

# Linguistic Coaching Process Research: Developments and Major Advances 2004-2023

## TIMELINE

## PHASES

- 2004: Eva-Maria Graf participates in the coaching training program "Psychologie der Veränderung" (Emotionally Intelligent Coaching) with "Dietz Training & Partner" which first sparks her interest for linguistic research on coaching.
- 2005: Start of an ongoing exchange and cooperation between Eva-Maria Graf and researchers from "Angewandte Gesprächsforschung" (Marlene Sator, Johanna Lalouschek, Ina Pick, University of Vienna), Gisela Brünner (University of Dortmund) and Thomas Spranz-Fogasy (Leibniz-Institute for the German Language Mannheim).
- 2006: First collection of authentic executive coaching process data by Eva-Maria Graf with the help of Inge and Thomas Dietz (as coaches) for her habilitation project.
- 2007: Foundation of the research group LOCCS "The Linguistics of Coaching, Counseling and Supervision" and publication of "Beratung, Coaching, Supervision" edited by Eva-Maria Graf, Yasmin Aksu, Ina Pick and Sabine Rettinger with Springer as an outcome of the research network.
- 2008: Publication of the edited volume "Discourses of Helping Professions" by Eva-Maria Graf, Marlene Sator and Thomas Spranz-Fogasy with John Benjamins.
- 2009: First applied linguistic habilitation on coaching "The Discourses of Executive Coaching: An Applied Linguistic Analysis" at the University of Klagenfurt by Eva-Maria Graf.
- 2010: Elke Berninger-Schäfer, Eva-Maria Graf and Hansjörg Künzli establish the first interdisciplinary, scientific journal on coaching in the German-speaking area Coaching | Theory, Research & Practice (Springer).
- 2011: Publication of the first linguistic monograph on coaching "The Pragmatics of Executive Coaching" by Eva-Maria Graf with John Benjamins and presentation thereof at the University of Klagenfurt during the public event "All you need to know about coaching".
- 2012: Publication of the edited volume on change in helping professions "Pragmatik der Veränderung" by Eva-Maria Graf, Thomas Spranz-Fogasy and Claudio Scarvaglieri with Narr Francke Attempto.
- 2013: Interdisciplinary collaboration between Eva-Maria Graf, Thomas Spranz-Fogasy (linguists), Hansjörg Künzli and Silvia Deplazes (psychologists) on the interrelation of global and local change potentials (of questions) in coaching; project proposal (re-)submission with the Austrian (FWF), German (DFG), and Swiss (SNF) national funding organizations.
- 2014: Publication of the first linguistic monograph on coaching "The Pragmatics of Executive Coaching" by Eva-Maria Graf with John Benjamins and presentation thereof at the University of Klagenfurt during the public event "All you need to know about coaching".
- 2015: Publication of the edited volume on change in helping professions "Pragmatik der Veränderung" by Eva-Maria Graf, Thomas Spranz-Fogasy and Claudio Scarvaglieri with Narr Francke Attempto.
- 2016: First interdisciplinary and international project "Questioning Sequences in Coaching" (QueSCo, I 449-G) at the University of Klagenfurt (Austria), the Leibniz-Institute in Mannheim (Germany), and the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (Switzerland) under the lead of Eva-Maria Graf (Austria and overall project lead), Thomas Spranz-Fogasy (Germany) and Hansjörg Künzli (Switzerland).
- 2017: Third edited volume on helping professions "Relationships in Organized Helping" is edited by Claudio Scarvaglieri, Eva-Maria Graf, and Thomas Spranz-Fogasy with John Benjamins.
- 2018: Publication of an interdisciplinary coding manual for question types and questioning sequences in coaching as an outcome of the QueSCo project.

**RESEARCH ON COACHING AS A HELPING PROFESSION**

Since coaching and client change transpire in and through the coaching conversation, at this stage, linguists (theoretically) establish coaching as a valuable research object for both linguistics and coaching practice. Arguing in favour of an evidence-based practice, they highlight the contributions and possible research questions of applied linguistic research.

Coaching is contextualized and embedded within established (linguistic) research on helping professions such as psychotherapy or medical encounters. At this point, linguists are (mostly theoretically) concerned with the interaction-type specificity of coaching, i.e., which conceptual, methodological, and interactive-communicative tenets underlie the speech event "coaching" in contrast to other helping professional formats.

Various contributions by Graf (2007, 2008, 2011a/b) and Graf et al. (2010) have helped to build the theoretical foundation for linguistic coaching research.

### FROM LINGUISTIC RESEARCH ON COACHING TO LINGUISTIC COACHING PROCESS RESEARCH

First empirical research on various aspects of the coaching process i.e., of coaching as talk-in-interaction between coach and client, are published. The aim is to carve out the underlying communicative goals and tasks as well as the practices and strategies employed to achieve and tackle them using authentic process data. Coaching is conceptualized as transpiring not in static phases (of change) but along interdependent, looping "Basic Activities" which (all together) constitute the "discourse of coaching" (Graf, 2019) (see illustration).

