one sessions to get to know her direct reports.

However, Rene's regular sessions occurred weekly instead of monthly like Darren's. Rene explained:

When I first get an individual, the very first coaching session is really a meet and greet, and it's all about them. “Where are you from? What makes you tick? What is your favorite food?” And then they will open up. And then you kind of share with them about yourself. Vulnerable things so they can see that you are being vulnerable, and you get them to talk. Because you have to find—. It's kind of like a sale, a pinpoint, or sweet spot of how you are going to develop this person. It's never the same; it's always different. They all get 45 minute of my time every week.

Gina also had regularly scheduled weekly one-on-ones which she referred to as “baseline.” She explained:

Some of them, they know exactly what they need to do. They are really great at moving along, and so I may only talk with them once a week or maybe another time during the week if they have a quick question. As far as personal conversation, there are others that I talk to everyday because they are newer in the world: They are just learning, they have a lot more questions, and they want a lot more feedback on their ideas before they take action. There are lots of emails back and forth and different forms of communications. I even have younger people who prefer texting—so there is a lot of quick hits, quick questions. I'm giving them an hour, but there may be other things relative to career development that I'm working with them on.

Specific Performance Improvement Coaching

Specific performance improvement coaching is used when an area of performance has been identified as needing improvement for the direct report to be successful. The specific

performance improvement issue could be identified in various ways by the manager. This identification could be an issue brought up by the direct report feeling they are not performing up to expectations, or the manager could review specific data to see if the direct report is meeting expectations. Additionally, the manager may have observed issues occurring with the direct reports performance and may have received feedback from team members, matrix managers, even outside customers. Whatever the source of the performance data, the manager realizes the performance issue needs to be specifically addressed through coaching. Ariana's approach to performance coaching direct reports, who were managers themselves, was based more on their experience level. She said:

So my approach would be different based on the person and their experience level. That person that has been doing it for many years, I will use them as a leader and gain their experiences and partnership approach. The person [direct report] that has never managed somebody [other direct reports], I will take a more active step-by-step approach to how they may address an issue: all the way to how they would hire to handle a performance concern and the steps to take in coaching that person either up or out.

Melissa stated that she had noticed different performance coaching approaches at different companies she had worked for. She explained:

I would say first and foremost, it has to do with the appetite and culture of the company you worked for. So, I've had experiences at different companies for performance coaching, especially those that are struggling to perform. And I think the experience has been different at each of those companies. I would say managerial support of my direct management chain in identifying and responding to the performance was a direct factor in the outcome. The current company that I work for is very employee leaning, has a lot more flexibility and appetite to work with somebody.

When this researcher asked Melissa if she could quantify how much or how often she underwent performance coaching, she said, "Umm. Probably per week. I think in recent examples we explicitly laid out the requirements of how often we would meet, and on top of that we would be meeting additionally because the employee wanted that."

Rene structured her weekly time spent with her direct reports based on their need for specific performance coaching. She explained, “Each one of my employees gets 45 minutes of my time every week.” Rene went on to describe,

I purposely open them [their numbers] and make sure that they know this is how they trended, these are their numbers. I have it coded for them so they see right away what I’m seeing and what is freaking me out in red. We talk about it, we listen to some calls, we find out maybe where—this is first call resolution.

First call resolution refers to a direct report taking a call from a customer and resolving the issue in that call. The customer has resolution in their first call to the organization. Rene continued,

At the end of coaching, I always hold them accountable to a smart goal. And every week when I’m ready to re-coach, I’ll pull it up and say, “Oh, this is what we are on this week. How did you do with that? How are your numbers?”

Rene further shared how she had her high performers peer coach those that were struggling with their performance:

What I will do though is, we are allowed to take our agents and instead of coaching them, they can go sit with a peer. I will say we are going to coach for 20 minutes of your coaching, and then I would like you to go sit with [Redacted]. . . , so that they can peer coach, because a lot of time they can get it better from a peer than from me. So I will sacrifice some of their time for them to do that.

Gina, unlike Rene, gave her direct reports all the time they needed when they were struggling and needed performance improvement coaching. Gina shared,

If it’s somebody who is struggling to perform, then that is probably going to be more like three to four hours a week because that’s going to be a lot more checking in, a lot more, “Hey, you said you were going to do this, how did that work out?” So when there is a struggle to perform and metrics don’t look good, and they are suffering, obviously that would increase my time spent.

Tom turned his regularly scheduled one-on-one meeting with his direct reports into performance improvement coaching time but explained that it might require additional sessions. Tom said,

If a performance issue is identified either by me or them, we shift from the normal type of coaching and we will say, “Okay, let’s focus on the issue at hand that we are looking to try to solve.” So it doesn’t change much other than we may meet more frequently during that period of time when we are trying to solve for something specific. ... But when it’s

necessary to do something that, say, performance improvement is needed, then that is where we'll spend our time.

Frequent Check-Ins

Four out of eight participants talked about “quick hits” or “check-ins” as being part of their coaching for performance improvement. These check-ins were very brief encounters, a few moments or a few minutes, with their direct reports in which they checked in to let their direct reports know that they were aware of what was happening with their performance. Some did check-ins by email, some checked in via a phone call, and some gave their direct reports brief “face time.”

Tom referred to frequently checking in with his direct reports as spontaneous coaching. He went on to describe it as,

being able to identify when someone needs to be coached. . . . You have to be able to—there are people who face day-to-day decisions, issues that come up and they need coaching. . . . And so you have to utilize those moments and they happen—they are always happening frequently. . . two to three times a day.

Gina explained that she conducted these check-ins a couple of times a day,

to touch point and make sure that you know, “Here is what you have your plate today. What are your plans to get through it?” and then a check in at the end of the day. So a couple times a day and that probably adds up to 4 hours a week.

Rene shared that she found daily check-ins important for successful performance improvement. “That is a daily thing. I’m going to come by and say, “[Redacted], I pulled the report; you are doing really great with the revenue and the whatever,” and they know what I’m talking about.” Rene also explained she does daily “real quick” check-ins face-to-face as a way to motivate her direct reports:

I pull the numbers, take a screen shot, and say, “Fabulous, you are doing so great.” And I always try to do the positive, not like, “Oh, I pulled your numbers and awww.” No, I always turn around and say, “I pulled your numbers and we are getting close, but one more order today. Come on, get back in that queue,” you know? And I just become their cheerleader. Rah, Rah, go—come on! Probably five to 10 minutes daily. It’s facetime

more than anything. It's the facetime that I give them, and that also makes a team full of good morale. Cause they know their boss cares.

Ariana performed check-ins also; however, she explained that her direct reports were not located in her office, nor were they in the same locations:

So if I have somebody who is not performing well, and the time I'm putting towards trying to coaching them to improve—it's daily and would be part of my schedule to check in.

So it is either email, phone call, or visits. So the most recent experience that I will take: I had a gentleman that I was working with downtown, and I work in Centennial [Colorado], so that time was travel to him, him traveling to me, and multiple phone calls. It could be based off of circumstances of what he was dealing with and trying to coach him how to handle those things. So I would say it was daily and I would say the time would depend on the event and it would be based off of how he was either improving or not improving, as to how much more time I had to put into it. So my time with him was daily. At minimum, I would even say an hour a day through the worse part of it.

When Susan was asked about how much time she spent checking in on her direct reports that she was coaching for performance improvement, she responded that it varied:

Let's say they are at the lowest end, where you are really trying to bring them up. You just end up checking in with them a lot more and with trying to balance your time with everything else. So, I would say, I would do at least weekly meetings with some item for them. And then I would say probably, whether that is email, whether if that's someone in person walking by and just it's always easier when you are face to face. And I mean hours in a week. If you are lucky.

Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs)

Though all of the managers were familiar with a formal performance improvement plans, and mentioned them during their interviews, only two of the eight managers stated they had used PIPs as a "last resort." A formal PIP usually involves human resources and requires documentation of all the steps the manager took regarding their coaching process and other types of assistance provided the direct reports. Melissa had two direct reports on PIPs in one company. One left while on a PIP for military duty and the PIP would resume upon return. Melissa described the process of the PIP:

The first steps involve a coaching memo, easing into a verbal warning, and then a PIP. It means taking several more steps before you get to a formal PIP. Time spent was probably from the time that we started a formal PIP until the individual left, was I want to say four months, three to four months.

Rene said that her department used a PIP “for anyone who falls below in the red on two metrics in two months running.” She explained:

The PIP’s are strictly metric driven. It’s strictly about the metrics. You are not making your metrics, so this is why you are on a performance improvement plan; it’s because you are not making your metrics for whatever reason.

And I tell my people, “You are very lucky you got your performance plan, because now we are going to get really, really good.”

Rene went on to explain why PIP’s are so useful in coaching her direct reports: “It motivates them so quickly that holding them accountable actually is the right thing to do, and it’s done as a department.” Rene explained that she found the department’s PIPs to be very helpful in her coaching as the PIP she used was totally metrics driven:

PIPs—it’s a 3-month PIP, and if they don’t make it, they don’t make it. I’ve never had anyone fail on it. It’s because I’m really watching the bus. I see that bus coming and I start letting them know immediately: “Listen, do you know if you did two more orders that day, we would have got it?” So I micromanage from behind with the numbers for those low performers. Probably 5-10 minutes a day.

As a follow-up question, the researcher asked each manager what overall percentage of success they would say they had with their direct reports. Five of the managers said they were 80% successful, one rated their success at 75%, and two at 90%. One of the two at 90% said she was 90–100% successful.

Coaching Competencies Used in Performance Coaching

By way of a card sort using the same group of coaching competencies from the literature review, the managers illustrated the process they used in their actual coaching engagements with their direct reports. This researcher put each competency on three by five blank index cards—this resulted in 10 cards each with a competency. The definition of each competency was put on

the back of each competency card. The competency cards were placed in alphabetical order from left to right in three rows of three cards. This left the single competency card of supportive environment in its own row because there was not room for another full row. The participants were instructed to arrange the cards in any order or design that reflected the process they used in coaching their direct reports.

Several managers identified what they called foundational, overarching, or supporting competencies: communicating (five), supportive environment (three) and listening (three). These competencies were listed as most important to the managers or necessary for their coaching to be successful. These competencies, as all 10 of the competencies, were the competencies selected from the literature review. Each of the participants' facsimiles of their card sorts can be found in Appendix F.

Communication as the Most Important Competency

Five participants placed communication as the “stand out” competency in their coaching process: Darren (foundational), Melissa (most important in her diagnosis phase), Susan (supporting others), Gina (overarching), and Rene (underpinning all others).

Darren's two competencies that were important to him in his coaching included communication and listening. Though Darren did not specifically pull those two competencies out in his card sort, when asked if any competencies were more important to him or gave him more leverage, he summed it up by saying,

So on the foundational piece, I would say communication. No question about that. And then as part of the actual, like I mentioned, this [listening card] is something learned very early on the importance of listening. So that jumps out to me. As part of the what you are coaching performance improvement—has a lot to do with listening.

When Melissa was asked by this researcher the same question of whether any competencies stood out to her, she included the four competencies in her diagnosis analogy:

analysis of concerns, providing feedback, listening, and communication. Melissa explained, “While I think these are cultural and probably the most important, they’re the hardest for the company to validate from an employee’s defense perspective.”

Susan talked about communicating as “the underpinning of everything else you do.” Rene also placed communicating as foundational to the other competencies. Gina placed “communication” as her overarching competency that surrounded all of the other competencies. Finally, though Paul did not place communication as a supportive or underpinning competency, he did say, “To me, we will never get to some of these . . . if we haven’t created an environment that we can effectively communicate.”

Supportive Environment

Paul, Susan, Rene, Melissa, and Tom included “supportive environment” as a top competency or a foundational/underpinning or overarching competency.

When Paul sorted his competency cards, the top four were supportive environment, listening, creating a learning environment, and communicating. Paul looked at all the competency cards and said, “We will never get to some of these [point to the lower competencies in his process]. If we don’t have a supportive environment or we’re not listening to each other.” Though Tom did not list supportive environment first in his card sort, he spoke of it as being first:

I think that the first one is supportive environment and creating a learning environment—they are the same I think. . . . I want them to know that this is a very creating, learning, supportive environment that they are safe in. That is number one. So I think creating a safe environment is good.

Susan and Rene both cited supportive environment as one of their supporting competencies for all of the other competencies. Finally, Melissa referred to four competencies as her “wrapper” or

“cultural” competencies; meaning, they encased all other competencies. Supportive environment was one of those competencies.

Listening

The last competency mentioned by three of the managers was listening. Though not a supporting or overarching competency, Gina, Rene, and Darren mentioned its importance in their coaching process. Gina identified and explained her first priority—listening:

So, I chose listening first, because in my opinion that is the number one thing that you have to do with your direct reports, is listen to them, whether they are talking about something with work, whether they’re talking about themselves, their personal life, whether they are talking about relationship problems, whatever it might be, that is the form of just kind of human communication that I think is just very important.

Though Rene did not designate listening as an underpinning competency, she spoke of how important listening was in her process: “And then of course I just listen to them. Listening is the meat of everything when you are coaching. And listening, listening, listening. Tell me more, tell me more.”

Finally, though not a foundational or overarching competency, Darren placed listening in the middle of his process: “Something I learned early on was the importance of listening. As part of the what you are coaching . . . it has a lot to do with listening.”

Of note was that participants mentioned phrases throughout the interviews that they considered important. These phrases were in context of communicating and the environment they were creating; however, these phrases were not competencies chosen for this study. However, this researcher noted that these phrases could be construed as belonging with or being part of other competencies. These included *honesty* which goes with communicating, *creating a safe place* which goes toward a supportive environment, *questioning the direct reports* which was mentioned as a competency in the literature, and *removing barriers* for their direct reports which was referred to in human performance technology.

Coaching Competencies Used in Performance Coaching Summary

Each manager's card sort was unique to them. During the card sorting exercise, some managers quickly arranged the cards, others took their time seemingly studying the cards carefully, and some changed their card sort as they went through the exercise. A few of the managers turned the cards over to review the definition of each competency (from the literature review) which was written on the back of each card. The managers discussed that, though given training in various aspects of coaching, management, and leadership, none of their organizations had adopted a particular coaching model for performance improvement. Finally, when asked how often the managers used these competencies in some way, most replied, "daily." Ancillary findings from the card sorts are discussed in chapter five.

Performance Coaching as Part of the Participants Overall Management Style

As part of the demographic information gathered, this researcher asked participants, "Have you had any type of coach/leadership training?" The question was meant to gather any type of coaching instruction, whether it was from an actual coaching class or as part of a leadership training or program. As a follow-up, the participants were asked to "describe what type of training, etc. you had in terms of what was covered, how long, and the type of training." The type of coach/leadership training included seminars, classes, conferences, and workshops. Six out of eight participants answered "all of the above." Their training consisted of various types of leadership classes that had coaching as a component along with other management related components. Only two participants had actual coach training, which was presented by third party vendors.

All participants shared that through their organizations, they had been exposed to a myriad of trainings, and many were volunteer opportunities rather than required trainings. Some

of those included Situational Leadership, Stepping Stones, Women's Vision Leadership Institute, Foundations of Organizational Leadership, CLIMB Leadership (proprietary to organization), ADKAR model (a change model consisting of awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement), sales training, leadership training, Emerging Leaders (proprietary to organization), and internal presentation of the GROW model. What became evident from most of the participants was that the organization gave them what they thought they needed. During the card sort question, all the participants said that their various experiences in their coaching/leadership/management trainings allowed them to create a coaching model that worked for them as a manager.

