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Coaching : an innovative new methodology for occupational social workers?

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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Occupational social workers strive to improve the fit between individuals, families, work organisations and communities and can assist with employment transitions so that people are gainfully employed (Barak and Bargal, 2000). Occupational social work is an emerging profession with the potential to positively influence the workplace. However, in order to make a positive contribution to solving current workplace dilemmas, occupational social workers need to keep abreast with workplace developments. The complexities of organisational challenges have caused companies to search for alternative means for addressing challenges.

According to the International Coach Federation (ICF); “Coaching is an interactive process that helps individuals and organisations to develop more rapidly and produce more satisfying results” (Valliantos, 2001:1). Coaching in the context of this study can be understood according to the above definition. Coaching has risen to the forefront as one of the means for addressing workplace challenges. Coaching has seen unprecedented growth and has become a favoured choice for dealing with individual, team and organisational issues. It is estimated that coaching in the United States of America is a $1 billion-a-year business (Sherman and Freas, 2004). The International Coach Federation (ICF) estimates that there are 10,000 full and part time coaches in the United States of America and the number of coaches entering the field has doubled in size every year for the past three years (Barber, 2003).

Since the late 1990‘s coaching in South Africa has sprung to the forefront of organisational interventions and is continuing to grow and develop (Rostron, 2006). There are 400 registered coaches on the Coaching and Mentoring South Africa (COMENSA) database and an estimated 1200 to 2000 practicing coaches in

South Africa (Rostron, 2006). Despite the dearth of empirical data, coaching is nevertheless gaining a public face as a legitimate form of intervention in South Africa (Anderson, 2007).

Progression and developments in the world of work place pressure on occupational social workers to choose how they will negotiate workplace developments. Occupational social workers can choose to ignore these developments or choose to explore possible alternate methods of intervention. According to Gibelman (1999) the future of the social work profession rests on a thorough explication of practice options and informed decision making - a proactive rather than reactive stance. In order to remain relevant, occupational social workers must develop the capacity to evaluate developments and be proactive in making practice decisions.

The primary aim of this study was to explore whether a relationship between coaching and occupational social work exists. The profession has a responsibility to determine its professional stance through an investigation of current workplace developments and assess the feasibility of emerging approaches in occupational social work.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

The primary rationale for the study was based on Jonathan Caspi's (2005) journal article entitled *"Coaching and Social Work: Challenges and Concerns."* The article created awareness of the coaching/social work dilemma and raised the research questions that formed the framework for this study. The article echoed the challenges and opportunities that social workers face in pursuing coaching as an intervention. Occupational social workers particularly are at the forefront of workplace service delivery and therefore need to be aware of new and developing workplace interventions such as coaching. Increased utilisation of coaching in the workplace has the potential to alter occupational social work service delivery. It is therefore important to examine where occupational social workers currently stand in as far as coaching is concerned. The above-mentioned article thus motivated an

interest for further investigation into the occupational social work/coaching inter-play.

A second rationale for the study besides the sheer exponential growth of coaching in the workplace is the perceived efficacy of coaching. The Association for Coaching (2009) conducted a web-based survey investigating the return on investment (ROI) from corporate coaching participants and reported that the benefits of coaching included improved productivity, job motivation, people management skills and work life balance. However, Gyllensten and Palmer (2005) caution that coaching is an emerging field there is appears a lack of empirical research into the actual effectiveness of coaching this serves as another rationale for occupational social workers investigating coaching further.

1.3 Aims of the Study

1.3.1 Primary Aim

The primary aim of the study was to investigate coaching as a possible new methodology for occupational social workers. Based on a review of the literature the major premise for the study was that social workers' clinical skills make them well suited as coaches and that coaching could furthermore serve to bolster social workers' careers (Caspi, 2005; Pine, 2000 cited in Vallianatos, 2001).

1.3.2 Secondary Objectives

The secondary objectives were:

1. To determine occupational social workers' understanding and opinions of coaching as a form of intervention in the South African workplace.

2. To explore whether occupational social workers have the relevant skills to coach.

3. To ascertain occupational social workers' interests in obtaining information on coaching.

1.3.3 Research Questions that Guided the Study

The following research questions created the framework for the ensuing study:

- Does a relationship between coaching and occupational social work exist?
- What do occupational social workers know about coaching?
- What influences occupational social workers' knowledge of coaching?
- Do occupational social workers have a positive or a negative perception of coaching?
- Will coaching compromise or add value to occupational social workers' methods of intervention?
- Do occupational social workers see differences in offering coaching and counselling services?
- Are occupational social workers interested in obtaining information about coaching?

1.4 Definitions of Terms

Coaching: According to the International Coach Federation (ICF); "Coaching is an interactive process that helps individuals and organisations to develop more rapidly and produce more satisfying results" (Valliantos, 2001:1).

Coach: A ''catalyst for change'', someone who ''stimulates and challenges the individual to adopt new behaviours'' (Zeus and Skiffington, 2002 in Bluckert, 2005:172).

Executive Coaching: is defined as a "helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organisation and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioural 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 organisation within a formally defined coaching agreement" (Kilburg, 2000 in Bluckert, 2005: 172).

Occupational Social Work: is defined as "a specialisation of social work practice in the workplace that promotes the individuals optimal adaptation to the current employment setting in preparation for changes to the work culture and social environment of the future" (Logan, 2001 in Maiden, 2001:2).

Organisation: "Organisations are collectives of individuals gathered together to serve a particular purpose" (Netting, Kettner and McMurty, 1998: 192)

1.5 Research Design and Methodology

The relationship between coaching and occupational social work is a relatively new area of research. In view of the dearth of research on occupational social work and coaching, an exploratory research design was considered appropriate for this study. According to Rubin and Babie (1993) an exploratory research design assists in breaking new ground and yielding new insights and understandings.

A pre-test study was conducted with eight occupational social work students who were not involved in the final analysis of the research study. The necessary changes were made to the research tool based on the findings from the pre-test study.

A non-probability, target sampling method was considered fitting in order to research a specific sector of the social work population, namely occupational social workers. Target sampling isolated occupational social workers for the purpose of exploring their perceptions of coaching. The rationale for specifically researching occupational social workers was that this sector of the social work community is directly involved with organisations and would therefore be more knowledgeable regarding current workplace developments. Occupational social workers in attendance at a quarterly South African Occupational Social Workers

meeting were the target sample for the study a response rate of 39% was achieved with 28 respondents included in the final sample.

The research tool consisted of a self-administered questionnaire which was available in paper-based or web-based format. The quantitative data in the study was collected and analysed by means of descriptive statistics and was presented in a range of graphs, tables and charts. The qualitative data was analysed by means of deductive methods and thematic content analysis.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

- All respondents in the sample were located in Gauteng province; this limited the representation of the sample.

- Most (89%) of the respondents were from government institutions, which hampered generalisation to the larger occupational social work community.

- As non-probability, target sampling was used to select a specific group of occupational social workers, the findings in the study could not be generalised to other population groups.

- The progress of the study was hampered as a result of incorrect information on the South African Occupational Social Work Association's (SAOSWA) database. As a result the study did not fall within the proposed time frame for completion.

1.7 Organisation of the Research Report

The research report is organised in the following manner:

Chapter One: Introduction - Chapter one establishes the foundation of the research report by providing an overview to the study. The rationale for exploring coaching and occupational social work is discussed. It includes the primary aim and objectives of the study as well as definitions of the main terms used in the

study. The chapter briefly describes the rationale of the research design and methodology employed.

Chapter Two: Literature Review of Coaching - Chapter two considers current workplace issues and the significance of the workplace as a developmental and learning institution. This chapter examines some definitions of coaching. The origin of coaching from the sports arena and the field of psychology is discussed. The International and South African growth of coaching is explored. The major theoretical underpinnings of coaching as it pertains to occupational social work are explained. Furthermore, the emerging specialisation of coaching psychology is reviewed.

Chapter Three: Literature Review on the Evolvement of Occupational Social Work and Coaching - In this chapter the evolvement and progression of social work and occupational social work is examined. The critical challenges facing the social work profession are investigated using Fook's (2002) conceptual framework of social work. The understanding and significance of occupational social work in the world of work is investigated by utilising Frank and Streeter's (1985) classic model of occupational social work as a conceptual tool. The chapter concludes with a section on coaching and occupational social work and examines the much debated coaching and counselling link.

Chapter Four: Research Design and Methodology - The research design and methodology chapter details how the research process was conducted. The chapter examines the primary aims and secondary objectives as well as the main research questions that guided the study. The motivation for an exploratory research design and the choice of sampling procedure is highlighted. The rationale for a self-administered research tool and the manner in which the tool was disseminated is discussed. The research methods used for collecting and analysing data is explored. The chapter concludes by highlighting the limitations and strengths of the research process as well as the main ethical considerations in the study.

Chapter Five: Analysis and Discussion of Findings - A description and analysis of the main findings of the study are presented in this chapter. The data was analysed by means of qualitative and quantitative methods and is presented by means of charts, graphs, tables and quotations. This chapter contains discussions of the main findings of the study as well as an examination of some of the contemporary debates regarding both occupational social work and coaching in the workplace.

Chapter Six: Summary of Main Findings, Recommendations and Concluding Comments - This chapter represents a synopsis of the study. It points out the key findings as they relate to the primary aims and objectives. The chapter includes recommendations to occupational social workers, professional associations, universities, organisations employing occupational social workers, as well as for future research. The findings of the study were used to develop a tool for curriculum planning for an 'Introductory Coaching Curriculum for Occupational Social Workers'.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW ON COACHING

2.1 Introduction

"Citizens of the 20th Century have witnessed more changes in their daily existence and environment than anyone else who has walked the planet. The 21st Century will be even more complex, fast paced, and turbulent" Cascio (1995, 28 in Peterson and Gonzalez, 2000). Work and life challenges have become more complex. The question that helping professions must answer is: 'Are traditional methods of intervention adequate to meet the new demands of a changing society?' According to Gibelman (1990) debates about future practice orientations in the social work profession are an indication of the dynamism of social work and its ability to respond to and address the needs of a changing world.

The social work community's response to the needs of the changing world of work is one of the central issues for debate in the current study. Barak and Bargal (2000) propose that occupational social work must situate itself between workplace realities and the workforce's needs. The methods of intervention utilised in the helping profession require continuous evaluation and examination in order to meet the demands of the 21st Century. The social work profession has a responsibility to embark on a continuous improvement campaign where the effectiveness of traditional and contemporary methods of intervention are evaluated and examined. This literature review examines coaching as a possible new method of intervention for occupational social workers. Current workplace issues and the significance of the workplace as a developmental and learning institution are examined. The foundations of coaching in the field of sports and psychology are also explored. The current definitions of coaching as well as the international and South African developments in coaching are investigated. Coaching as a 'methodology' and coaching as a 'movement' are discussed. The chapter concludes by highlighting some of the theoretical underpinnings of both occupational social work and coaching.

2.2 Current Workplace Challenges

In the 2008 budget speech, the Minister of Finance, Minister Trevor Manuel, stated that South Africa faced severe economic turbulence in 2008/2009. (http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/national%20budget/2008/speech/speech, pdf; 2008).

South Africans have faced power crises, interest rate hikes and challenges related to crime, violence and political instability. According to Ho (1997) global and domestic competition has resulted in efforts to make corporations "lean and mean" through cost reduction and downsizing. These changes have undoubtedly had negative effects on employee health and well-being thus increasing the likelihood of over-work, work stress and job dissatisfaction. Environmental changes and the impact of global warming have compounded issues placing further pressure on organisations to ensure responsible business practice and good governance. Global and domestic macro trends have created much uncertainty and vulnerability for members of South African society. These indisputable dilemmas have changed the way organisations do business.

Occupational social workers in the 21st Century are at a crossroads; they can either rise to the new challenges or remain in the background whilst other professionals provide the services that workplaces require. The workplace is an important area of service delivery and keeping updated on trends in this area is critical for effective service delivery and growth of the profession. The next sub-section examines the significance and meaning of work as well as the role of the workplace as a developmental and learning institution.

2.3 The Significance of Work and the Workplace

Most human beings spend the largest portion of their day in the workplace. It is estimated that an individual working a 9 hour, five-day week, spends an average of 180 hours per week in their workplace. The workplace is much more than a 'means of production' - it can act as an important developmental and learning institution. It is therefore important to take cognizance of new developments that

have the potential to influence the way in which employees develop and learn. Logan (in Maiden, 2001) argues that the work environment is as important as family life and that the helping professional must recognise it as an inseparable element of service delivery.

