

“Transdisciplinarity and executive coaching? An example of researching questioning practices”

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This talk focuses on the professional format 'executive coaching', on how coaching research and coaching practice (do not) collaborate (Graf & Ukowitz 2020) and introduces a transdisciplinary project on questioning sequences in coaching, which brings together linguistics, psychology and coaching practice (Graf, Dionne & Spranz-Fogasy 2020; Graf, Spranz-Fogasy & Künzli 2020). Executive coaching is defined as "a helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to assist the client to achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and consequently to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization within a formally defined coaching agreement" (Kilburg 2000: 65f). Across coaching practice literature, coaches' questions are considered the silver bullet to successful, i.e. change facilitating, coaching as these allow for reflection and thus change in the client. Practice literature abounds with monological, de-contextualized and invented examples of questions, coaching manuals are believe-based, and coaching research so far offers only scattered findings on e.g. solution-vs. problem-oriented questions in psychology (various papers by Grant) or on requesting examples in coaching vs. psychotherapy in linguistics (Spranz-Fogasy et al. 2019). A joint endeavor by coaching practitioners and coaching researchers (from process and outcome research) is needed (and already initiated) to tackle interactional, psychological and coaching theoretical characteristics of questioning practices and to establish an evidence-based typology upon which practitioners can devise strategies designed for 'real' practice with 'real' clients that allow for local and global change (Graf & Spranz-Fogasy 2018). We discuss how various epistemes can be combined as a means to overcome the addressed collaborative challenges between coaching practice and coaching research and illustrate it in the context of our project, "Questioning Sequences in Coaching".