This researcher noted that when all of the participants were asked the question of how performance improvement coaching fit into their management styles, sales-oriented managers were very clear on how it fit in their overall management style, regardless of whether they were coaching other people, managers, or individual contributors. The operations managers appeared less sure of how coaching for performance fit into their management styles. Also noted by this researcher was the more experienced managers appeared more confident and quicker to answer how performance coaching fit into their management style.

Sales Team

Tom and Paul both considered coaching as the majority of their management styles. They both worked for the same sales driven organization and between the two of them, they had many years of experience with coaching, leadership, and management. Though similar in their thoughts on coaching direct reports for performance improvement; they expressed them differently.

Tom was very articulate about how he viewed coaching for performance improvement; however, he explained how it fit into his management style even before the question was asked. When asked how often he coached his direct reports, he responded with “two to three times a day,” and then he continued in with a description of his management style:

You know, we are in a very time-based business, and so you know, opportunities are pretty abundant [for coaching]. But I think they [those coaching opportunities that present themselves daily] are the most effective coaching pieces because those situations actually require coaching. . . . Picture a box and draw two lines in it. At the very top of that box is coaching, and the middle of that box is leadership, and the bottom of that box is management. So it's really a simple formula, so you are either in one of those three boxes categories on a daily basis. And of course, optimally, you want to be in the coaching category as much as possible. You have to be able to know when you are there and when you are coaching. You have to know when the leadership is required and you have to know when management is required. You can't confuse those areas. Paul shared similar insights as Tom about management and coaching:

To me, there is a difference between management and coaching. Sometimes when I'm a manager, I'm saying this is what I want you to do and this is how I want you to do it, and this is when I need it done by. With coaching, I would much prefer that they come up with a solution or multiple solutions or at least ones to try, and then we can simply talk about those. So whenever I'm coaching and this is whether its performance improvement coaching or its development coaching, I'm mostly asking questions. Ninety percent of what I do is ask questions.

When I think of management, there are some jobs where that's what you have to do. Okay? If I worked in a—, if I was managing a fast food restaurant, for example. . . . But the majority seems like you would be spending 90% of your time managing; whereas, I spend 90% of my time coaching and 10% of my time managing.

Gina, like Tom and Paul, worked in a sales-driven organization. She, like Tom and Paul, was quite assured as to what place performance coaching had in her management style:

It's a top priority because, you know, if your team is not performing, then you're not doing your job. In my role, if you're not doing your job, you know, the whole business is based on the metrics, and so if the metrics aren't where they need to be, coaching and making sure those metrics are improving are best a core responsibility that I have, so it's a top priority.

Rene described incorporating performance coaching into her management style meant coaching by motivating her team:

So, I think I coach by motivation, by positivity. There is not Debbie-downers on my team . . . because we are a team, and we have to lift each other up. So, I think, I like to say, I lead with love. Because I love my team even those back rowers [poorest performers]. I love them and I want them to be successful. But I get where they are at, and I have to figure out some way to make them to get over the top—get that new house.

Operations Team

Melissa, Susan, Darren, and Ariana all worked in operational departments as opposed to the sales-driven organizations that Paul, Tom, Gina, and Rene worked in.

Ariana, a tenured professional in operations said coaching was part of her management style in different ways:

Coaching in general is a big piece of my management style. That's an area that I've—, my experience is what I use for my coaching, if that makes sense. And specifically, for improvement, so if you take somebody that is not performing well and you are spending your time with them, it's getting into the— really getting into the detail of that. Where are they not doing well, what are the steps that they're taking that is causing them not to perform well? Is it time management, is it follow-up, is it how they are leaders to other people, how it is that they're not managing their people, is it not meeting goals? So it divides into a lot of different areas. So you may not deal with each one of those areas every day, but you take any of those topics can come up throughout, if that makes sense?

When asked if coaching was integral, Ariana responded as others had:

Integral. My success is only based off of their [her team] success . . . and our team success. You know when you have eight you need them to work together with each other. If they are not pulling their weight, it affects the performance of others.

Melissa, early in her management career, also saw a difference in what constituted her management style, but she described coaching as more leadership than management. She drew a distinction between coaching performance for direct reports that have direct reports (i.e., other managers) than for individual contributors. From other comments she made during the interview, this researcher gathered that Melissa felt more inclined to do developmental coaching. This researcher told her that it appeared from her previous answers that coaching was integrated in her management style, to which she responded:

Yes, it is. I almost don't look at it as management, but leadership. I guess I sway more towards the leadership side of things. I think management is very tactical, and it's certainly necessary, but especially for the folks at the levels that I'm dealing with, they are people leaders. So, it's a different set of expectations than if we were talking about an hourly employee. . . . So, it [coaching for performance] is part of the DNA of my leadership and management style.

Susan, also in operations, did not articulate what part performance coaching played in her management style like other participants. She explained:

But coaching is, I feel it's more like a partnership, I think it's giving them [direct reports] a few things to work on at a time and then ideally saying, "Alright, it's very different to me. Think, where you are; like how did that go for you?" I think it's [coaching] more of a two-way conversation.

In an attempt to elicit a more definitive answer, Susan was asked what percentage she thought performance coaching played in her management style. She responded:

I'll take this team [her current team] away because it is so new. But again, 70% [success rate], I would say. On one hand we all sort of run operations teams, so you have to get things done. But it's hard. I've been at (*redacted company*) now for two years and they are big on the development piece, which is separate obviously than we are looking at from performance improvement. With performance, you can look at coaching and feedback. You know, those are sort of a tandem thing going on.

Darren, like Susan, had difficulty in answering how coaching his direct reports for performance improvement fit into his management style. Darren explained:

Hmmmm. To me, it means identifying the goals and objectives that the individuals want to accomplish for the year. And then staying in touch with those objectives. And in my mind, coaching comes into play when there is something that is maybe not exactly on track, and so now, as opposed to just touching base on progress on how things are going, if we are having more of a coaching component to the one-on-one, then it's more like, "Hey, this is a little off track or this needs some improvement. Let's talk about what the issues are that may be preventing you from accomplishing whatever the deliverable is."

Darren was the least experienced of all of the participants in the study. When Darren was asked if he felt coaching was only part of his management style, he answered with one word:

"Exactly." For Darren, coaching was not the majority of his management style; he brought it up when he needed it.

Summary of Findings

This study explored the lived experiences of eight managers coaching their direct reports for performance improvement. The eight managers were from different industries and had different levels of experience in coaching direct reports for performance improvement. The three superordinate themes that emerged from their rich descriptions were coaching categories within use of successful performance improvement coaching, use of coaching competencies in performance coaching, and use of performance coaching and management style.

Through the managers' interview responses, it was evident that none of them relied on one particular type or category of coaching for performance improvement; rather, it was a progression using the various types of performance coaching based on the direct report's progression. All of the managers in the study held formal one-on-ones. Some of the managers used their monthly or weekly one-on-one as a way to get to better know their direct reports and understand their motivations; whereas, others used the one-on-one as an overall discussion on how the direct reports are doing in their overall job. Following the one-on-ones, the next category of performance coaching the managers described was coaching a direct report on a specific performance issue, such as not meeting expected metrics, time management, or team member issues. This was generally a weekly or monthly coaching engagement to create and review specific actions to be taken by the direct report to improve their performance issue. Following up on the specific performance coaching for a specific problem, the managers used another type of performance coaching: frequent check-ins to encourage the direct report or update the direct report on the progress of their performance. This category could include sending brief emails, voicemails, or taking a few minutes only to talk quickly with the direct report. The final category the managers spoke, only to be used as a last resort, was the formal

performance improvement plan in which the direct reports were generally given a formal written warning and a plan that they needed to follow to improve their performance.

The second superordinate theme was the use of coaching competencies in performance coaching. This process was an exercise for participants to demonstrate their personal performance coaching process by using the competency cards. They were directed that there was no wrong or right way to organize the cards; they could arrange them as they liked. A surprising result was that five of the participants indicated that there were competencies identified as the most important competency that were either overarching the others or underpinning or supporting the others. Those three competencies were communicating, supportive environment, and listening. Other findings from the initial card sort were that all the card sorts were unique to each participant. Several stated that they used one or more competencies daily, and some viewed the competencies in groups.