Grint (1991) postulates that work in its most basic form is an activity undertaken with our hands which gives objectivity to our world. It provides value, status, economic reward, is a demonstration of religious faith and is also means to realise self potential. Inversen (1998) concurs that work is an essential, defining component of most people's lives, serving both an instrumental and expressive purpose.

The meaning of work is varied and the expectations of both employees and employers differ considerably. Work has multiple definitions based on internal factors, such as a person's culture, psychological make-up and external factors such as the times in which the person lives and the economic situations of that era (Peterson and Gonzalez, 2000).

An organised workplace can serve as an important developmental institution and can create a climate of personal and social growth (Akabas, 1982 cited in Du Plessis, 1990). Organisations can no longer afford to assume that employee health is only a private matter; the health and well being of employees is increasingly a legitimate and important management concern (Ho, 1997). The people that make up an organisation are its most important resource; progressive organisations recognise this and have created conditions that are conducive to personal and social growth. Coaching has become known as one of the foremost organisational tools to aid in the personal and social growth of employees (O'Flaherty, 2004). The ensuing sections of this chapter will discuss how coaching originated; its value as a possible organisational tool; coaching as both a method and a movement; and the theoretical underpinnings of coaching.

2.4 An Introduction to Coaching in the Workplace

Coaching in the workplace has become a 'buzz word' and there are a myriad of books and articles, as well as a number of coaching courses available. Tomlinson (2002) claims that if the topic of coaching were mentioned at a company meeting five years ago, it would be swept under the table. However, the present day reality is that coaches are in high demand and frequently used as an organisational tool.

2.4.1 Towards a Definition of Coaching

Albeit an emerging field, the sporadic interest and growth in coaching has resulted in varying definitions of the term. According to Hamilton (2000) a common definition of coaching does not exist and there are as many definitions of coaching as there are coaches. Eggers and Clark (2000) concur that there is no generally agreed-upon definition of coaching, outside of the world of sports. The authors argue that it is still unclear as to just what coaching is or is not, in an organisational context.

The dictionary definition of the term 'coach' includes the coach being an 'instructor', 'teacher', 'trainer', as well as a 'professional advisor' (Brockbank and McGill, 2006). Coaching can be viewed from either an 'instructional' or a 'facilitation' approach. Parsloe (1995 cited in Palmer and Whybrow, 2006: 8) defines coaching as being "directly concerned with the immediate improvement of performance and the development of skills by a form of tutoring or instruction – an instructional approach". Downey (1999 cited in Palmer and Whybrow, 2006) on the other hand sees coaching from a facilitation approach where coaching is the art of facilitating performance, learning and development.

The Centre for Coaching defines executive coaching as a skilful methodology for development, which enables executives to be both more effective and more fulfilled (http://www.centreforcoaching.co.za/28.RESOURCES.html;2007). The principles of coaching are similar to that of executive coaching except the target population in executive coaching is executives in the corporate world whereas

coaching in its broad sense can be applied to all level of staff in an organisation as well as in the broader community.

Guest (1999) views coaching as a tool used to amplify an individual's knowledge and thought processes. Mink, Owen and Mink (1993) concur with this view of coaching. They view it as a process in which the coach creates an enabling relationship with the client and in so doing develops a learning environment. The International Coach Federation (ICF), an international professional association of personal and business coaches, defines coaching as "an interactive process that helps individuals and organisations to develop more rapidly and produce more satisfying results" (Valliantos, 2001: 1). Coaching and Mentoring South Africa (COMENSA) have developed an umbrella definition of coaching, compiled from a number of coaching definitions that are specific to the experiences and practices of South African coaches (Rostron, 2006). The Coaching and Mentoring South Africa (COMENSA) definition of coaching is "a professional, collaborative and outcomes-driven method of learning that seeks to develop an individual and raise self-awareness so that he or she might achieve specific goals and perform at a more effective level" (Rostron, 2006: 8).

The common theme in all of the above definitions is the empowerment of the individual to develop their inherent potential and reach specific goals. These empowerment tenets are not new to the social work profession and will be discussed further in the next section which examines the origin of coaching.

2.5 The Origin of Coaching

Coaching originated from a range of different fields; which is one of the reasons there is much debate on an agreed upon definition of coaching. Sports and psychology are considered the main predecessors of coaching and will be discussed in the next section.

2.5.1 Sports as a Foundation of Coaching

According to Peltier (2001) coaching has its roots in athletic and performance coaching. Coaching identifies with the world of sports as there are common themes between the corporate world and the world of sports (Peltier, 2001). Jones (2002), a sports psychologist turned business consultant, asserts that the principles of elite performance in sport are easily transferable to the business context. He argues that sport has a considerable amount to learn from excellence in business. Coaching can be viewed as unlocking a persons' potential to maximize performance (Whitmore, 1992 cited in Palmer and Whybrow, 2005). The common ground that both sport and business coaches are concerned with is maximizing performance and producing more satisfying results.

Conversely, Berglas (2002) cautions against the association of business coaching with the simplified world of sport coaching. According to Berglas sport is often only used as a marketing and sales pitch for coaching programs since it offers quick solutions to difficult problems. He argues that coaches leaning solely on the simplistic sports model could in the long term prove potentially disastrous for companies and individuals. The sports model ignores the introspective component of change which according to Berglas is a time consuming effort with no short term or quick fix results. There appears to be a risk with an over-identification of coaching with sports. The next section brings balance to this debate by discussing the psychological origins of coaching.

2.5.2 Psychology as a Foundation of Coaching

Williams (2004) asserts that coaching has its foundation in the principles of psychology. The theories of William James, Carl Jung, Carl Rogers and Alfred Adler have all influenced the field of coaching. The work of Carl Rogers highlighted the ability of clients' to change and grow (Williams, 2004). This shift in perspective from a medical to a developmental model was a significant precursor to what is known today as coaching. Similarly, Adler saw individuals as the creators and artists of their lives. He involved clients in goal setting, life planning, and inventing their own futures. Jung similarly believed in a "future orientation"

where clients were encouraged to create their own futures through visioning and purposeful living (Williams, 2004). Abraham Maslow researched, questioned, and observed people who were living with a sense of vitality and purpose and who were constantly seeking to grow psychologically and achieve more of their human potential. He found that man is naturally a health-seeking creature who pursues self-actualization, playfulness, curiosity, and creativity (Williams, 2004).

Coaching is a derivative of many fields and the innovative thinking of great pioneers. This section highlights the fact that social work, psychology and coaching share the same historical fore-fathers. The popularity of coaching in corporate and other circles has created an entire new industry; the following section examines the international and South African developments of coaching and the implications of this for the field of occupational social work practice in South Africa.

2.6 The International Growth and Development of Coaching

Coaching in the United States is estimated to be a $1 billion-a-year business, (Sherman and Freas, 2004). According to Brockbank and McGill (2006) the number of executive coaches working for business was expected to reach 50,000 in the United Kingdom by 2007.

According to O'Flaherty (2004) coaching has had a 15 to 20 year international heritage and interesting growth statistics abound:

- Over half of Fortune 100 executives use a personal coach to build leadership competency.
- Over 10 000 professionally certified coaches work in the United States.
- Coaching is a burgeoning profession in Europe and Australia.
- In a recent Fortune Survey, one-on-one coaching was the single most planned developmental tool being considered by executives for their Leadership Development (O'Flaherty, 2004).

Parsloe and Rolph (2004) from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) explored the growing popularity of coaching, how its value is perceived and how it fits in with other methods of corporate performance and development activity. They report that 78% of the survey's respondents use coaching as part of their learning and development activities. The authors, question whether this is a fad or an essential and valuable feature of a modern organisations learning and development strategy.

Hicks (1999) argues that the positive findings of coaching has encouraged more individuals to climb on the executive coaching bandwagon but it has also attracted dubious coaching schools that offer short-tem quick-fix coaching courses without any entrance requirements. Upon completion of such a course anyone can dub themselves a 'coach'. Herein, lays the dilemma for occupational social work associating with the field of coaching. Despite the ethical dilemmas coaching has nevertheless become one of the fastest growing areas in consulting companies and for solo practitioners alike. There now appears to be shortage of good coaches (Hicks, 1999). The growth of coaching has far-reaching consequences for occupational social work and could in effect alter future occupational social work service delivery. As Gibelman (1999) so aptly states, the nature of service delivery is determined by the demand of the institutions in which it functions. If coaching is in demand in the workplace it follows that the demand placed on occupational social work is likely to evolve as well. Are South African occupational social workers prepared for the next level of evolvement of the profession? The development of coaching in South Africa has followed a similar pattern to coaching internationally and will be dealt with further in the next section.

2.6.1 The Development of Coaching in South Africa

According to Rostron (2006) since the year 2000 coaching and mentoring have sprung to the forefront in South Africa and the rest of Africa. Despite its relative infancy, coaching in South Africa is slowly gaining momentum. A Sunday Times article, published on the 3 August 2003, showed that executive coaching in South Africa is being used by a diverse range of industries, including insurers and banks,

retailers, oil and energy companies. Some of the users of coaching in South Africa include multi-nationals such as Shell, Standard Bank, Nedcor, First National Bank and Sanlam. Standard Bank and First National Bank in South Africa have entire divisions devoted solely to the provision of coaching services for employees. According to Zweli Manyathi, chief executive of Branch Delivery at First National Bank, there is value in employing life coaches to groom executives at both middle and upper management levels (Sunday Times, 2003).

Coaching in South Africa enjoys professional recognition in the form of the South African Council of Coaches and Mentors (SACCM), (Cilliers, 2005). In addition, the establishment of Coaching and Mentoring South Africa (COMENSA) as a regulatory, voluntary organisation has added further momentum and credibility to the development of coaching in South Africa. Coaching and Mentoring of South Africa (COMENSA) represents 400 South African coaches and mentors from a variety of coaching fields namely executive, ontological, professional, business, career, life and sports coaching (Rostron, 2006).

Despite the current growth of coaching there remains a dearth of South African coaching literature and empirical study on the topic. Cilliers (2005) similarly found that no South African academic and scientific research on the psychological effects of coaching could be found. The South African literature on coaching is mainly found in popular journals which focus on general and human resources management but not on psychology and social work fields (Cilliers, 2005). Since coaching in South Africa is largely unchartered territory the field remains open for occupational social workers to choose their professional stance. Is coaching in South Africa an empirically relevant field of practice or is it a passing fad that will soon be gone? Further research focussed on specific coaching/occupational social work issues in South Africa is needed. The next section expounds on coaching by examining it as a method and as a movement.

2.7 Expounding on Coaching

According to Caspi (2004) coaching is a method and a movement that is concerned with amplifying the individual's knowledge and thought processes. A discussion of coaching as a movement and a method will aid in creating a better understanding of the potential of the field. It will serve to provide insight into the possible impact coaching could have on the helping services.

2.7.1 Coaching as a Movement

According to Caspi (2004) the word 'coaching' describes an emerging practice movement, with its own scope of practice. He asserts that coaching is by no means a passing fad but is in fact headed by special interests groups who are pushing for recognition as a specialised area of practice. Coaching as a movement has not only been spearheaded by coaches but also by the consumers of coaching. Hamilton (2000) points out that the 'movement' was initiated by individual executives who sought to make sense of their chaotic lives, and take ownership of their careers. Executives identify with coaching as it is considered a socially acceptable form of counselling (Spence, Cavanaugh and Grant, 2006).

The development of coaching into a professional discipline is a complex issue. Firstly, there is a lack of clarity as to what professional coaching is and what makes for an effective or reputable coach (Sherman and Freas, 2004). A common definition of coaching does not currently exist (Hamilton, 2000). Reaching consensus on an agreed upon definition is the first step towards coaching gaining the status of a discipline. If these first steps are not successfully negotiated coaching may be a long way off from being recognised as a discipline.

Secondly, the diversity of individuals who call themselves coaches has limited the development of coaching into a discipline. An Australian study gives a clear depiction of the variety of backgrounds of coaches; these include consultants, executives, teachers, salespeople, social workers and psychologists (Grant and Zackon, 2004 cited in Grant, 2006). Reaching agreement on specified norms and practice standards is a challenging and complicated task; this is due in part to the

range of individuals with different backgrounds as well as levels and forms of training.

Thirdly, the sheer number of 'self-styled' individuals offering coaching services makes reaching consensus a challenge. The plethora of self-styled executive coaches with little or no knowledge of business and/or coaching exacerbates the lack of control measures in the field (Sherman and Freas, 2004).

The fourth issue that represents a major stumbling block in the development of coaching into a reputable discipline is the lack of empirical studies in the field. Only 131 peer-reviewed studies on coaching were published since 1937 and of these, just 56 were empirical, and few met standards of reliable methodology (Grant, 2003 in Sherman and Freas, 2004). Williams and Irving (2001 cited in Brockbank and McGill, 2006) describe executive coaching as an unregulated, unstructured and potentially unethical process. Anyone in South Africa can call themselves a 'coach' without any formal training or regulatory processes in place.