Research at this stage focuses on the linguistic macro, meso, and micro levels of coaching and applies a variety of methods (such as Critical Discursive Psychology, Discourse Analysis or Conversation Analysis).

As a result of continuous interdisciplinary exchanges, linguistic research on coaching is then increasingly embedded into a process research paradigm, which had already been established for psychotherapy.

### CONTRIBUTIONS TO ESTABLISHING THE "DISCOURSE OF COACHING"

#### MACRO-LEVEL RESEARCH

- Coaching as a psycho-managerial discourse (Schulz, 2013)
- Establishing the basic activities of (executive) coaching (Graf, 2015a, Graf, 2017a, Graf, 2019)
- "Co-constructing Change", "Building the Relationship"/doing relational work, "Defining the Situation" in coaching (Behn-Taran, 2014, Graf, 2015b, Graf, 2017b, Graf & Jautz, 2019, 2022)
- Gender ideologies and gendered discourses in coaching (female clients) (Graf & Fleischhacker, 2020)

#### MESO-LEVEL RESEARCH

- Emotion work/management, "feelings talk" and emotive narratives (Schreyögg, 2015, Graf & Pawelczyk, 2014, Schulz & Steyaert, 2014, Graf, 2012)
- (Re-)structuring client knowledge and constructing client concerns (Sator & Graf, 2014, Schulz, 2016)
- Role and (professional) identity construction of coaches and clients (Graf, 2011, Rettinger, 2011, Jautz, 2017)

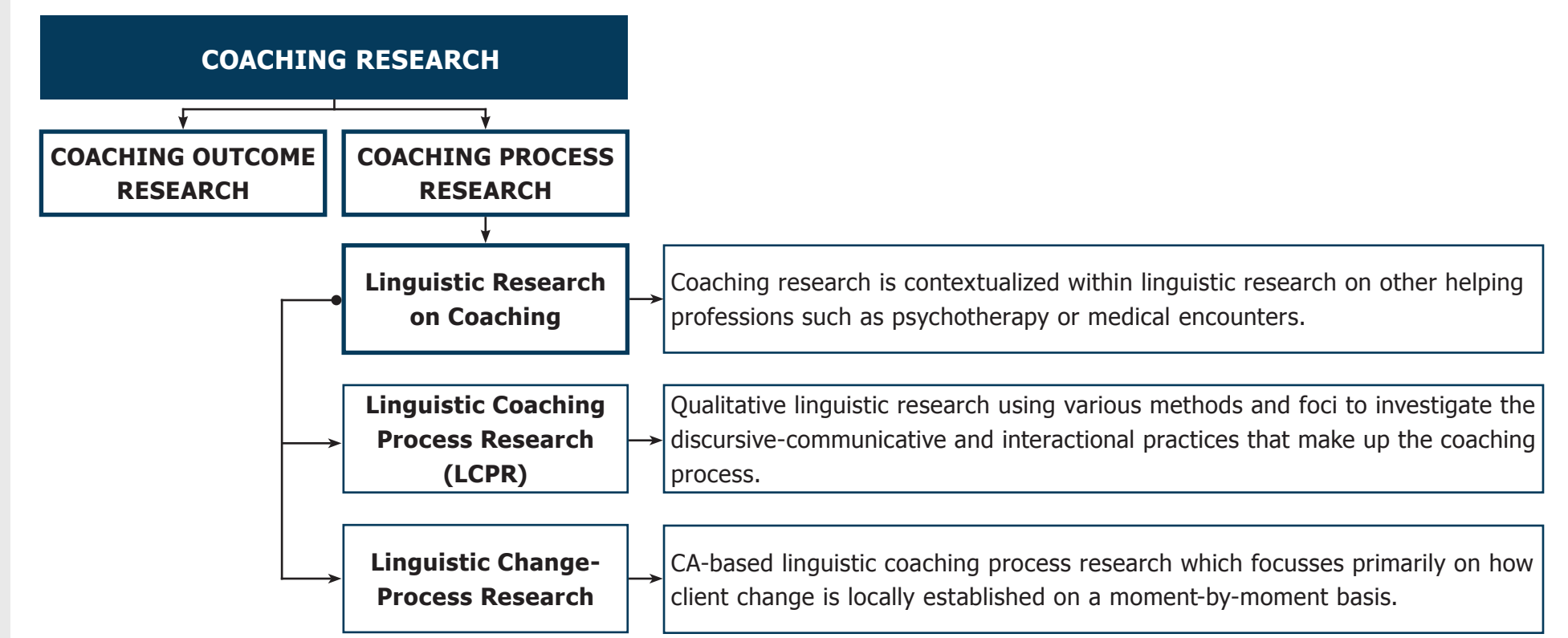
#### MICRO-LEVEL RESEARCH

- Questions and keywords as change-inducing linguistic devices (Jautz, 2018)
- Questions requesting examples and questions generating solutions (Spranz-Fogasy et al., 2019, Kabatnik & Graf, 2021)
- Semi-responsive answers and coaches' reactions in third position (Winkler, 2022)
- Linguistic features of telephone coaching (Lynden & Avery, 2016)