Finally, the eight managers described in depth how coaching fit into their overall management style. All of the managers stated that coaching their direct reports was a major component of their management style; however, differences surfaced between managers in a sales environment and managers in operations. Sales-driven metrics were a definite influence on four managers, and they gave clear descriptions of being metrics driven. The four operation managers, while acknowledging the importance of coaching as part of their management style, did not seem to indicate their management style was influenced as much by the drive to meet certain results.

Chapter five includes more detail on the findings that emerged from this study and provides this researcher's interpretation on the data. Additional reflections of this researcher are

given along with suggestions for follow-up research and ideas for future research based on observations made during data analysis of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Chapter five is arranged by superordinate themes, as in chapter four. These discussions include how the findings connect to both the literature and the theories presented in earlier chapters of this paper. Also, as is appropriate for interpretive phenomenological analysis, I included personal reflections on these findings. These reflections are based on the my experience in the field of coaching for performance improvement in organizations. The broader implications of the findings are included. Furthermore, chapter five includes a discussion on why the findings are especially useful and impactful to/on learning and development (managerial coach training), human resource development and performance improvement practitioners. Lastly, suggestions for future research on managers coaching their direct reports for performance improvement are included.

Discussion of Theoretical Findings

As stated in Chapter one, a system is elements interacting with each other. Open systems refers to the exchange of various elements with an external environment. In this study, various systems interacted and responded to their various ecosystems within organizations. Organizational systems theory was supported by the system to adapt and meet the need of the organization to survive. This was demonstrated by the sales-oriented managers operating within a metrics environment; whereas, operations managers were not as constrained due to lack of a metrics environment. Managerial coaching theory supported both study groups of sales and operations managers because they both sought to improve their direct reports performance regardless of having metrics or not having metrics. The competencies, as a subset of managerial coaching theory, demonstrated how the participants each used those competencies in coaching

their direct reports for performance improvement. All but one of the participants further organized the competencies in groupings reflecting their particular coaching process. Three competencies emerged as the most important/overarching/supporting of the 10 competencies; supportive environment, communicating, and listening were the competencies identified as crucial to the managers' success as coaches.

Discussion of Findings

This study was based on a compilation of much of the literature on managerial coaching and human performance technology (HPT). The competencies (skills and behaviors) selected for this study were extracted from the managerial coaching literature from 1950 through 2018 (Appendix B). Participants were each presented with a group of 10 competency cards laid out in alphabetical order with instructions for them to arrange the cards to reflect their performance coaching process. This study found that the practice of managers coaching direct reports for performance improvement was actively occurring in organizations. The study also revealed that the participants were well versed in a coaching process and using the extracted literature competencies to engage in performance coaching interactions with their direct reports. As shown in chapter one, A. Gilley et al.'s (2010) study revealed that only 6% of 485 MBA and PhD students with a practitioner background in organizational development programs always coached. In 2016, ASTD surveyed their membership (coaches and trainers) to reveal that only 48% performed "on the job" coaching with their employees. However, the role of managers coaching their direct reports for performance improvement was clearly demonstrated by this study's participants. Unlike other previous studies, the findings of this study were unexpected as the participants' responses revealed that they were "always" coaching for performance improvement.

This study's findings provide noteworthy additions to the literature and speak directly to the problem cited in chapter one: the paucity of literature to support that managerial coaching is occurring in organizations today. In the last 20 years, no qualitative studies have been conducted on performance coaching and coaching competencies; therefore, this qualitative study is a snapshot of current performance coaching in organizations today. I utilized qualitative methods to delve into the participants' thoughts and processes. The three following superordinates further reveal their lived experiences of coaching direct reports for performance improvement.

Superordinate Theme One: Coaching Categories for Successful Performance Coaching

Hamlin et al. (2008) defined managerial coaching as “the explicit and implicit of intention of helping individuals improve their performance in various domains, and to enhance their personal effectiveness, personal development and personal growth” (p. 281). The participants of this study revealed that they utilized different categories of performance coaching to improve their direct reports' performance: regular update one-on-ones, specific performance improvement coaching, frequent check-ins, and performance improvement plans (PIPs). Though the participants organized their coaching engagements in a progressive manner, beginning with the regular scheduled one-on-one, they realized that the informal coaching allowed them to be flexible and timely based on the need of the direct report.

As posited by Grant's “quality conversations framework” (2017, p. 10), performance coaching is not limited to a formal sit-down session (as in one-on-one' or specific performance coaching sessions) but can be used in various ways, thus, moving back and forth on a continuum from formal coaching sessions to informal coaching conversations. Grant illustrated a fluidity between formal coaching conversations and informal coaching conversations and included corridor coaching and collaborative conversations as part of the continuum. This fluidity allows

the manager to move between these types of coaching based on the needs of the direct report. Dixey and Hill's (2015) qualitative study revealed that most managers prefer "an informal, conversational style of managerial coaching" (p. 80). Participants in this study confirmed that they use coaching conversations as part of their performance coaching.

Additionally, Grant's framework reflects many human performance technology models, including the latest model by Conway Dessinger et al. (2012) where flexibility is built in based on intervention and evaluation. Several participants found various opportunities to informally interact with their direct reports—often on a daily basis. Some interactions were in the form of an email or a sticky note on the direct report's desk, and some were quick, direct face-to-face conversations regarding performance. For those with direct reports in a different location, the managers often did "check-ins" via telephone.

Superordinate Theme Two: Coaching Competencies Used in Performance Coaching

In this study, participants were each presented with a group of 10 competency cards; they were instructed to arrange the cards to reflect their performance coaching process. Three competencies emerged from the participant card sorts that stood apart from the other competencies presented to the participants: supportive environment, communication, listening (see Appendix F). Participants often referred to these three competencies as foundational, overarching, or most important. Some participants showed the competencies in their card sort process as separate from the other competencies; others just spoke about the importance of the competencies to them as managers and coaches. Supportive environment was identified as the most important; this mirrored the literature on managerial coaching that showed supportive environment was the most frequently mentioned competency cited by 16 out of 22 authors in my literature search for competencies (see Appendix B). Five out of eight participants selected

supportive environment as the basis for a successful performance coaching engagement. The interviews revealed that a supportive environment began with the managers really getting to know the direct report. The participants indicated that time spent with the direct reports early on in the relationship paid dividends to the manager supporting the direct report during performance coaching. Participants explained that it was not just a “one and done” interaction; rather, it was ongoing.

Communicating and listening were two additional competencies that emerged as being foundational, overarching, or most important for the participants. Three out of eight participants identified both communicating and listening as important. In the literature on managerial coaching competencies, communicating was fourth in frequency and listening was ninth in frequency (see Appendix B). Listening is part of the process of communicating; however, listening is often overlooked as key to a productive two-way conversation. The implication of listening is the importance of managers to allow their employees to be heard. One participant, Tom, said, “I think most coaches will tell you—I believe that the more you are listening the better coaching you are doing.” Tom went further to say that by letting the direct report talk, “they actually solve their own problem as they go through those structured pieces and they define what they want to accomplish that month, or with that region.”.

When laying out the competency cards representing their coaching process, none of the eight participants used the competencies in the same card order. Each process was unique to each manager. For example, three of the managers led with the competency of leader expectations /performance expectations. Three managers had leader expectations/performance expectations as the third most important competency, and two managers had it toward the end of their process. This difference could relate to how they were defining “leader

expectations/performance expectations.” Some may have viewed it as a review of previously stated job expectations, and some may have viewed it as the manager expectation of the direct reports as they pursued improvement. Regardless of what they extracted from their various trainings, each manager created their own process based on what worked best for them.