Grant (2003) on the other hand argues that whilst coaching is not yet a profession or discipline in its own right, it is developing into one. Caspi (2005) shares this view and argues that the body of coaching research is developing; that there are flourishing coaching organisations which offer training and credentialing and that there are sizeable annual coaching conferences being held. These developments points to the rapid momentum that coaching is gaining in developing into a bona fide discipline and profession.

According to Williams (2005) coaching should have standards, definitions, ethical guidelines, ongoing research and credentialing to be recognised as a profession. There is currently no regulated criterion or training standards in South Africa for becoming a coach. Although Coaching and Mentoring South Africa (COMENSA) have standards for practice in place, coaches are not obligated to register with the organisation, as it is a voluntary organisation. Despite the challenges in as far as development into a discipline is concerned, evidence suggests that coaching in the

workplace is in demand and has become the 'new and preferred' mode of intervention in corporate circles (O'Flaherty, 2004; Sherman and Freas, 2004; Barber; 2003 and Brockbank and McGill, 2006).

Occupational social workers' association with coaching in its current unregulated form should be handled with prudence. Occupational social work has strong ethical tradition which should be protected from potentially unregulated, unethical practice. The occupational social work and coaching link is fraught with controversy and perhaps only the passage of time can tell what coaching might develop into. Coaching may have started in the direction towards becoming a discipline but still has a long way to go towards becoming recognised as a reputable, academic discipline. How occupational social work in South Africa negotiates these challenges is the pressing issue for debate.

2.7.2 Coaching as a Method

Coaching as a method refers to the approach or style that the coach chooses to deliver services. There are a range of different models and approaches to coaching. Some of the reasons that coaching methodology is multi-faceted are firstly due to the diverse backgrounds of coaches. Secondly, the eclectic foundational sources that coaching draws from including business, consulting, psychology and sport. Thirdly, Fitzgerald and Garvey (2002) suggest that the practice of coaching is too much of an emerging field for any one person or group to have the only one model or the right approach. Lastly, not enough has been codified or researched for a rigorous and unified model of coaching to currently be in place (Fitzgerald and Garvey, 2002).

2.7.3 Examples of Coaching Models

Palmer (2007) highlights some of the popular coaching methods utilised in coaching which are represented in the table below. As Sherman and Freas (2004) point out no one has yet demonstrated conclusively what makes an executive coach qualified or what makes one approach to coaching better than another.

Various coaching schools and individuals adopt different approaches to coaching but the extent to which these methods have been empirically tested is unknown. The various methods represented below have many similar elements in common; the most common being the evaluation of current circumstances and the emphasis of future planning and goal-setting. When juxtaposed with psychology and social work models its apparent that coaching is an adaptation of traditional psychology and social work interventions.

Table 1: Coaching Models

COACHING MODELS- ACRONYM	MEANING OF THE ACRONYM
GROW (Whitmore: 1996 in Palmer :2007)	**G**oal **R**eality **O**ptions **W**ill or Wrap Up
ACHIEVE (Dembkowski and Elridge: 2003 in Palmer: 2007)	**A**ssess current situation **C**reative brainstorming **H**one Goals **I**nitiate Options **E**valuate Options **V**alid action programme **E**ncourage momentum
ABCDE model (adapted from the work of Albert Ellis')	**A**ctivating event or situation **B**eliefs **C**onsequences **D**isputation of the belief **E**ffective and Approach
SPACE (Edgerton and Palmer:2005 in Palmer: 2007)	**S**ocial context **P**hysiological **A**ction **C**ognitions and **E**motions

Taken from Palmer (2007:71)

The development of a measurable and scientific coaching methodology could aid in the evolvement of the coaching profession into a bona fide discipline. To this end an entirely new field of psychology known as 'coaching psychology' has emerged. Coaching psychology offers a scientific approach to coaching methodology and will be further explored in the next section.

2.7.4 Coaching Psychology

According to Garvey (2004) psychologists are beginning to flex their professional muscle in the field of non-therapeutic helping through the development of areas of practice such as coaching psychology. Coaching psychology has developed from the field of psychology in response to the growth of coaching. Stober (2006) suggests that coaching psychology and positive psychology have emerged from the same socio-cultural-historical epoch, and share many similarities including their focus on optimal performance and well-being and an emphasis on strengths and success, rather than dysfunction or disease. Grant and Palmer (2002 cited in Palmer and Cavanagh, 2006) agree that coaching psychology promotes performance in work and personal life with normal, non-clinical populations.

The main difference between coaching and coaching psychology is that coaching psychology is underpinned by models of coaching that are grounded in established therapeutic approaches. These include an understanding of mental health; motivation; systems theory; personal and organisational growth; adaptation of therapeutic models to the field of coaching; research into effectiveness, resilience and positive psychology (Palmer and Whybrow, 2006).

The field of coaching psychology is new and experimental. Garvey (2004) points out that there is an increasing professionalisation of 'helping'. He argues that the more this trend continues the more the different power bases with the moral high ground will assert themselves and 'muddy the waters' so that the competing interests eventually confuse practitioners and users alike. On the contrary, Peltier (2000) shows that one of the reasons coaching has increased in popularity in corporate circles is due its perceived distance from therapy and psychology.

A study by Garmin, Winston and Zlatoper (2000 cited in Campbell, 2001) examined media perceptions of executive coaches and their effectiveness compared to psychologists and found that favourable views of coaches far exceeded those of psychologists in terms of being competent and helpful. Therefore coaching psychology could be a ploy to gain a stake in a lucrative market. Despite unknown and perhaps dubious motives there is potential value that coaching psychology could add to the field of coaching. Coaching psychology serves to increase the credibility and body of empirical knowledge about coaching; this will ultimately serve the interest of coaching professionals and the users of coaching alike.

The roots of coaching psychology stretch back to humanistic traditions; cognitive-behavioural approaches and is also related to the emergence of the positive psychology movement (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Snyder and McCullough, 2000 cited in Grant, 2006). The field of generic social work and occupational social work have the same theoretical underpinnings and by virtue of market forces should be gravitating in the same direction as coaching psychology. However, this appears not to be the case, as results from this study indicate that occupational social workers are grappling to understand coaching. Training and development in the workplace, is another area of human behaviour that has been impacted by the growth of coaching, the impact that this has on the field of coaching will be explored further.

2.7.5 Coaching in Training and Development

According to Garvey (2004) one-to-one helping activities are increasing across all sectors and have a key role in any learning and development strategy. Coaching has developed into a significant organisational developmental tool in the world of work. Many prestigious organisations have opted to fund one-to-one coaching programmes for entire management teams (Guest, 1999).

Williams (1999) compared training on its own as opposed to training and coaching as an organisational intervention; it was found that training on its own only

increased productivity by 22.4% while training and coaching increased productivity by 88%. This finding is supported by recent research conducted by the Chartered Institute of Personal Development (CIPD), where 90% of respondents believed that coaching was a key mechanism for transferring training skills into the work force. In addition, 96% of respondents held that when coaching is applied appropriately, it positively influences the bottom-line (Thomas, 2004). This perception of the impact that coaching has on the bottom-line has secured its place in training and development programmes of organisations. Should coaching results continue to reflect positive influences, coaching could arguably be favoured above traditional mainstream disciplines such as industrial psychology and occupational social work. Williams (2004) makes the bold claim that coaching is on its way to becoming bigger and more successful than any other form of organisational investment in the future. Perhaps the growth and effectiveness of coaching is due to its adaptation and liberal borrowing of true and tested classical psychological principles. Coaching could very well be old principles dressed up in new more 'socially acceptable' language. The next section will examine some of the common theoretical underpinnings of social work and coaching.

2.8 Theoretical Underpinnings of Social Work and Coaching

The foundation of social work is steeped in psychological theory that undergirds its practice and adds value to the world of work. Coaching psychologists bring a host of psychological theories and models to coaching relationships (Palmer and Cavanagh, 2006). These include an understanding of mental health; motivation; systems theory; personal and organisational growth and positive psychology. The scope of this study does not permit an in depth analysis of all the psychological theories that inform coaching approaches. However, a brief discussion on the behavioural; cognitive-behavioural; person-centred; and the strengths perspective will be discussed. The positive and negative aspects of these approaches as they relate to coaching will be examined in the next section.

2.8.1 Behavioural Therapy and Coaching

The work of Pavlov, Watson and Skinner in the behavioural tradition has an honoured place in the human sciences. According to Peltier (2001) it is arguably one of the most powerful traditions for coaches and clients to better understand and deal with workplace issues and problem behaviours. The behavioural model is based on the belief that coaches can best support personal change by encouraging clients to understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others, and by looking for ways to constructively adapt their behaviour to the expectations of their organisations (Skiffington and Zeus, 2003).

Peltier points out (2001) that there are many principles and processes utilised in coaching and business that are derived from behavioural psychology. These include positive reinforcement, conditioning, biofeedback, extinction procedures and modelling.

Kilburg (2000: 65) defines coaching as a "helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organisation and a consultant who uses a variety of behavioural techniques and methods. This is to assist the client to achieve mutually identified goals; to improve his or her professional performance; personal satisfaction and consequently to improve the effectiveness of the client's organisation within a formally defined coaching agreement". This definition places an emphasis on the use of behavioural techniques and models as being the primary tools for change and development of the coachee in the coaching relationship.

There are naysayers who argue that behavioural psychology is too simplistic to be utilised in the complex corporate world. Berglas (2002) argues that treatments derived from behavioural psychology are too limited to address the problems that disrupt an individuals' ability to function. He argues that the behavioural model focusses too simplistically on helping the client adapt new behaviours rather than viewing the client's presented problem behaviour as merely symptomatic of deeper, underlying psychological issues.

The value of being trained in the behavioural approaches is that it encourages the use of measurements and metrics. The corporate world operates within a system of measurable outcomes and is more likely to invest funds in observable and measurable outcomes (Peltier, 2001). The use of goal oriented metrics makes the work of helping professionals more credible.

In conclusion, the use of behavioural principles could prove useful depending on the presenting issue and the needs of the coachee and the organisation.

2.8.2 Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy and Coaching

Cognitive-behavioural therapy is a broad term encompassing a wide variety of intervention techniques that range from largely cognitive to largely behavioural interventions (Ducharme, 2004). Cognitive-behavioural treatments can be categorised into one of three categories: coping skills therapies, problem-solving therapies, and cognitive-restructuring therapies (Dobson and Block, 1988; Dobson and Dozois, 2001).

Cognitive-behavioural methods of intervention, offer a wealth of techniques to assist individuals in learning about themselves and exploring the relationship between thoughts and feelings. It emphasises that how we react to events is largely determined by our views of them, not by the events themselves (Neenan and Palmer, 2001). The essence of the cognitive-behavioural approach is the client's right to self determination.

According to Peltier (2001) this method is readily adaptable to the business and corporate environment, since it is direct straight-forward and results-oriented. Ducharme (2004) is of the opinion that another advantage of the cognitive-behavioural approach is that the techniques applied are transparent and more easily comprehensible for the coachee than other intervention approaches. The author argues that cognitive-behavioural techniques can be easily taught to managers in order for them to transfer the techniques into coaching and mentoring relationships with direct reports and colleagues.

The cognitive-behavioural approach is similar to coaching in that the helping professional in both approaches holds themselves either as the expert in their clients' life or they hold the client as their own best expert who takes the lead in resolving their own personal issues (Joseph, 2006)

Ducharme (2004) claims that a limitation of the cognitive-behavioural approach is that it can be seen as very specific and issue-focussed, not taking into sufficient account the person as a whole or going beyond a surface level analysis. Similarly to the behavioural approach a noted limitation of the cognitive-behaviour approach is its simplicity. Ducharme (2004) argues that high functioning executives in an executive coaching relationship may be disappointed by the mechanical and seemingly unsophisticated view that is presented by the cognitive-behavioural orientation. However, for some clients, the simplistic approach, the ease of use, the focus on results, efficacy and goal orientation may be a strong drawcard.

In conclusion, Ducharme (2004) recommends that for stress management and skill development purposes, a cognitive-behaviour approach in the workplace could be highly effective. However, for coaching situations that call for more in-depth analysis of unconscious motives and conflicts, this approach may not be useful.

2.8.3 The Person-Centred Approach and Coaching

The person-centred approach originally developed by psychologist Carl Rogers (1951, 1961 cited in Williams, 2004) is concerned with the facilitation of optimal functioning. According to Joseph (2006), Rogers is rarely acknowledged in the context of coaching merely because the term coaching was not used; instead Rogers adopted the term counselling.