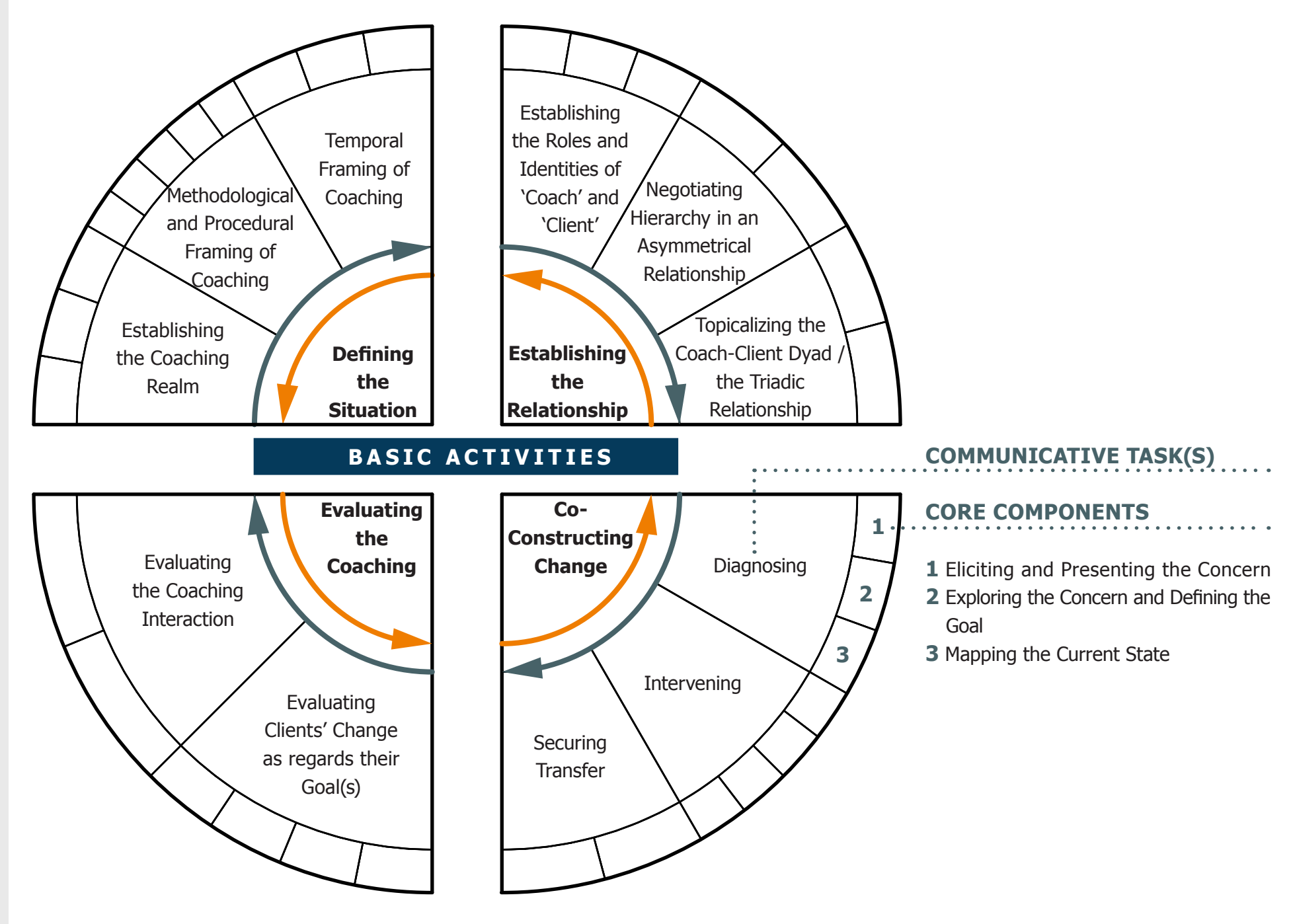
### LINGUISTIC CHANGE-PROCESS RESEARCH

In analogy to linguistic and psychological research on psychotherapy, coaching process research starts looking into change-inducing interventions such as questions, i.e., into their local effectiveness and contribution to client change. The interdisciplinary "Turn-Sequence-Phase-Process" or TSPP model (Deplazes et al., 2018) (see illustration) thereby plays an important role in conceptualizing both the psychological phases of change and the moment-by-moment sequential development of the coaching interaction. The first change-inducing practice under scrutiny are questions, a key yet empirically underresearched intervention in coaching (e.g., Graf & Spranz-Fogasy, 2018; Graf et al., 2020)