Five out of eight of the participants grouped their competencies: Paul, Susan, Ariana, Melissa, and Darren (see Appendix F). Grouping indicated that certain competencies went together or were in the same realm. By grouping the competencies together, the participants mirrored grouping of competencies found in the literature: Ellinger et al. (2011), Popper and Lipshitz (1992), and Orth et al. (1987). Just as none of the managers’ processes were ordered the same, none of their groupings were the ordered the same. Melissa named her groups of competencies: “diagnosis group,” “solutions group,” and “backbone or cultural group.” She moved from the diagnosis group to the solutions group and wrapped them both up in the cultural group: how her organization supports performance improvement coaching. Melissa’s methodology was hers alone and it appeared from her interview that this worked successfully for her coaching her direct reports. She rated herself at 90-100% successful in coaching her direct reports.

Finally, the card sorting exercise revealed that the participants were clearly familiar with the competencies presented to them. Though the participants were told that the definition of each competency was on the back of the competency card, only two referred to the definitions before placing the card. The inference here is that managers today are familiar with the competencies used in today’s overall management approach. They understood what “supportive environment,” “feedback,” and “analysis of concerns/evaluation” to name a few, meant in terms of their overall management style.

Superordinate Theme Three: Performance Coaching and Management Style: Sales Verses Operations

The managers of this study were found to approach performance coaching differently based on their management style; however, this study's participants clearly demonstrated that performance coaching was evidently in the realm of responsibility of the manager. Evered and Selman (1989), pioneering researchers in the art of management, stated that management should be about "enabling the people in a group or team to generate results and be empowered by the results they generate" (p.18).

Four of the participants were from the sales area of two separate organizations, and the other four were from operation areas of two separate organizations. This unplanned demarcation of sales and operations emerged from their responses of how performance coaching fit into their management styles. All of the managers felt that coaching their direct reports was an integral part of their management style. From the earlier literature review, DeBower and Jones in 1914 first notated the concept of expanding the meaning of coaching into the realm of management. They referred to the training and coaching of salesmen. DeBower and Jones included a clearly defined process for coaching a new salesperson in the field; likewise, the sales managers in this study had their own clearly defined process of coaching their direct reports. Sales' managers stated that they used a comprehensive, detailed and metrics driven process in coaching their direct reports. All four of the managers in the sales arena of this study had given their direct reports training and follow-up coaching. Over 105 years later, DeBower and Jones' influence is still felt today in sales-oriented organizations today.

The operations managers were less clear on their direct reports' goals or their end game, and they seemed more interested in developmental coaching or getting their direct reports to the

next level. Metrics or goals were rarely mentioned by the operations managers; however, two managers spoke of annual reviews and goals that were set for the entire year. The operations managers just seemed to know when one of their direct reports were struggling and yet one operations manager said that her coaching was taking up 40% of her time on a weekly basis, but she did not indicate what exactly the performance issue was. Another operations manager mentioned that with manage operations teams, they have to “get things done,” but she never mentioned what those things were or how they were measured. This replicated the other managers in operations’ responses which never mentioned specific goals for their direct reports, nor if and how they were measured.

Implications for Practice From all Three Superordinates

According to Longenecker (2010), "for a manager to produce sustainable long-term results, they must demonstrate real skill at coaching the people who report to them" (p. 32). The following three sections will discuss how the implications can move organizations toward the sustainability they need in today’s face paced business environment.

Superordinate Theme One Implications

I believe there are two specific implications from superordinate one of this study that should be considered in future managerial coach trainings. First, progressive coaching is a process that can be adapted, taught, and implemented in organizations today. None of the participants in this study had been given any type of model or process of performance coaching; they all took from the various trainings what applied to coaching and created their own model or process. Any organization with a specific managerial coach training could provide managers with the tools needed to successfully coach their direct reports. Secondly, the participants revealed that “collaborative coaching conversations” are happening today and coaching for

performance improvement is moving toward these more “on the go” conversations as opposed to formal sit downs meetings. One participant in this study referred to these as “spontaneous opportunities”. By making the addition of more daily informal conversations into the manager’s daily agenda, managers will see how the improvement effort is progressing with their direct reports, and can make adjustment accordingly.

By giving managers these coaching tools (models and processes) in their toolkit, the manager’s time will be more manageable, and yet still achieve maximum performance improvement with their direct reports. If managerial coaching for performance improvement was practiced by the entire organization, productivity may increase which would contribute to the overall organizations’ sustainability.

Superordinate Theme Two Implications

As learning and development academics and practitioners, we know that every person learns differently; therefore, a supportive environment is critical. This same concept of different learning styles is applicable to coaching styles. Each manager/coach had their own style and used the competencies in a manner that worked for them and garnered the results they desired from their direct reports’ performance improvement. As Fournies (2000) said, “When your people are successful, you will be recognized as a successful manager” (p.8). The implication for practice from superordinate two is managers should regularly hold one-on-ones with direct reports; each manager will know how often these meetings need to take place. The consistency of these one-on-ones plays an important part in creating that supportive environment. These results also reveal that to cultivate a supportive environment, the manager must understand the support that each direct report needs. By understanding those needs, managers can then provide the support appropriate for each direct report.

Superordinate Theme Three Implications

Implications from superordinate three suggest that it would be advantageous for more organizations to have some type of metrics to quantify results to make the reviews or feedback sessions based on previously established goals. I have witnessed many managers struggle to write their direct reports' year end reviews or appraisals due to lack of concrete goals or any type of metrics. Managers wait until the last minute because they have no concrete way to measure an individual's performance. A further implication is that HRD could play a key part in holding managers accountable for writing up goals and creating certain metrics pertaining to specific jobs. Perhaps even the managers' year end evaluations or appraisals could be based on how well they establish these goals and metrics for their direct reports.

The last findings from this study are to review the research questions to determine if and how they were answered. Research question one addressed how managers perceive their lived experiences of coaching their direct reports for performance improvement. All of the participants coached their direct reports for performance improvement, though the extent of the coaching varied by whether the manager was metrics driven or not. The metrics driven managers appeared to have a more rigorous coaching style with their direct reports, while the operations managers were not as rigorous.

Research questions two addressed what competencies (skills and behaviors) are being used in coaching engagements with managers' direct reports. All the participants used all the competencies they were shown. All the participants used all the competencies; though each manager used them in a manner that worked best for them. All but one manager noted that they grouped their competencies, and all managers cited competencies that were the most important to them in the coaching: supportive environment, communicating, and listening.

The managers did not appear to “over report” on their use of performance coaching or use of the individual competencies. It was apparent through the managers’ detailed familiarity with the competencies that they used coaching in various categories. Participants provided examples of when they would use each category and when they sometimes found it necessary to move back and forth between categories.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are several possible follow-up studies that would be valuable for managerial coaching focusing on performance improvement of the direct reports. From this study, both Paul and Tom made it clear that coaching was truly part of their organizations culture; therefore, one such study might look at the appetite and culture for coaching in an organization from the top (i.e., C-suite executives or HRD department) through the manager to the direct reports. From these three separate groups, executives or HRD, managers, and direct reports, is there a known coaching culture that is practiced throughout the organization at all levels?

Based on this study’s findings, two participants stated they wanted to find other positions for their poor performers and another participant talked of “managing them (poor performers) out.” These two attitudes of “coaching up or coaching out” could be explored in various organizations and how this phenomenon relates to that organization’s overall culture. Most organizations today have a published mission, visions, and values statement. For those organizations that ascribe to values such as continuous quality improvement, an environment of respect and trust, open communication, ethical conduct, full accountability, and diversity and inclusiveness, how do those statements support the process of coaching the person to success or coaching them out of the organization? HRD has commonly been involved immediately when a manager encounters a performance issues; however, as stated previously, participants did not

appear to have guidance on how a less than standard performance should be handled from HRD until reaching the PIP state. Now HRD departments are encouraging managers to handle performance issues themselves and not be involved until it becomes necessary to use the PIP process. This study's participants were all familiar with the process, but only two participants had used PIPs in their coaching practice. The implication here is that an organization's culture and HRD department should have major influence on how a manager coaches their direct reports, even if modeling Welch's approach (2005) of terminating the bottom 10% of performers; however, today, Welch's approach is not as replicated as it once was.