Dryden (2002:134) sums up the essence of the person-centred approach as follows, "Person-centred therapists start from the assumption that both they and their clients are trustworthy. This trust resides in the belief that every organism, the human being included, has an underlying and instinctive movement towards the constructive accomplishment of its inherent potential."

Unlike other therapeutic approaches, person-centred practice was never concerned with ‘repairing’ or ‘curing’ dysfunctionality, and never adopted the ‘diagnostic’ stance of the medical model (Joseph, 2006). The person-centred approach does not prescribe techniques of practice, but allows for a diversity of practice methods, in so far as practice is securely grounded in the theoretical assumption that people have an inherent tendency toward growth, development, and optimal functioning, and that this tendency is facilitated by the right social environment (Rogers, 1959, 1963 cited in Joseph, 2006).

The Rogerian attitude to counselling encompasses active listening, respecting the client, and adopting the client’s internal frame of reference which are essential skills for a coach. Whether coaching chooses to acknowledge this or not the core of coaching is based on Rogerian attitudes and principles. However, Rogers (1982, in Schneider, Bugental and Pierson, 2001 cited in Cilliers, 2005) cautioned that his work should not be trivialized in organisational applications. In this context, Kramer (1995 cited in Cilliers, 2005) illustrated how active listening is easily forced into a tool to enhance productivity rather than a skill to build relationships. Cilliers (1991; 1992; 1995 cited in Cilliers, 2005) illustrated how the concepts of facilitation and empathy are used superficially in training, management and organisational development. Cilliers (2005) argues that using these facilitative conditions of the person-centred approach in executive coaching will require a high level of training to provide a trusting and respectful environment.

In conclusion, training and knowledge of the person-centred approach provides insight into how a coach should be with a client (Peltier, 2001). The person-centred approach is not just a set of therapeutic techniques but rather an attitude based on the theoretical stance that people are their own best experts (Joseph, 2006). Given this premise occupational social workers with a working understanding of the person-centred approach can add immense value to clients in coaching and therapeutic relationships.

2.8.4 Positive Psychology and the Strengths Perspective

"…one cannot build on weakness. To achieve results, one has to use all the available strengths… These strengths are the true opportunities" (Drucker, 1967: 60 cited in Linley and Harrington, 2006)

In keeping with the principles of the person-centred approach and positive psychology, an emphasis on the strengths perspective moves away from the traditional medical model of psychology. References to wellness and strengths refer to the positive psychology paradigm (Cilliers, 2005). Positive psychology can be understood as "the scientific study of optimal functioning, focusing on aspects of the human condition that lead to happiness, fulfilment, and flourishing" (Linley and Harrington, 2005: 13 cited in Grant, 2006).

There has recently been considerable interest in positive psychology that focusses on developing human strengths and competencies (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Snyder and McCullough, 2000 cited in Grant, 2006). The author reiterates that the emergence of positive psychology is to be applauded and welcomed, and marks a shift in the research focus of applied psychology away from psychopathology.

The strengths perspective focusses on the individuals' strengths and the internal resources that human beings possess in order to solve and deal with challenges (Saleeby, 2006). A strength is "a natural capacity for behaving, thinking, or feeling in a way that allows optimal functioning and performance in the pursuit of valued outcomes" (Linley and Harrington, 2006:15).

Williams (2004:2) sums up the strengths perspective in stating that: "Psychology is not just about pathology, diagnosis, and the treatment of human frailties but rather the study of human potential and brilliance with the higher purpose being not to repair what has been damaged, but to cultivate the genius that resides within the human mind".

Charles Rapp (1998 cited in Saleeby, 2006), one of the most important figures in the development of the strengths perspective defines the effective helping relationship as purposeful, reciprocal, friendly, trusting and empowering (Saleeby, 2006). Social workers emphasize the importance of the helping relationship and the use of self as the medium for change and growth (Shulman, 1992 cited in Saleeby, 2006). According to Saleeby (2006) a strengths orientated practice means that everything done as a social worker will be predicated on helping to discover and exploit clients' strengths and resources, and in so doing assist them to achieve their goals and realise their dreams. Central to coaching success is the development of an empowering relationship between the coach and client.

Linley and Harrington (2006) argue that a strengths coaching approach identifies and capitalises on people's natural capacities, helping them to understand where their capacities may be and building on the resources they already have, and this leads to increased engagement, energy and motivation.

The use of positive psychology and the strengths perspective in corporate environments have had some negative criticism. There have been concerns that an over enthusiasm for positive psychology may lead to ideological enmeshment, and that an over-simplistic dichotomous thinking about 'the positive' or 'the negative' is not helpful or accurate (Lazarus, 2003 cited in Grant, 2006).

Norem and Hang (2002 cited Grant, 2006) aptly state that for some clients seeking in-depth explanations the psychodynamic model could be appropriate. For others, seeking a psycho-mechanical approach, a cognitive-behavioural intervention may be more appropriate. Similarly, for those with a defensive pessimism personality style, an overemphasis on aspects of positive psychology may not be helpful. Williams (2004) is of the opinion that the hallmark of coaching is its synthesis of tools from other fields as well as its capacity for innovation. Coaching has no doubt liberally synthesized traditional theories and models and made this more attractive and socially acceptable for both individuals and organisations. Occupational social

work should likewise investigate ways in which they can re-formulate models to match a changing workplace.

As can be seen, coaching models are heavily undergirded by psychological theories and the occupational social worker with knowledge and skill of the psychological processes could make good use of these skills in a coaching relationship.

The scope of the study permits only a brief discussion of four theoretical approaches. There are various other classical and modern theories that have influenced the development of coaching; these approaches are expounded on in Table 2.

Table 2: Theories Informing Current Coaching Practice

THEORY	THEORIST	BASIC PHILOSOPHY OF THE THEORY
Adult Learning	Knowles (1950)	Based on the premise that adults have different motivations for learning to children. Adults' associate learning needs with changing social roles; they are interested in immediate application of learning are internally rather than externally motivated. Prefer voluntary and participatory learning experiences (Merriam, 2001) and (Cranton, 1994).
Transformational Learning	Mezirow (1991, 2000)	This theory leads to empowerment; and is created from interpretations of new experiences. It is a process that includes reflection and learning; enabling adults to make meaning from life's experiences (Merriam, 2001, Mezirow, 1991, 2000).
Behavioural Theory	Skinner (1935, 1947)	Behavioural modifications are achieved and change produced by means of positive reinforcement, conditioning, biofeedback, extinction procedures and modeling.
Change Theory	Lewin (1935, 1936, 1945)	The essence of the model is that both individuals and groups proceed through three different stages in making change: unfreezing, moving and refreezing (Burnes, 2004).
Constructive Developmental	Kegan (1994)	Individuals make meaning of; understand and interact with their world based upon specific stages of adult development (Kegan, 1994).
Humanistic	Rogers (1951, 1961)	Based on the premise that humans, develop, improve and grow. Both coaching and humanistic psychology have collaboration as a foundation.

		(Peterson and Seligman, 2004; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Kauffman, 2006)
Theory of Change	Prochaska (1994)	This theory suggests that behaviour change includes the variables of the stage of change an individual is in, the decisional balance index, the ability for self-efficacy and the processes of change Prochaska (1994).
Intended Change Theory	Boyatzis (2005)	Boyatzis's (2005) intended change theory maintains that individuals who manage their own development intentionally are positioned to make better choices and create strategies to live more effective and satisfied lives.
Motivational Change	Miller and Rollnick (2002)	Motivational Change is a collaborative, evocative and self-directed process that emphasises the client as ultimately responsible for making and sustaining change Miller and Rollnick (2002).
Organisational Development and Learning	Senge (1990, 1999)	This theory suggests that team learning produces exponentially greater results than when one learns individually. The individual contributes personally to the team in the form of consistent results and commitment to learning (Senge, 1990, 1999).
Process Change	Schein (1996, 1996)	Schein (1999), compares expert consultation models (the selling and telling) with doctor patient models (diagnosis and prescribing) and suggests that everything you do with an organisation is the intervention - from assessment to completion of the consultation cycle.
Chaos Theory	Wheatley (1999)	Organisations are living systems in which individuals interact with their environments in adaptive ways. Challenging organisations to view stability, equilibrium and balance as temporary states. Human beings are capable of a self-organisation process Wheatley (1999).
Complex Adaptive Systems	Stacey (2000)	Organizational change is unpredictable based on the interactions of agents. Transformative change begins with the individual acting upon the unknown system.
Integral Psychology	Wilbur (2000)	The more we exercise all aspects of our being, more likely of transformative experiences. Encourages honoring the physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental activities within the self, culture and nature.

(http://www.ohiolink.edu/etd/send-pdf.cgi/Marshall%20Margaret%20K.pdf?acc_num=antioch1160858983; Adapted from Marshall: 2008, 16)

2.9 Conclusion

The unprecedented growth of coaching has impacted the workplace and the manner in which organisations resolve workplace challenges. There are

controversial issues related to coaching which require further debate before coaching could be considered a possible occupational social work methodology. Issues related to licensing, ethics as well as untested methodology makes coaching a complicated subject for occupational social workers. It is prudent for occupational social workers to keep abreast with developments in the workplace as this directly impacts the level and quality of occupational social work service delivery. Occupational social work as a professional discipline must function with caution in as far as embracing untested methods are concerned.

This chapter provided an understanding of the origins, dynamics and theoretical underpinning of coaching. This was necessary in order to explore what constitutes professional helping services. The strong theoretical and ethical traditions of occupational social work should be used as the primary guide when deciding on adopting additional methodologies. The evolvement of social work and occupational social work will be examined in Chapter 3, the critical challenges facing the profession and the conceptualisation and significance of occupational social work in 21st Century organisations will be discussed. Lastly, a discussion on the proponents for and against coaching and counselling seeks to bring balance to the discussion of occupational social work and coaching.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE EVOLVEMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK AND COACHING

3.1 Introduction

In order to bring balance to the coaching-occupational social work debate an examination of the evolvement of current social work and occupational social work directionalities is essential. An understanding of the current position of social work and occupational social work is one of the determinants that will undergird the professions capacity to adopt alternative methodologies. According to Gibelman (1990) social work is defined by its place in the larger social environment. The author asserts that economic; social and political forces are more influential in shaping the nature of practice than intra-professional choices. The previous chapter highlighted some of the external forces that could be brought to bear on occupational social work. This chapter focusses on the intra-professional choices and forces that have played a role in the evolvement of the social work and the occupational social work profession.

3.2 The Evolvement of Social Work

The International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASS) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) have put forward the following definition of social work:

"A profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work" (Thompson: 2005, 13).

The above definition shows that social work is concerned with problem solving, empowerment and the enhancement of well–being. The focus of social work according to this definition is similar to the humanistic, positivistic and strengths-based approaches utilised by coaches. Another point of interest in the above definition is the fact that social work is concerned with where people interact with their environment. The predominant point of interaction for the occupational social worker is the workplace and therefore examining developments in the workplace is critical for effective occupational social work practice. Du Plessis (1994) argues that the sanctioned focus for South African social work is adjusting the individual to the environment - the person-in-environment fit. Social workers concerned with the person-in-environment fit must be in a position to critically examine the modern day clients' environment.

Gibelman (1999) observes that the face of the social work profession in the 21st Century has evolved to include the following elements:

- Private practice has become an increasingly important alternative for the provision of social work services.

- The "generic" social worker has given way to the specialist.

- The for-profit sector has become a significant alternative for delivering social work services and, concurrently, the proportion of services delivered through the non-profit sector has decreased.

- Competition has increased with allied professions, such as psychologists, marriage and family therapists, public administrators, and even business administrators, for direct service, supervisory, and administrative positions.

Given the above changes in social services, occupational social work should likewise change its perspective and current methods if it is to develop into a thriving speciality. The strong theoretical base of occupational social work makes it well suited to adapt to the new methods and demands of the workplace.

Conceptual tools formulated by Fook (2002) form the framework for the below discussion on the critical challenges facing social work profession.

3.3 Critical Challenges for the Social Work Profession

Fook (2002) suggests the following conceptual framework to aid in the analysis of future possibilities for social work. These include: the changing views of professionalism; inclusivity; complexity and context and redeveloping critical social work. Each of these tools will be discussed in turn with special emphasis on how these tools relate to occupational social work and coaching.

3.3.1 Changing Views of Professionalism

Fook (2002:28) outlines the dilemma that social workers face in the new economy by the following statement:

"In the old economy, the professional was one who practiced from a particular body of knowledge and from a particular value system involving specialist expertise. This is threatened in the new economy, where specialist knowledge is easily accessible to all who have access to the new information technology. Therefore, professionalism, if it is to be viable in the new economy, must be reconceptualised as the ability to produce knowledge in ways which are applicable to a specific setting."