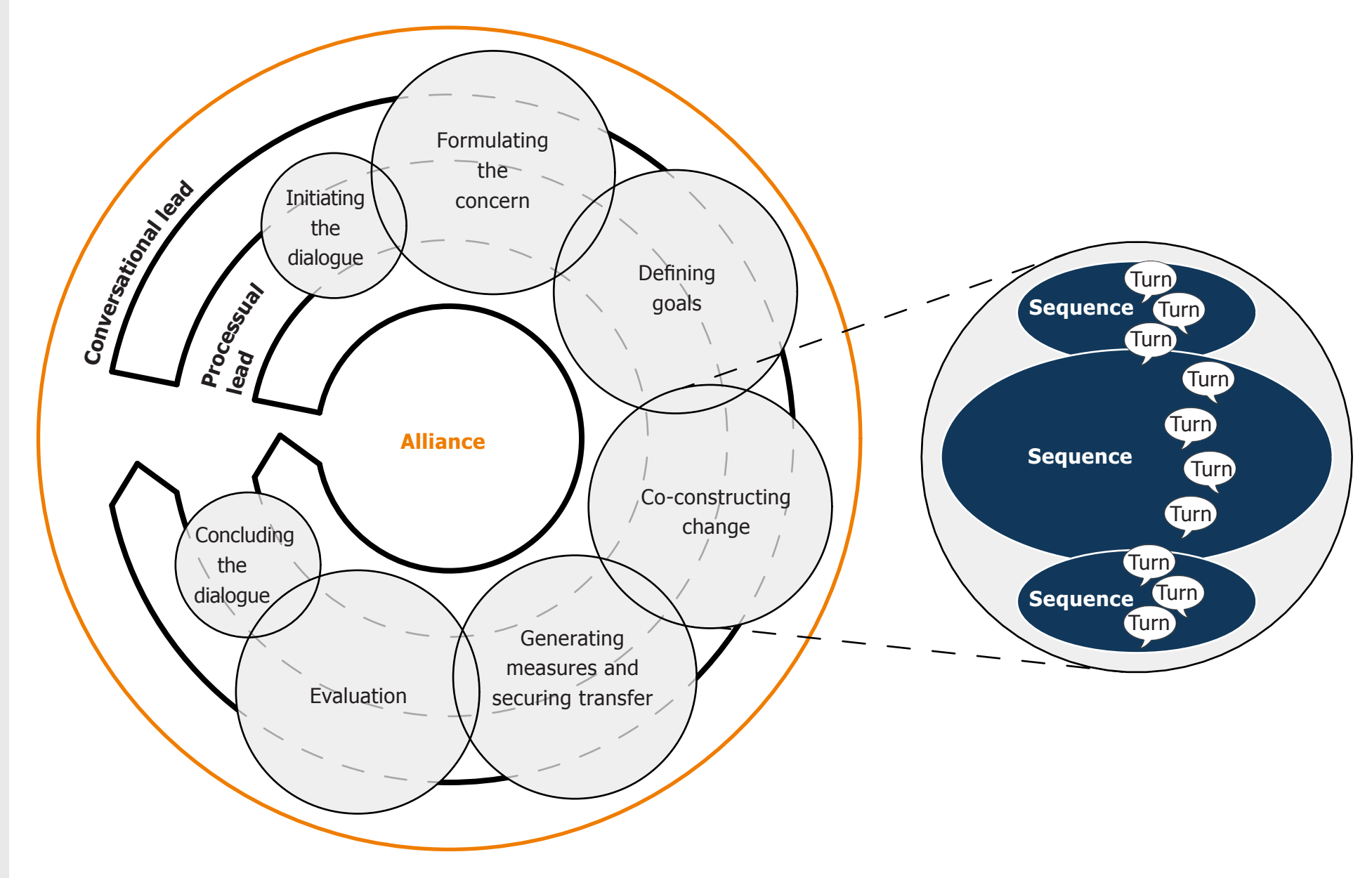
The TSPP model, then, also underlies the goal and research design of the first international and interdisciplinary project on "Questioning Sequences in Coaching": QueSCo (I 4990-G), which addresses the local and global change-inducing potentials of questions.



### THE BASIC ACTIVITIES OF COACHING



### TSPP MODEL: MODELLING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHASES AND SEQUENCES



### NETWORK OF COACHING RESEARCHERS, COLLABORATIONS, AND PUBLICATIONS