When this dissertation journey began, I was intent on using the repertory grid as the methodology. Though I abandoned repertory grid in favor of doing an IPA methodology, those constructs identified from the literature for the repertory grid process were used in working with the software, and consequently, became the competencies I used in this study. I would still recommend that another researcher seriously consider looking the repertory grid. This researcher felt the methodology would have been an appropriate choice as a mixed methods approach for this study, but it needs more exposure in academia to be encouraged as a methodological choice. Personal construct theory, the theory behind repertory grid, has great potential for the future of research in many areas of the social sciences.

Concluding Statement

I sought to clearly and specifically show how managers perceived the phenomena of coaching their direct reports for performance improvement through interviewing them in their lived experiences. All eight managers interviewed in this study stated that coaching their direct reports for performance improvement was part of the overall management style. Of the ten competencies presented to the managers, they unanimously stated that they used them all, and all

eight managers stated they used them daily in their management practice. However, some participants viewed these competencies of coaching as being more imbedded in their management style than others. The findings showed that the only plausible difference appeared to be whether the manager participants were in a metrics-driven sales environment or an operations environment.

Lastly, I was impressed by the study's participants use of coaching in performance management and how well versed these managers were with the competencies and how to use them. Most of all, these participants left me with a sense of how much they cared about their direct reports' success in the organization. It was a great privilege to have them share their personal thoughts and processes surrounding how they perceived coaching their direct reports for performance improvement.

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APPENDIX A: COACHING COMPETENCIES

Table A.1

*Competencies Culled From the Competencies, Skills, & Behaviors Table
(Scholars/Practitioners)*

Authors (year)	Competency	Frequency of references
Ellinger, Ellinger, Bachrach, Wang, and Elmadağ Baş (2011) Grant et al. (2010) Zhang (2008) Noer and Leupold (2017) Grant and Cavanagh (2007) Longenecker and Neubert (2005) Ellinger et al. (2003) Hunt and Weintraub (2002) Stowell (1988) Phillips (1996) Graham et al. (1994) Schelling, (1991) Evered and Selman (1989) Orth, Wilkinson, and Benfari (1987) Mace (1950) Chong, Yuen, Tan, Zarim, and Hamid (2016)	Supportive environment	16

Beattie et al. (2014)	Providing feedback	16
David & Matu (2013)		
Hagen (2012)		
Ellinger et al. (2011)		
Grant et al. (2010)		
Heslin (2006)		
Ellinger et al. (2003)		
Hunt and Weintraub (2002)		
Ellinger and Bostrom (1999)		
Stowell (1988)		
Phillips (1996)		
Graham et al. (1994)		
Popper and Lipshitz (1992)		
Schelling (1991)		
Orth et al. (1987)		
Allenbaugh (1983)		
J. W. Gilley and Gilley (2007)		
Hagen (2012)	Analysis of concerns/evaluating	14
Ellinger et al. (2011)		
Grant et al. (2010)		
Noer and Leupold (2017)		
Heslin (2006)		
Longenecker and Neubert (2005)		
Ellinger et al. (2003)		
Phillips (1996)		
Graham et al. (1994)		
Schelling (1991)		
Orth et al. (1987)		
Allenbaugh (1983)		

Fournie (2000)
J. W. Gilley and Gilley (2007)

Beattie et al. (2014)	Communicating	9
Hagen (2012)		
Gregory & Levy (2010)		
A. Gilley et al. (2010)		
Grant et al. (2010)		
Park, Mclean, and Yang (2008)		
Ellinger et al. (2003)		
Phillips (1996)		
https://coachfederation.or/core-competencies		

David and Matu (2013)	Leader Expectations/Performance	9
Ellinger et al. (2011)	Expectations	
Noer and Leupold (2017)		
Grant and Cavanagh (2007)		
Heslin (2006)		
Ellinger et al. (2003)		
Stowell (1988)		
Graham et al. (1994)		
Schelling (1991)		

Stowell (1988)	Goal/Solutions Focused	6
Grant et al. (2010)		
Grant and Cavanagh (2007)		
Graham et al. (1994)		
Evered and Selman (1989)		
Fournies (2000)		

Beattie et al. (2014)	Creating learning environment	5
David and Matu (2013)		
Hagen, (2012)		
Grant et al. (2010)		
Ellinger and Bostrom (1999)		
Beattie et al. (2014)	Providing resources	4
Hagen (2012)		
Ellinger et al. (2011)		
Park et al. (2008)		
Ellinger et al. (2011)	Listening	4
Grant et al. (2010)		
Hunt and Weintraub (2002)		
Phillips (1996)		
Popper and Lipshitz (1992)	Informing and advising	4
Hagen (2012)		
Beattie (2002)		
Ellinger and Bostrom (1999)		

Table A.2

Additional Competencies Listed Less Frequently in the Literature

Exploration of employee actions – 1	Development – 2
Clarification of positive and negative consequences – 1	Recognize Performance – 2
Encourage different perspectives – 2	Team Approach – 1
Delegating – 2	Trust – 1
Interviewing – 2	Collaborating – 2
Being a role model – 2	Analyze results – 1
Challenging employees – 3	Supportive Staff – 1
Building a relationship – 1	Accept ambiguity – 1
Managing outcomes – 1	Managing process – 1
Supportive staff – 1	Develop plans – 1
Delegating – 2	Analyze results – 1
Look at things from others' perspectives – 1	Ask for feedback – 1
Use examples, scenarios, analogies – 1	

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL SHEET

Interview Protocol Study: How managers perceive coaching their direct reports for performance improvement: A phenomenological study.

Date and time of interview: _____

Location of interview: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Gender of Interviewee: Male____ Female____ Transgender____ Other____

Age: _____

Level of education: high school ☐ some college ☐ college degree ☐
 graduate school ☐

Position of Interviewee: _____

What industry are you in?_____

Over your career, how long have you managed direct reports? _____

No. of direct reports currently managing: _____

What other experience have you had as a manager?_____

Have you had any coach/leadership training? ☐ Seminars ☐ Classes ☐ Conferences
☐ Workshops ☐ Other: _____

Please describe what type of training etc. you had in terms of what was covered, how long, and type of training.

Brief description of the study: To explore your experiences with coaching your direct reports for performance improvement.

Questions:

1. What can you share with me about coaching your direct reports for performance improvement?
 - a. What does that look like in terms of time?
 - b. What does that look like in terms of frequency with individual direct reports?
 - c. What does that look like in terms of your over all management style?
2. Of these cards I'm presenting to you, what competencies (skills and behaviors) are you using coaching engagements with your direct reports? (I will lay out on the table in front of the participants 10 cards, each will have one of the 10 competencies on it.)
 - a. Of the competencies (skills and behaviors) presented to you, how would you arrange them when thinking of your coaching process? You can arrange in any manner you chose. (Researcher will photograph their arrangement of the

competencies and will photograph any changes made to their original arrangement.)

b. Why have you arranged them as you have?

The following are follow-up questions if needed

- i. Tell me about the arrangement you have made with the cards.
- ii. What, if any, is the significance of the arrangement you have chosen?
- iii. What can you describe or tell me about each one of these competencies?

3. How often do you use these competencies in your coaching engagements?

4. What results have you seen from your coaching engagements with your direct reports?

5. Overall, after talking about your coaching of your direct reports, what are your thoughts about coaching your direct reports for performance improvement?

Notes on interview: Observations of participants and their surroundings.

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE HUMAN CONSENT-TO-PARTICIPANTE FORM

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Colorado State University

TITLE OF STUDY: How do Managers Perceive Coaching their Direct Reports for Performance Improvement: A Phenomenological Study.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: Gene Gloeckner, Ph.D., Leann Kaiser, Ph.D.