From the above definition it appears that debates on adapting new methods to the field of occupational social work are in line with the changing views of professionalism. Social work and occupational social work in the current context need to 'produce knowledge' or new ways and methods of dealing with workplace challenges. Fook (2002) suggests that social workers recreate the identity and value base of social work by 'incorporating different perspectives' and communicating differently the potential value social work has to offer its service users.

An examination of coaching as a possible new method for occupational social work is a timely debate and issue for further research. Despite the current identity

crisis the social work profession faces, there are possibilities for growth and development that the profession can experience. This development can only take place if a critical evaluation of the current social work position takes place. Should social workers and occupational social workers not submit to an ongoing process of evaluation, the profession could face the danger of eventually becoming obsolete and irrelevant. Occupational social workers can choose to embrace a different view of professionalism and use this as a window of opportunity to broaden their scope of practice.

3.3.2 Inclusivity

The second conceptual tool highlighted by Fook (2002:29) is the issue of inclusivity; this includes the idea that social workers must recognise the need to draw from a wide range of professions and disciplines in order to improve practice. The author aptly states that:

"Our ways of practicing and knowing about our work need to be inclusive of different methods and approaches. We may need to incorporate modes of working and technologies which are more congruent across local and national boundaries."

The potential of coaching to be utilised as one such new method and technology in occupational social work requires an inclusive perspective from the occupational social work fraternity. Different methods need not be seen as weakening or diluting the profession but rather as strengthening the future prospects and sustainability of the profession. Untested methods do not have a place in social work and therefore the type of alternate methodology must be carefully scrutinized.

3.3.3 Complexity and Context

Fook (2002) asserts that social workers current practice domain is complex and requires an approach that is mindful of the differences that exist within different contexts and different levels of society.

"Our practice needs to be able to incorporate the contradictions and tensions which may exist between experiences for different groups" (Fook: 2002:29).

Critical social work incorporates the ability to analyse the differences between various sectors of society and organise practice within a complex global system that is still sensitive to context. In order to address the tensions and contradictions that exist as a result of globalisation, occupational social workers need to break out of the mould of traditional frameworks when thinking about practice. Effective occupational social work is not practiced in a vacuum; but exists only when an awareness of the complexity of practice and context are taken into consideration.

3.3.4 Redeveloping Critical Social Work

Fook (2002) asserts that given the complex global realities of social work practice; effectiveness and significance as a profession is incumbent on an ability to redevelop critical social work.

"We need to be able to redevelop our critical practice so that it is relevant and responsive to both the global and the local context" (Fook: 2002:29).

Redeveloping practice requires that social workers and occupational social workers become au fait with developments not only within the field of social work but from a global perspective; across disciplines and specifically within their practice domain. The essence of this framework is that social workers and occupational social workers have a responsibility to commit to a process of ongoing learning and analysis of developments.

3.4 Conceptualising Occupational Social work

According to Googins and Godfrey (1987) occupational social work came into being by the ideas and energy of a handful of innovative practitioners, rather than a rationally conceived plan by the profession. The focus of the profession has evolved and has developed into a succinct form of workplace social work, with specialised areas of intervention as well as formalised tertiary training and development in the field.

Logan (2001:2 cited in Maiden, 2001) defines occupational social work as a "specialisation of social work practice in the workplace that promotes the

individuals optimal adaptation to the current employment setting, in preparation for changes to the work culture and social environment of the future". The foundational emphasis of occupational social work is the optimal adaptation of the person to environment. According to Netting, Kettner and Mcmurtry (1998), occupational social work involves assisting employees, their families and management with challenges that relate to social functioning and human relationships in the workplace.

A classical definition of occupational social work by Googins and Godfrey (1987:5) is "a field of practice in which social workers attend to the human and social needs of the work community by designing and executing appropriate interventions to ensure healthier individuals and environments." The important element of this definition is the issue of designing and executing appropriate interventions. The occupational social work fraternity must determine what constitutes appropriate intervention; based on developments in the wider work context and from awareness on what constitutes 'appropriate' South African practice. If regulated standards of practice and empirical methodology are the main tenets of appropriate practice, then perhaps coaching is not appropriate practice for occupational social workers. The onus nevertheless must be determined by the holders of power which is the occupational social work community. Future practice decisions can only be birthed through collective choices made within the occupational social work community.

According to Du Plessis (1990) there are two different approaches to understanding occupational social work. The first approach enables practitioners to analyse the direction of existing practice. The second concerns an analysis of occupational social work as an evolutionary process, focussed on the evolvement of the profession from the individual to the organisation, from the curative to a preventative thrust, and from a micro to a macro level. The focus of this chapter is located within the second conceptualisation of occupational social work; since the focus is on coaching as a 'possible new methodology' for occupational social work. Coaching emphasises the development of the individual within the organisation.

Individual growth and empowerment has a ripple effect on the effectiveness and success of the organisation. Thus coaching moves the field of occupational social work along the continuum of care to dealing with macro-level organisational issues.

Whether or not occupational social workers will be given the mandate to offer coaching services depends in part on how occupational social work is viewed both internally and externally. Do occupational social workers hold the necessary stature to deal with important coaching and organisational issues? There are issues of power and boundaries in practice decision-making that influences occupational social work development. The significance and relevance of current occupational social work practice in the workplace will be explored in the following section.

3.4.1 The Significance of Occupational Social Work in the Workplace

The socio-political and economic environment at any given time influences the goals, priorities, and targets of intervention and methodologies of the social work profession (Gibelman, 1999). The rapid pace of change and the demands that individuals face calls for support and tailor made interventions for the workplace. Occupational social work has developed as a mechanism to support individuals in the workplace.

Occupational social work is of benefit to the workplace since it is based on the premise that employees need to be treated as a total entirety, (Logan, 2001 cited in Maiden, 2001). Occupational social work adds an important humanistic approach to organisations. Social work values such as valuing diversity, balancing family needs and work demands find their way into the workplace as a result of occupational social workers intervention.

Occupational social workers are in an excellent position to effect change because of their proximity to both management and workers. According to Bargal (2000) occupational social work has the potential to lower the human costs of economic

changes and in so doing contribute towards shaping a new industrial and organisational reality. Bargal (2000) cautions that in order to effectively achieve this goal occupational social work will have to improve its professional training, develop a more scholarly culture, and attain an integrative and influential position in new workplaces emerging in the 21st Century. The views of occupational social work in the corporate world are varied; the next section outlines these perspectives in more detail.

3.4.2 Varying Perspectives of Occupational Social Work

According to Specht and Courtney (1994 cited in Gibelman, 1999) the social work profession has abandoned its mission to help the poor and oppressed and to build communality. Occupational social work has received criticism for its work with 'healthy' population groups. Even though the workplace is a legitimate area of practice it has often been misconstrued by traditional generic social workers as an abandonment of true social work ideals.

Social work is more than only work with the poor; it involves empowerment at a broad level, irrespective of environment and social status. It is discriminatory to make value judgments based on social class or status whether this is in favour or against the poor, middle class or wealthy citizens. Financially viable population groups require support and should not be excluded from this on the basis of their status. Social workers mandate is to provide support to those in need and it would go against the grain of social justice for social work to have only a one dimensional approach to providing support. All individuals irrespective of financial status should be afforded the right to access social work and occupational social work services. Occupational social work is simply filling a much needed niche for support in the workplace.

However, the arguments against occupational social work include the vested interest of business in increasing profits. This potential conflict of interests for the occupational social worker is an area of concern. Increasing profits, market share and shareholder interest versus the development and optimal social functioning of

employees has and always will be an issue of debate in organisations. The well-positioned respected occupational social worker can add voice to these debates by being a part of the organisation and serve an advocacy role on behalf of employees. Whilst this would be the ideal, the status of an effective advocate is earned through a demonstration of proficiency in the field and confidence in the occupational social workers ability to deliver high quality services.

Occupational social workers are faced with challenges of acceptance from clients and as well as management. South African occupational social workers are currently in the process of applying for recognition of occupational social work as a specialisation. Occupational social work and its development into a specialisation has been the issue of much debate. The proposed speciality of occupational social work raises an awareness of the need for new and improved methods of intervention in occupational social work. Occupational social work must develop its own unique methodologies based on evidence-based practice efforts.

Some of the developments and debates in the social work and occupational social work profession run parallel to each other. To this end Gibelman's (1999) observation that the social work profession is facing increasing competition is true for occupational social work as well. Du Plessis (1994) concurs with this sentiment and shows that there are constant 'turf battles' and a need to continually justify occupational social works' position in the workplace. Whilst competition is healthy it highlights the need for an organised collective voice amongst occupational social workers. Bargal and Barak (2000) are of the opinion that in order for occupational social work to gain the recognition it deserves there exists a need for a strong professional identity, a research-based theoretical foundation, recognition by professional organisations, and a more clearly defined niche of professional specialisation.

Occupational social work practice cannot always be neatly divided into traditional social work methods. Googins and Godfrey (1987) state that in the debate over the nature and appropriateness of social work in the workplace, many issues relate to

the basic question: are occupational social workers whose primary practice is within the work setting in fact doing social work or are they moving into a different profession? Occupational social work as a profession must look 'outside the box' of traditional social work practice to develop and adopt methodologies that are context specific and relevant to the needs of the workplace (Du Plessis, 1990). The call for a new professional reality is clear but are occupational social workers ready to rise to the challenge and meet this call? To understand this dynamic further, Frank and Streeter (1985) provide a framework for conceptualising occupational social work and this is investigated below.

3.5 The Future of Occupational Social Work through the lens of Frank and Streeter (1985)

A multi-level conceptual framework for identifying the roles of social workers in occupational settings is presented by Frank and Streeter (1985). This is an all encompassing model that focusses on broad systemic issues. This section examines whether or not coaching fits into the broader framework of goals for the evolvement of occupational social work practice. Coaching could arguably be a tool to shift the occupational social worker along the helping continuum. Alternatively, coaching could still be too experimental to be used in occupational social work. Occupational social work on the other hand could possibly be in too much of an infantile stage to engage or consider coaching. Examining Frank and Streeter's (1985) classical model assists in putting the debates into perspective and allows for a long term vision for practice realities.

The Frank and Streeter (1985) model focusses on functions rather than the specific roles that occupational social workers play. According to this model coaching could be placed within Cell 1, 2, 4 and 5 and 6. (See Table 3)

The reasons for the categorisation are listed below:

Cell 1 and 4: Coaches make use a range of diagnostic tools to gather information on organisational and individual concerns, such as the 360 degree evaluation tool. The coach can choose to conduct group coaching sessions which are still in line with Cell 1. This is listed in Table 3 as a group work approach.

Cell 2: The focus of work in Cell 2 is on the human resource function. Human resource departments utilise the services of coaches in order to further organisational goals. There is alignment between the goals of coaching and the human resources department. The coach is accountable to the human resources team in as far as progress and the achievement of goals is concerned. In fact, over 50 years ago, Peter Drucker, the father of modern management, argued that the personnel manager's role is "partly a social worker's job" (Drucker, 1955 cited in Bates and Thompson, 2007). The occupational social worker has a 'personnel/human resource function' in the workplace which correlates well with the goals outlined in Cell 2.

Cell 5: Coaching can be viewed as part of the process of organisational development. As a result of coaching, changes in individual employees' behaviour occurs. This dynamic could in turn have a positive impact on the organisation as a whole. Coaching can also take place as a group/team intervention and be used in setting strategic interventions.

Occupational social work is evolving and practitioners who are willing to recognise and embrace the change will be in a better position to deliver effective workplace interventions. An important consideration for the occupational social work community is the issue of capacity or lack of capacity of the profession as a whole. Perhaps occupational social workers lack the capacity to keep pace with the changing needs of organisations. The developments in the workplace are fast moving and require an equal dynamism on the part of occupational social work.

Table 3: Frank and Streeter (1985) Model of Occupational Social Work

Level of intervention	Individual	Organisation	Community
Nature of intervention	**Cell 1**	**Cell 2**	**Cell 3**
	- Diagnostic Assessment - Counselling - Referral - Information - Group Work	- Human Resource Development - Program Planning - Evaluation - Mediation - Team Building	- Corporate giving - Public Relations - Industrial Development - Consumer Education
	Cell 4	**Cell 5**	**Cell 6**
	- Diagnostic Ass - Counselling - Day Care - Alcohol and Drug Treatment	- Needs Assessment - Organisational Development -Strategic Planning - Advocacy	- Economic Development - Research - Mediation - Policy Analysis - Lobbying

(Source: Du Plessis, 1991)

Bargal (2000) questions whether occupational social workers can bear the burden of providing proper knowledge and skills in addition to recruiting, training and supervising professionals in an effort to cope with the new social and organisational needs of workplaces. Du Plessis (1994), likewise, argues in favour of a multi-dimensional thrust in social work intervention which will aid in creating additional practice opportunities in the workplace. The challenges are not so much one of opportunity to develop the profession as much as the profession's capacity to cope with the challenges put forward by the workplace.