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Karla Barry, Doctoral Student, School of Education, karladbarry@msn.com

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH? You have been asked to participate in this research study because you are a manager with direct reports who has been managing for 3-5 years.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY? The study will be conducted by the co-principal investigator, Karla Barry, a doctoral student working on a dissertation study. Dr. Gene Gloeckner and Dr. Leann Kaiser will be available for support in all phases of the study, including data collection and analysis.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY? The purpose of this study is to examine how managers coach their direct reports for performance improvement and to examine how managers use 10 competencies of coaching.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST? You will participate in a 60-90-minute interview in your workplace, or a setting of your choosing, and the interview will be digitally recorded. You will be invited to review the transcript of the interview for accuracy and clarity. You will also receive a copy of the study on its completion.

You will be contacted via e-mail messages or phone calls to arrange the logistics of the interview including time and place. Your total time commitment including review of the transcript will be no more than three hours.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO? You will be asked to answer several interview questions relating to your experience as a manager who coaches their direct reports. The interviews will be informal, and you are encouraged to speak openly and honestly about your experiences. Once a transcript of our interview has been prepared, you will be asked to review it to make sure it is an accurate and clear reflection of our conversations.

ARE THERE REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY? You only participate in this study if you are a current manager who coaches their direct reports in performance improvement.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS? There are no known risks or discomforts to participation in this study. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known or potential, but unknown, risks.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? There are no direct benefits to you associated with this research. There is a benefit of adding to the growing literature on managerial coaching in hope of better understanding of managers coaching for performance improvement and the competencies they use. In addition, the study may help practitioners in creating managerial coach training in organizations.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY? Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE? We will keep private all research record that identify you, to the extent allowed by law.

For this study, we will assign each participant a pseudonym and the only place your name will appear in our records is on the consent form and in our Excel file which links you to your pseudonym. The Excel file containing a link from your pseudonym to personally identifiable information will be held on a different computer than the computer storing data. Only the research team will have access to the link between you, your pseudonym, and your data. The only exception to this is if we are asked to share the research files for audit purposes with the CSU Institutional Review Board ethics committee, if necessary.

CAN MY TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY? You will be scheduled for an interview at a time that is convenient for you, however, we know issues may arise that you necessitate a change in schedule. Should this occur, the interview will be rescheduled once. If a participant is unable to participate in the rescheduled interview, they may be removed from the study.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS? Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the co-principal investigator Karla Barry at karladbarry@msn.com; 720-339-4369. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the CSU IRB at RICRO_IRB@mail.colostate.edu; 970-491-1553. We will give you a copy of the consent form to take with you.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW? We will record audio interviews using a digital recorder to accurately produce transcripts. The recordings will be shared with a professional transcriptionist that is not affiliated with any higher education institution. Once transcribed, the

audio recordings will be maintained in a password protected file on a computer with Webroot anti-virus and firewall protection. The digital recorded will be in a locked filed cabinet when not in use. All audio recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Do you agree to give the researchers permission to record (audio) your interview?

Yes, I agree for my interview to be recorded (audio)_____Please initial

No, I do not agree for my interview to be recorded (audio)_____Please initial

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. You signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the data signed, a copy of this document containing three (3) pages.

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

Date

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

Name of person providing information to participant

Date

Signature of Research Staff

APPENDIX D: EMAIL TO PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANTS FOR THE STUDY

Email Correspondence to Prospective Participants

Dear Participant,

My name is Karla Barry and I am a researcher from Colorado State University in the School of Education. We are conducting a research study examining how managers perceive coaching their direct reports for performance improvement. Coaching for managers is describe as the intention to help individuals improve their performance in various domains, and to enhance their personal effectiveness, personal development, and personal growth. The title of our projects is *How Managers Perceive Coaching Their Direct Reports for Performance Improvement: A Phenomenology Study*.

The Principal Investigators are Gene Gloeckner, Ph.D., and Leann Kaiser, Ph.D. and the Co-Principal Investigator is Karla Barry, School of Education.

We would like you to take part in an informal interview with the Co-Principal Investigator in person at your place of work. The interview will be recorded and transcribed. Participation will take approximately 60-90 minutes. Soon after the interview you will be asked to review a transcript for accuracy and clarity. Both the interview and the review should take a maximum of three hours of your time. Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time without penalty.

In order to be part of this study, you must meet the following criteria:

- Be a current manager with direct reports

- Have at least 3-5 years of managerial experience

We will publish the result of this study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private. All participant identifiers will be replaced with pseudonyms. We will record audio interviews using a digital recording device to accurately produce transcripts. The recordings will be shared with a professional transcriptionist that is not affiliated with any higher education institution. Once transcribed, the recordings will be maintained in a password protected file on a computer with Webroot antivirus and firewall protection. The digital audio recorder will be stored in a locked file cabinet when not in use. All audio recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of this study.

While there are no direct benefits to you, there is a benefit of adding to the growing literature on managers coaching their direct reports for performance improvement. In addition, the study may also help both academics and practitioners who work with coaching training, book, manuals, and research.

There are no known risks associated with this study. If you agree to participant you will need to complete the attached Consent to Participate in a Research Study form and return it before the interview begins. Electronic copies of the completed form will be accepted.

If you would like to participate or have any questions, please contact Karla Barry at karladbarry@msn.com; 720-339-4369. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the CSU IRB at RICO_IRB@mail.colostate.edu; 970-491-1553.

Sincerely,

Gene Gloeckner, Ph.D.