The occupational social work-coaching fit deserves a separate discussion as this fit or non-fit formed the basis of the current research focus. The relationship between these two issues will be dealt with further in the next section.

3.5.1 Occupational Social Work and Coaching

Coaching and social work are related in that they are both based on a one-to-one relationship between a professional and client with the purpose being to improve or change the client's life (Pine, 2000). The goals and underpinnings of occupational

social work and coaching are both concerned with individuals realising their aspirations and reaching their full potential both personally and professionally.

According to Hoffman (1990 cited in Du Plessis, 1994) the predominant aim of people changing interventions in occupational social work is to strengthen the coping capacities of workers. This ideal holds true for the aims of the coaching profession as well. Berry (1990) argues that the skills and knowledge that social workers possess can be applied to non-traditional settings in novel ways to increase employee productivity and organisational effectiveness. Occupational social work and coaching by virtue of the workplace being their common area of practice are inextricably linked.

Saleeby (2006:7) defines empowerment as the "intent and the process of assisting individuals, groups, families and communities to discover and expend the resources and tools within and around them". There has been criticism as to whether social workers are in fact empowering clients. Occupational social work and coaching both have a focus on empowerment. Margolin (1997 cited in Saleeby, 2006) argues that the central paradox of mainstream social work practice is that social workers have managed to use the language of empowerment but have maintained the 'prerogative to plan and strategise, direct and control the counselling process' but nonetheless convincing themselves that they have 'empowered' the client. Occupational social workers would need to know considerably more than just the language of empowerment in the workplace, since organisations require monitoring and evaluation strategies as a means to measure the effectiveness of interventions such as coaching. Coaching is more than just a label; it has gained prominence as it has measures in place that demonstrate its effectiveness.

Coaching is aimed at primarily 'emotionally healthy' populations, however, research has found that some individuals seek coaching since it is seen as a socially acceptable form of therapy (Peltier, 2001). Studies have found that 25% to 50% of individuals presenting for life coaching meet clinical mental health criteria

(Green, Oades and Grant, 2005; Spence and Grant, 2005 cited in Spence, Cavanaugh and Grant, 2006). This suggests that coaching may be attracting individuals who want to address mental health issues without the stigma associated with therapy and counselling. If coaching is indeed publicly perceived as a more socially acceptable form of therapy the pressing question to ask is: 'Are coaches equipped to deal with mental health issues?' An Australian study of 148 coaches conducted by Spence, Cavanagh and Grant (2006) showed the most common backgrounds of coaches were training (57%) and consulting (41%). Since a large number of coaches enter the field of coaching from the business and consulting world they are likely to have little or no therapeutic training. Occupational social workers interested in coaching are at an advantage; since they posses both the skill and knowledge to know when a client is in need of in-depth therapy. The occupational social worker may be skilled to provide counselling services but coaching methodology is a unique form of intervention. The issue under question is: are occupational social workers skilled and knowledgeable in coaching methodology enough to begin coaching?

According to Feurer (1994 cited in Maiden, 2001) occupational social work contributes largely in companies and public sector organisations towards personnel and organisational development processes; especially new services, such as project management, team development and coaching. Bates and Thompson (2007:8) state that "the essence of occupational social work practice lies not in an administratively defined helping practice, but in a broader and often more subtle creative practice that can offer a broader perspective of people's difficulties within the workplace. Through their education and training social workers are generally adept at seeing people within their family and social contexts and consequently fashioning a more effective response." Feurer (1994 cited in Maiden, 2001) asserts that occupational social work should be marketed within new areas of service which according to the author includes coaching. This prophetic assertion about coaching being marketed and developed within occupational social work was made in 1994, which was approximately 15 years

ago. Coaching has seen limited development in the field of social work or occupational social work since Feurer's statement above. Caspi (2004) 10 years later echoes the same call as Feurer. The onus now rests on the occupational social work community to heed this call. When will new services find their way into occupational social work? Gehlenborg (2001 cited in Maiden, 2001) concurs that occupational social work must examine its products with relevance to the organisation and be accessible to new target groups through new products.

Googins and Godfrey (1987) observe that the dilemma for occupational social work is a gap between the human problems in the work environment and the perceptions by organisational decision makers of the abilities and appropriateness of occupational social workers to alleviate those problems. The authors argue that unless the gap is closed by entrepreneurial social workers and by continued communication regarding social work activities, the potential of the field will remain limited.

According to Valliantos (2001) a redoubling effort is being made with clinical social workers increasingly considering coaching as an alternative or additional mode of practice. A study in the United States of America by Williams (2004) found that twenty-three (23%) percent of therapists are presently offering coaching services to their clients. An interesting survey conducted by Grant (2006) showed that a small number of human service professionals were involved in coaching. Counsellors, psychologists, social workers taken together, accounted for only 20% of the sample. Social workers in particular accounted for only 9% of the sample. Whilst Valliantos (2001) argues that an increasing number of social workers are offering coaching services the finding above shows that social workers represent only a small percentage of coaches entering the field.

According to Caspi (2005) the evidence of the growth of coaching in social work can be seen by the increases in presentations on coaching at social work conferences, in articles and classified advertisements in National Association of Social Work (NASW) News, and in NASW state chapter publications. Furthermore,

coaching workshops are now approved for social work continuing education credits in more than 30 states in the United States of America. Whilst clinical social workers appear to be heeding the call, no evidence was found that suggests the same is true for occupational social workers. Googins and Godfrey (1987) point out that the world of work represents a core social institution whose members are faced with a variety of human and social problems. Whilst its borders and doors have been closed to the social work profession in the past, the ground breaking work of occupational social work has opened many future possibilities. If occupational social work has opened new doors and possibilities in the world of work why is it that occupational social workers don't appear to be using the opportunities for practice in the workplace?

The link between coaching and occupational social work might be clear from a theoretical perspective but developments in the field do not produce evidence of this. The non-existent relationship between occupational social work and coaching could be due to the negative issues associated with adopting coaching. The role this has played in hampering the evolvement of the profession will be examined further in the next section.

3.5.2 Negative Issues Related to Occupational Social Work and Coaching

- ***Unproven Field***

Coaching is a relatively unproven field and embarking on this as a field of practice requires careful consideration. Campbell (2001) argues that social workers should not abandon their hard won degrees and licences to move on to an unproven field in its infancy, where anyone can call himself/herself a coach.

- ***Exaggerated Financial Reward***

There appears to be an emphasis on coaching being lucrative career option for social workers. Pine (2000) suggests that this argument is questionable as the administrators of 'Coach Training Programmes' promote unrealistic expectations of coaching as a profitable career, in a bid to lure social workers into courses. Whilst

coaching does present some degree of financial reward, Pine (2000) is of the opinion that this is grossly exaggerated.

- ***Poor Business Acumen***

Occupational social workers need a strong business and marketing flair in order to survive in the world of business. Occupational social workers will be required to market and promote their coaching services. As Pine (2000) points out self-promotion could be uncomfortable for some social workers. Occupational social workers offering private coaching will be challenged to find and attract paying clients. This is quite different from working in the public sector. Social workers are trained in the humanistic principles of behaviour change and people development, social workers are not trained in the area of business development and marketing. Knowledge of these areas is critical for success as a coach. Generalist social workers do not have training in business; however, there appears to be an increasing business focus from schools of occupational social work.

Coaching has positive attributes but must not be viewed in an idealistic manner. There are clearly many controversial factors that dissuade occupational social workers from adopting coaching as a methodology. There is much debate in the literature about coaching and counselling; some proponents argue that counsellors are well suited to coach and the others are against counselling becoming diluted with erratic coaching methodology. These issues will be discussed in more detail in the next section and will shed more light on the dilemmas that occupational social workers are likely to face should they choose to offer coaching services.

3.6 Proponents For and Against Coaching and Counselling

There is an ongoing debate in academic and coaching circles alike regarding the relationship between coaching and counselling. The question remains: Is coaching merely a novel therapy in disguise (Williams, 2004)? Summerfield (2002 cited in Senior, 2007) argues that there is much confusion over whether coaching is a standalone process or connected to counselling.

3.6.1 Support for a link between Coaching and Counselling

Rogers (cited in Brockbank and McGill, 2006) suggests that coaching owes a debt to the therapeutic profession that is largely unacknowledged by the coaching fraternity. Campbell (2001) shows that in the field of coaching there is a liberal borrowing of principles from counselling and psychotherapy. According to the author, coaches borrow extensively from Albert Ellis, Arnold Beck, David Burns, Milton Erickson, Gerald Egan, Stephen de Shazer and Jay Hayley, to mention but a few. Coaching's liberal and extensive borrowing of counselling theory should serve to point counsellors back to the positive humanistic principles that form the basis of counselling and psychotherapy (Campbell, 2001). Coaching has its basis in counselling and can therefore not be seen as a solely independent 'new' form of intervention. The terminology 'coach and coaching' might be new but the tenets of coaching are steeped in age-old counselling and therapeutic traditions.

However, Mink et al (1993) argues that coaching has a job-related focus whereas counselling is motivational, focussing on personal and attitudinal problems. Richardson (1999 cited in Campbell, 2001) is of the opinion that coaching differs from counselling; in that coaching gives a more practical 'how to' approach whereas counselling does not deal with practical 'how to' issues.

Pine (2000) favours counsellors and social workers becoming involved with coaching and is of the opinion that since coaching is a growing field counsellors and social workers are obligated to consider it as they may be left behind and become irrelevant should they choose to ignore it. Coaching, according to Pine (2000), will be an interesting and important addition to the social workers repertoire of skills. Wilkins (cited in Campbell, 2001) states that coaching may serve to stimulate discussion and debate among counsellors and psychotherapists about current models for learning and personal change. Coaching could be the catalyst that the world of counselling requires to engender fresh debate and new perspectives.

3.6.2 Against a Coaching and Counselling Link

Coaches are sceptical about the involvement of 'counsellors' entering the business world. According to Sherman and Freas (2004) helping professionals may be too naive about business to win an executives' trust. Some counsellors similarly think that coaching lacks the important underpinning theory that supports therapists in their work and enables them to work productively and safely (Brockbank and McGill, 2006). There is a belief that coaches could do more damage than good as they lack training on the intricacies of cognitive processes and human development (Hicks, 1999).

Sherman and Freas (2004) argue that executive coaching is distinct from psychotherapy and that the two should be kept separate. Kerpan (2002) agrees that the approaches employed by coaches, therapists and consultants are all different. A therapist attempts to repair past problems and deficiencies, the management consultant is project-oriented and assists with strategy formulation and implementation, but the coach is future-oriented and works to increase future productivity (Kerpan, 2002).

Peltier (2001) argues against the use of the term counselling in the workplace and makes the important point that coaching is not called executive counselling or workplace therapy; since coaching is a more acceptable term as opposed to counselling or psychotherapy. The corporate world does not identify with the stigma attached to counselling; hence the terminology coach and coaching is used. There is a belief in business circles that 'only weak or crazy people' get therapy (Peltier, 2001). Coaching consequently provides a safe cloak for individuals seeking help and support in the workplace. Brockbank and McGill (2006) concur that executive coaching has become an acceptable form of therapy for isolated leaders with hubristic tendencies. It would be advantageous for occupational social workers to take note of 'socially acceptable' terminology in the workplace and examine their approach and services accordingly.

Williams (2004) asserts that since the 1990s the role of coach has been redefined and a new paradigm is emerging. In this new model, the coach is not the expert, but is instead a committed 'thought partner'. The coach and coachee share their individual thoughts, insights and opinions. Counsellors with a typical 'uninvolved neutral' approach may be too ethically bound to develop as 'thought partners'.

Both coaches and counsellors alike have an equal responsibility to clearly delineate when coaching or counselling should be utilised. Garvey (2004) points out that if there is no clear understanding in terminology between coaching, counselling and mentoring it thus becomes difficult to know who is engaging in what activity, what is being done, how effective it is, if it's value for money, or if it's been done to an appropriate standard.

There appears to be both similarities and differences between coaching and counselling. However, there is a dire need for clearer ethical guidelines and reliable empirical research in the field and until this happens the boundary between coaching and counselling will remain unclear.