Professor

Colorado State University

Leann Kaiser, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

Colorado State University

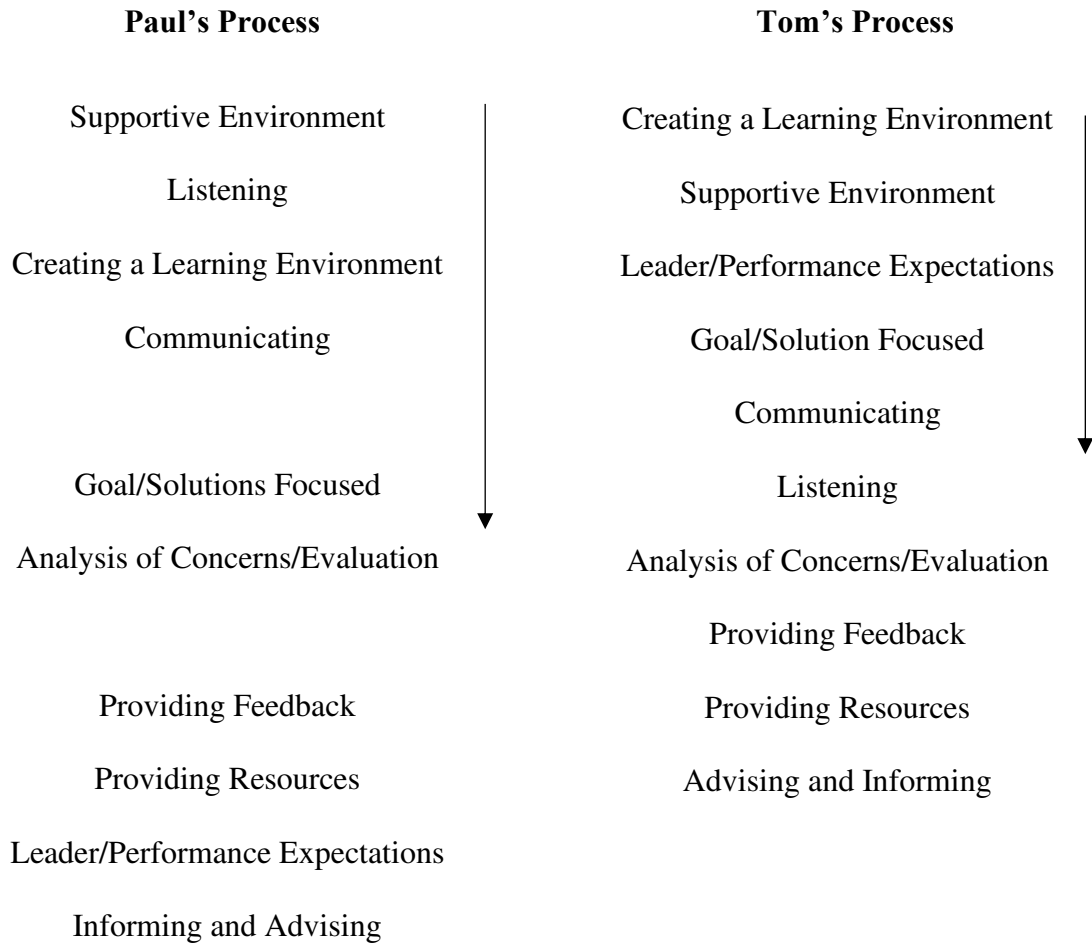
Karla Barry

Doctoral Student

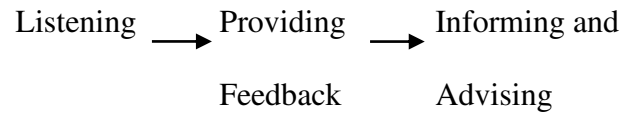
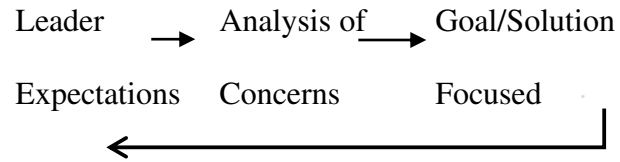
Colorado State University

APPENDIX E: INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT CARD SORTS

Individual Competency Processes



Rene's Process



Communicating Supportive Environment

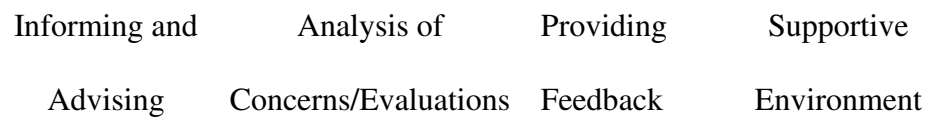
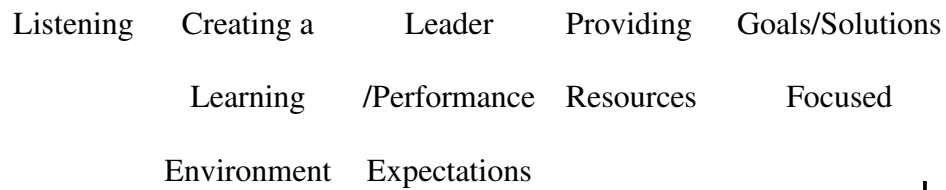
In Weekly Meeting

Creating a Learning Environment

Providing Resources

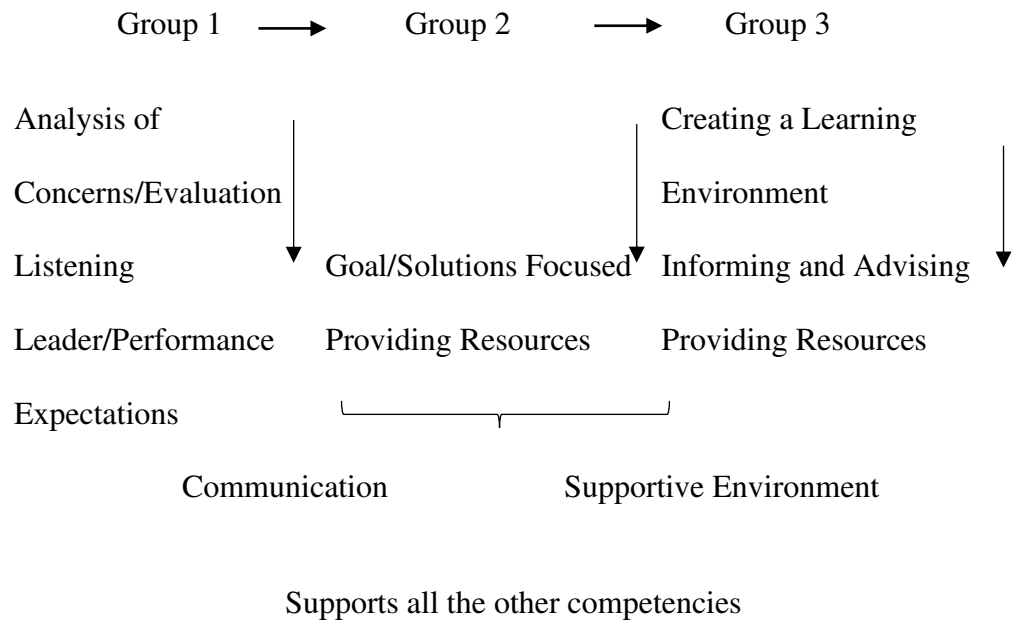
Gina's Competencies

Communicating

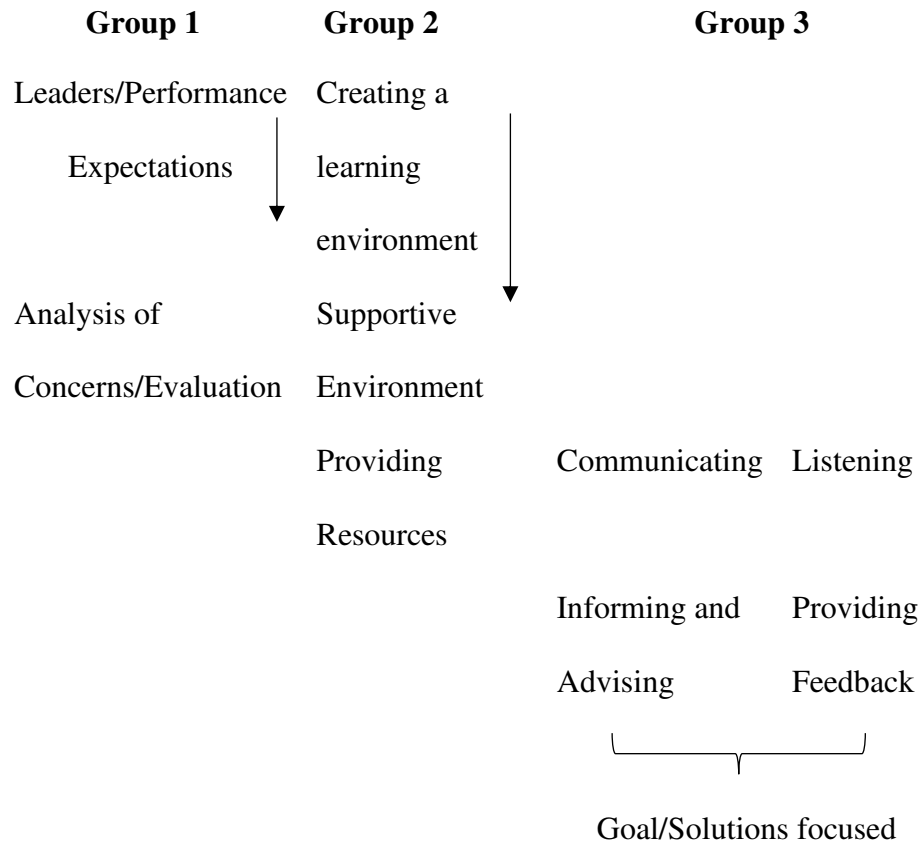


Individual Competency Processes

Susan's Competencies



Ariana's process



Melissa's Process

Diagnosis Group

Analysis of Concerns

Providing Feedback

Listening

Communicating



Wrapper/Backbone/

Cultural Group

Provide Resources

Supportive Environment

Creating a Learning

Environment

Solutions Group

Goal/Solutions Focused

Leader/Performance

Informing and

Expectations

Advising

Darren's Process