3.7 Conclusion

Barak and Bargal (2000) argue that in order to create an effective occupational social work practice the profession must permit cross-fertilization between practice in workplace settings and more traditional social work settings. This chapter explored the viability of cross-fertilization between coaching and occupational social work. The examination of new methods is important for occupational social work. Logan (cited in Maiden, 2001) advocates that occupational social work can act as a beacon of light by advocating more positive and creative approaches to solving work-linked problems. Bargal (2000) agrees that the range of problems employees face call for new professional and organisational responses. The literature is clear that new methods are required and the onus now lies with occupational social workers to heed the call to develop and embrace innovative new approaches to practice.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The explosion of coaching in organisational settings has made it critical to explore the impact that this may have on the future practice of occupational social work. The research design and methodology considered suitable to explore coaching as a possible method of occupational social work intervention is examined in this chapter. To explore the knowledge, opinions, perceived skills and interest that occupational social workers may or may not have in coaching an exploratory research design was utilised. An exploratory research design was suitable as exploring coaching and occupational social work is a pioneering area of study with a scarcity of credible literature available on the topic.

4.2 Aims of the Study

4.2.1 Primary Aim

The primary aim of the study was to investigate coaching as a possible new methodology for occupational social workers.

The major premise for the study was based upon a review of the literature that indicated that social workers' clinical skills make them well suited as coaches and that coaching could serve to bolster social workers' careers (Caspi, 2005; Pine, 2000 cited in Vallianatos, 2001).

4.2.2 Secondary Objectives

The secondary objectives were:

1. To determine occupational social workers, understanding and opinions of coaching as a form of intervention in the South African workplace.

2. To explore whether occupational social workers have the relevant skills to coach.

3. To ascertain occupational social workers interests in obtaining information on coaching.

4.2.3 Research Questions that Guided the Study

The following research questions created the framework for the study:

- Does a relationship between coaching and occupational social work exist?
- What do occupational social workers know about coaching?
- What influences occupational social workers knowledge about coaching?
- Do occupational social workers have a positive or a negative perception of coaching?
- Does coaching compromise or add value to occupational social workers' methods of practice?
- Do occupational social workers see differences in offering coaching and counselling services?
- Are occupational social workers interested in obtaining information about coaching?

4.3 Research Design

Thyer (cited in De Vos et al, 1998) views a research design as a blue print or detailed plan for how a research study should be conducted. According to Babbie (2001:92), an exploratory study is most typically done for three purposes: "firstly to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding; secondly to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study and thirdly to develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent study". The purpose of exploratory research designs is to build a foundation of general ideas and tentative theories; they do not produce conclusive results but rather explore the research question or problem area (Grinnell, 1993). In view of this and in light of the scarcity of research

available on occupational social work and coaching, an exploratory research design and methodology was considered appropriate for purposes of this study. The exploratory nature of the study ensured that a foundation of general ideas and relevant issues for debate, discussion and research could be developed.

A quantitative-qualitative mixed methodology was employed as this allowed for the exploration of a number of differing variables. The use of both methods assisted in achieving an empirically relevant study with higher degrees of validity. The combination of a qualitative-quantitative mixed methodology drew on the strengths of the two approaches. Nau (1995:1) concurs that "blending qualitative and quantitative methods of research can result in a final product which can serve to highlight the significant contributions of both methods."

According to De Vos and Strydom (1998) the qualitative research paradigm in its broadest sense refers to research that elicits respondents' accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions. It produces descriptive data and thus involves identifying the respondents' beliefs and values that underlie the phenomena. A qualitative design was an appropriate choice as it elicited respondents' knowledge and opinions of coaching. Quantitative research design elements were included in the study by means of closed ended questions and a likert type scale. This ensured that important quantitative information was obtained.

4.4 Research methodology

4.4.1 Sampling

A non-probability sampling method was utilised in the study; specifically target sampling was used. Walters and Biernacki (cited De Vos et al, 2002) describe target sampling as a purposeful, systematic method in which controlled lists of specified populations within a geographical district are developed. Since the focus of the study was on occupational social workers' understanding and opinions of coaching, a target sampling method which aimed at this specific sub-group of social workers was suitable. The target group were a sample of 71 occupational social workers who were in attendance at a quarterly meeting of the South African

Occupational Social Workers Association (SAOSWA). A response rate of 39% (28 respondents) was achieved. Respondents were from the Gauteng geographical area.

4.5 The Research Tool

4.5.1 Pre-Test of the Research Tool

The aim of the pre-test was to test the feasibility of the research tool and thus ascertain its validity and reliability. According to Creswell (2003) pre-testing is important to establish the content validity of an instrument and to improve questions; formats and scales. Respondents' ability to understand the concepts and constructs of the research tool was validated as a result of the pre-test. The time taken to complete the questionnaire was also ascertained as a result of the pre-test.

Permission to conduct the pre-test was obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand, Occupational Social Work Course Co-coordinator. All 12 occupational social work students in the 2007 Occupational Social Work Course were invited to partake in the pre-test; only 8 students chose to participate in the pre-test. Pre-test respondents were not included in the research sample.

4.5.2 Modifications to the Research Tool

The following comments and responses were obtained from the respondents' in the pre-test and the resultant modifications were made:

- Three of the 8 respondents (38%) were of the opinion that the questionnaire was too long. This comment was taken into account and the completion time reduced from approximately 30-40 minutes to 20-25 minutes.

- There were comments that suggested that the tool contained too many open- ended questions. These comments were modified taking into account the over-all exploratory nature of the study and the appropriate changes were made.

- Four respondents (50%) found the instructions for completion of the 'Mentoring and Coaching Talents Inventory' *difficult to understand.* Instructions for completion of the inventory were rephrased to increase understanding.

- An explanation of coaching terminology was requested from respondents who indicated they were unfamiliar with the concept of coaching. The request was noted but could not be fulfilled; since the purpose of the study was to ascertain respondents' understanding of the term coaching and supplying information on coaching would thus defeat the aims of the study.

4.5.3 The Self-Administered Questionnaire

A self-administered questionnaire was chosen as a measuring instrument as it offered anonymity, avoided interview bias and was considered to be more cost-effective (Neuman, 2003). The disadvantage of this method of data collection is that the researcher could not control the conditions under which the questionnaire was completed. Also as Neuman (2003) points out since there is no-one present to clarify questions or probe for more information a higher rate of incomplete responses are common.

The questionnaire consisted of two main sections. The first was a custom designed set of questions pertaining to respondents' demographic information; employment details; further education and training; coaching and counselling as well as coaching and occupational social work. The second section of the research tool consisted of a "Mentoring and Coaching Talents Inventory" (Appendix A) developed by Meyer and Mabaso (2001). An examination of each of these components is detailed in the next section.

4.5.3.1 Part One of the Self-Administered Questionnaire

The self-administered questionnaire consisted of two main parts which were sub-divided into 6 sub-sections. Part 1 had 5 sub-sections and each of these will be

discussed below. This will be followed by a discussion of Part 2 which consisted of a Likert type scale.

- ***Section A: Demographic Particulars of Respondents***

There were 4 items in this section of which 3 were tick-box styled questions and 1 open-ended question.

- ***Section B: Employment Particulars***

This section consisted of 7 items. Respondents' employment particulars were an important factor when examining respondents' understanding and skill to coach. Predominantly closed questions, dichotomous questions and ordinal questions were used in this section. According to (Babbie, 2001), the order of questionnaire items affect responses, thus care was taken to initially present shorter, less threatening, closed-ended questions. This pattern of question ordering was maintained in all sections of the research tool.

- ***Section C: Further Education and Training***

This 7 item section formed an integral part of the research findings as it explored education and training as a variable in assessing respondents' understanding, skill and perceptions to coaching. This section was exploratory in nature and contained mainly open ended questions.

- ***Section D: Coaching and Counselling***

The fourth section contained 7 items and focussed on eliciting respondents understanding and perceptions on coaching and counselling. It contained a combination of open-ended questions; completion questions; dichotomous questions as well as follow-up questions.

- ***Section E: Coaching and Occupational Social Work***

The primary objective of the research study was to examine coaching as a possible new method for occupational social workers. In view of this, the

opinions of respondents in this section were critical in fulfilling those objectives. There were 12 items in this section. This last section focussed specifically on coaching and occupational social work and contained a majority of dichotomous questions but fewer open-ended questions.

4.5.3.2 Part Two - Mentoring and Coaching Talents Inventory Scale

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of the Mentoring and Coaching Talents Inventory Scale (Meyer and Mabaso, 2001). The scale is a self-assessment checklist first developed for use in the South African Navy as part of the South African Navy's Mentoring Programme. This Likert type scale is based on 30 statements that evaluate respondents' suitability to coach/ mentor. The scale is, therefore, well-suited to the South African context and specifically suited for the current study which consisted of a majority of government employees.

The scale was developed from theoretical frameworks on mentoring and coaching. The statements in the scale were based on the International Coaching Federation Competency Framework which outlines the core competencies required for coaching. Since the components' of the scale were in line with internationally accepted standards for coaching it contributed to the construct validity of the scale.

The 30 statements on the attributes most suitable for a coach and/or mentor consisted of the following main components: 1) Personality Traits;
2) Approachability; 3) Problem Solving Skills; 4) Leadership Skills and 5) Communication Skills. Each of these is discussed below and represented in Table 4 below.

- ***Main Components of Scale:***

Personality Traits refer to issues in the scale such as: patience; willingness to help; ability to enjoy and celebrate others success or disappointments; ability to remain calm in stressful situations and level of optimism.

Approachability refers to: whether people/co-workers at any level could approach respondent for advice or help and whether respondent was able to act as a confidant.

Problem Solving refers to: issues such as how respondents approached problem situations; the types of skills employed in addressing problems and the level of problem solving skills that respondents possessed.

Leadership refers to: whether respondents understood the priorities required of a leader; ability to provide constructive criticism and feed back; ability to deal with mistakes or failings and willingness to receive coaching and to be a coach.

Communication refers to: ability to express feelings; whether respondent is able to communicate clearly; respondents' ability and skill to listen and relationship skills.

Table 4: Main Components of the Mentoring and Coaching Talents Inventory

SUITABLE SKILLS AND CHARACTER TRAITS	NUMBER OF ITEMS IN THE INVENTORY
Personality Traits	Items 1, 2, 5,11, 16,17, 18,
Approachability	Items 8, 21, 22, 23, 29
Problem Solving Skills	Items 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15,
Leadership Skills	Items 6, 13, 19, 20, 24, 25, 30
Communication Skills	Items 3, 26, 27, 28,

- ***Scoring Method used in the Inventory***

The respondents were required to rate themselves for each item according to the following Likert scale: (See Table 5)

Table 5: Inventory Category Rating

NUMBER	CATEGORY ON THE SCALE
1	strongly disagree
2	disagree
3	slightly disagree
4	slightly agree
5	agree
6	strongly agree

Taken from Meyer and Mabaso (2001)

All scores were added together and given an overall score. Based on the Meyer and Mabaso (2001) scoring scale an appropriate meaning for each response was calculated. Each respondent's suitability to a career in coaching and/or mentoring was then determined by a final score. (See Table 6 below)

Table 6: Inventory Scoring Table

RANGE OF SCORES	INTERPRETATION OF SCORES
A score of 0 – 69	You are not ready to be a mentor or a coach.
A score of 70 – 109	You need major development.
A score of 110 – 149	You have good potential to become a mentor or a coach.
A score of 150 – 180	You will be an excellent coach or mentor.

Taken from Meyer and Mabaso (2001)

4.6 Research Procedure and Data Collection Methods

Having examined the measuring instruments employed in the study, this section outlines the research procedure and data collection methods used in the research study.

4.6.1 Paper-Based Research Tool

Permission to conduct the current research with South African Occupational Social Work Association (SAOSWA) members was applied for and obtained from the SAOSWA Management Committee (see Appendix B). The SAOSWA committee agreed to the researcher attending the first quarterly meeting of the Society. The purpose of attendance at the meeting was to brief members of SAOSWA on the current research project and invite potential respondents to participate.

Respondents who chose to participate were invited to collect a copy of the questionnaire from a designated box which was available at the end of the quarterly meeting. The questionnaire had an invitation letter and an informed consent form attached to it; this explained the nature of the study and gave brief description of the purpose of the research. Respondents were given the option of either faxing the completed questionnaire back to the researcher or handing the completed questionnaire in at a common point in the organisation.

4.6.2 Web-Based Research Tool

The research tool was made available on the internet. Madge (2007) is of the opinion that web-based research tools are easier and more convenient to complete, response rates could be significantly higher, resulting in increased data accuracy and reliability.

The choice to employ an online research tool was based on the increased availability and accessibility of email and internet usage. The advantage of the online tool was the convenience and ease of completion as well as the fact that respondents outside of the geographical area of Gauteng could be reached.

The ease and accessibility of communicating by means of online methods made the development of a web based research tool an appropriate method. SAOSWA members were emailed an invitation letter, with the following direct electronic link to the host website. http://uamp.wits.ac.za/surveys/survey.php?sid=28 (Appendix C).

The technological support for this survey was obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand Information Technology Department and the University's webmaster. The online survey was formulated in collaboration with the University of the Witwatersrand's webmaster.

Measures were put in place to ensure that the website and online questionnaire was user friendly and easy to navigate. A secure online host site owned and operated by the University of the Witwatersrand was made available for the researcher; thus the necessary security measures were ensured. A specially designed computer format was utilised to construct the online questionnaire.

4.6.2.1 Web-Based Research Ethics

Online research is distinct to traditional methods of data collection and hence the ethical considerations require further discussion. Technological advances and the accessibility of the internet and email in South Africa have made the option of conducting research online a viable, affordable and secure option. According to Madge (2007) there are five key issues of ethical conduct commonly identified pertaining to online research ethics they are: informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, debriefing and netiquette. Online ethical considerations were taken into account in the following manner:

- **Informed Consent for the Web Based Tool -** Potential respondents were invited to choose to participate in the research. Respondents were emailed an invitation letter, with a direct link to the host website and the online questionnaire. Informed consent was obtained by means of an invitation/information letter which introduced prospective respondents' to the

purpose of the research and the rights of respondents to withdraw at anytime in the research process.

- **Confidentiality -** In order to ensure confidentiality, technological support was obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand Information Technology Department. The researcher worked closely with the webmaster from the University of the Witwatersrand to ensure that the website and questionnaire was user friendly and easy to navigate. The researcher arranged for an independent member of the SAOSWA committee to email potential respondents from SAOSWA's database. This ensured that the researcher had no identifying details of respondents. The necessary security measures were ensured and a secure online host site owned and operated by the University of the Witwatersrand ensured that respondents remained anonymous and responses confidential.

4.6.2.2 Challenges of Web-Based Research

The debate surrounding online research ethics according to Madge (2007) is a work in progress and the ethical challenges are not simple. The following challenges were confronted in the research process:

- *The formulation of the online tool:* This involved the use complex software programming and specialised information technology input.

- *The issues of privacy and confidentiality:* Securing an affordable, stable host site was of necessity. To safeguard respondents it was critical that the host site be a certified secure site.

- *The dissemination of the research tool to prospective respondents:* The issues of changed or corrupted email addresses must be verified as part of the research process in order to ensure delivery of the research tool.

4.7 Data Analysis

The research tool produced both quantitative and qualitative data.

4.7.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

The process of qualitative data analysis involved analysing the data into categories on the basis of themes, concepts or similar features (Neuman, 2003). Creswell (1988: 144 in De Vos; 1998) states that "classifying means taking the text or qualitative information apart and looking for categories, themes or dimensions of information".

- The raw data was organised into one schedule using Microsoft Word and Excel programmes.

- After the initial examination, the raw data was divided into the most prevalent themes. Common words, phrases and themes that emerged in the text were coded. The main themes were further classified into sub-themes and lesser themes.

- The raw data was cross-correlated and re-examined to determine if relationships between the variables existed. The two main variables examined included respondents current and past employment as well as further education and training.

- This process of data classification, ordering and coding was repeated until definite succinct themes emerged.

- The major themes and issues were reflected upon by means of peer discussion, supervision, note-taking and journaling. This assisted in eliminating possible researcher bias. However, it also provided important insights that aided in the interpretation of the results. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985 cited in Creswell, 2003) the final step in the data analysis process involves interpreting or making meaning of the data and examining the lessons learned.

- The major results and the meaning that was deduced from this process were then displayed using bar graphs, charts and tables. The use of rich, thick descriptions and direct quotations were used to convey findings. The rich, thick descriptions were also used as a strategy to check the accuracy of findings (Creswell, 2003).

4.7.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative variables were organised into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The discreet and continuous variables were counted and measured. These were presented in bar charts, graphs and tables. Results were compared with the demands and expectations of theory and literature which according to De Vos (1998) serves an additional purpose of verification.

4.7.3 Validity

This section will show how validity on a number of levels was achieved. One of the primary methods in which validity was taken into account was by the use of both a qualitative and a quantitative research design. Jayaratne (1993:117) postulates that “qualitative data can support and explicate the meaning of quantitative research”.

4.7.3.1 Content Validity

According to Creswell (2003) content validity refers to whether the content of a research tool measured the content it intended to measure. Table 4 above shows that a number of different indicators were used to determine the attributes being measured. The use of multiple indicators in the scale serves to improve the content validity of the scale. According to Neuman (2003:198) “the use of multiple indicators that measure several aspects of a construct or opinion improves content validity.”

The scale was designed to avoid response bias by switching the direction of the scoring for item 20.

4.7.3.2 Construct Validity

Creswell (2003) describes construct validity as whether items on a research tool measure hypothetical constructs or concepts.

The main components of the scale were in line with the International Coaching Federations 11 main competencies required to be a successful coach. Each of the main components of the scale are highlighted and displayed in Table 4.The use of an international standard for establishing the constructs of the scale ensured that construct validity was attained.

Construct validity was promoted by means of an extensive literature review and the application of theoretical concepts in the development of the custom made self-administered questionnaire.

Humbley and Zumbo (1996 cited in Creswell, 2003) argue that construct validity also includes whether scores serve a useful purpose and have positive consequences.

4.7.4 Reliability

Occupational social work students were purposefully selected to participate in the pre-test as this group represented the proposed target sample for the study. This promoted the reliability of the research tool.

The use of triangulation in the data collection process assisted in ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings. Triangulation was achieved via the use of custom-designed self-administered questionnaire as well as Meyer and Mabaso's (2001) Mentoring and Coaching Talents Inventory to elicit qualitative and quantitative data.

Peer discussion, supervision, note-taking and journaling were also measures undertaken to aid in enhancing the reliability of the research process and findings.

According to Merriam (2002) validity and reliability depend to an extent on the ethical manner in which the research was conducted. The current study remained ethically grounded and adhered to the ethical guidelines outlined by the Ethics Graduate Studies Committee thus contributing to the validity and reliability of the study.

4.8 Potential Contributions of the Study

The study explored coaching as a possible method of intervention for occupational social workers. The potential contribution of the study includes the following:

- To determine the readiness of occupational social workers to explore alternative methods.

- To inform future practice decisions and the give insight into some of the factors that influences the evolvement of the profession.

- To contribute to ongoing debate and discussion within the occupational social work community regarding new methods of intervention such as coaching and social work/counselling, thereby stimulating an interest in an examination of other innovative strategies for occupational social workers.

- To encourage occupational social workers' interest in the field of coaching and support further research of the coaching-occupational social work debate.

- To add to the body of knowledge and contribute to the paucity of research on coaching and social work.

- To promote the use of technology and specifically online survey tools in conducting research.

4.9 Limitations and Strengths of the Study

4.9.1 Limitations of the study included:

- The possibility of researcher bias was explored as the researcher is involved in both occupational social work and coaching. Possible bias was overcome by means of regular supervision, peer review and note keeping. This gave the researcher the opportunity to reflect on and put measures in place to avoid possible bias. The quantitative aspects of the research tool furthermore assisted in maintaining objectivity as it aided in the process of triangulation.

- Purposive, non-probability sampling was used with the specific group of occupational social workers. The sample did not include all members on the SAOSWA database and thus the findings in the study cannot be generalised to SAOSWA members and other occupational social work population groups.

- All respondents in the study were affiliated to SAOSWA. This limited the spectrum of respondents. Occupational social work practitioners outside of SAOSWA were not represented in the study, which hampered the representation of the sample.

- The sample consisted of 89% of respondents from the government sector. The representation of the population was thus compromised which negatively impacted the findings. Seventeen respondents (61%) in the sample were employed in one organisation and a further 5 respondents (18%) employed in another organisation. Findings could not, therefore, be generalised to the experiences and opinions of occupational social workers from other work environments.

- Another limitation was the fact that the research tool consisted of too many open-ended questions. The number of unanswered questions was a limitation in the study as it limited the sample size and compromised the

analysis, validity and reliability. The low rate of completion of the research tool could be due to the number of open ended questions in the tool.

- A further limitation and a contributing factor to the low rate of completion of the research tool could be the fact that questionnaires were completed in respondents' personal space and time. It was found that only 46% (13 respondents) completed all the questions; 32 % (9 respondents) left 3% to 10% of their questionnaires blank and 22% (6 respondents) left 10% to 74% their questions unanswered. According to Neuman (2003) incomplete questions are common in self-administered questionnaires.

- The questionnaire was made available to each respondent to complete in their own time; this increased the likelihood of skewed responses. This impacted the reliability and validity of information contained in the completed questionnaire**.**

4.9.2 The strengths of the study included the following:

- An exploratory research design proved to be positive point in the current study. Utilising an exploratory research design allowed for a richness of information to be gathered that directly reflected respondents' perspectives and levels of understanding since the topic of coaching and occupational social work was relatively new.

- The use of open-ended questions proved valuable in that it gave respondents the opportunity to express their opinions.

- The research tool was made available in both paper-based format and web-based format. This increased opportunities for respondents from other geographical areas outside of Gauteng province to participate in the study, thus further increasing the possible scope of the study.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Non-medical Ethics Committee of the University of Witwatersrand. Potential respondents' were given an information sheet detailing the purpose and process of the research. Factors relating to confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw from the study at any point in the research process were highlighted.

4.11 Conclusion

An explanation of the design and methodology of the research represents the core undertaking of the entire research project. This chapter represented an overview of the aims and objectives; an explanation of the research questions addressed and an overview and motivation for the choice of research design and methodology.

CHAPTER: 5 ANALYSES OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

An examination of the major South African social work journals yielded no articles or information related to coaching and social work or occupational social work. However, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) in the United States of America has published articles exploring social work and coaching, one of the most important being Jonathan Caspi's (2005) article entitled *"Coaching and Social Work: Challenges and Concerns".* According to Caspi (2005) coaching has been included in several of the NASW conference topics. This highlights the growing interest from the international social work community for information on coaching. Irrespective of the international interest in coaching and social work there appears to be a paucity of information on the use and understanding of coaching amongst South African occupational social workers.

The possible inter-relationship between coaching and occupational social work raises issues that pertain to 'fit' and 'readiness'. Does coaching 'fit' the mandate of occupational social work and should a 'fit' between these two fields exist? The readiness of the occupational social work community to practice coaching requires further investigation.

This chapter analyses the results of the study and draws conclusions from the findings that begin to address the above questions. This chapter includes a presentation, analysis and discussion of the research findings and is organised into the following main sections: demographic data of respondents; employment and educational particulars and respondents understanding and opinions of coaching.

5.2 Demographic Details of Respondents

5.2.1 Gender and Racial Distribution

For the purposes of analysis and discussion the gender, racial demographics and social work experience of respondents were organised collectively and represented in Table 7.

Table 7: Gender, Racial Distribution and Social Work Experience[1]

YEARS OF SOCIAL WORK EXPERIENCE	**NUMBER OF AFRICAN RESPONDENTS**		**NUMBER OF WHITE RESPONDENTS**		**NUMBER OF COLOURED RESPONDENTS**		**NUMBER OF ASIAN RESPONDENTS**	
	Female	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**
1- 5 years	1 (4%)	1 (4%)						
6 – 10 years	4 (14%)	2 (7%)	4 (14%)				1 (4%)	1 (4%)
11-15 years	5 (18 %)		1 (4%)		1 (4%)	1 (4%)		
16-20 years			3 (11%)					1 (4%)
21 or more years			2 (7%)					
Total	10 (36%)	3 (11%)	10 (36%)		1 (4%)	1 (4%)		
Total Sample: 28 (100%)		**Total African**: 13 (46%)		**Total White**: 10 (36%)		**Total Coloured**: 2 (7%)		**Total Asian**: 3 (11%)

n = 28

[1] Social work experience refers to years employed as a social worker and not time qualified as a social worker. Social work experience will be further discussed in section 5.2.3.1.

Females were the predominant gender in the sample. Twenty-two of the 28 respondents represented in the study (79%) were female and only 6 respondents (21%) were males. The African population had the largest representation with 13 respondents (46%); of which 10 respondents were female (36%) and 3 were male (11%).

The second largest population group represented was the White population group with 10 female respondents (36%); but no White males were represented in the study. The Coloured population group were represented by 1 male (4%) and 1 female (4%) respondent. There were 2 Asian males (8%) and 1 Asian female (4%) represented in the study.

5.2.2 Languages of Respondents

All 11 South African languages were spoken by various respondents. English and Afrikaans were the most common languages spoken.

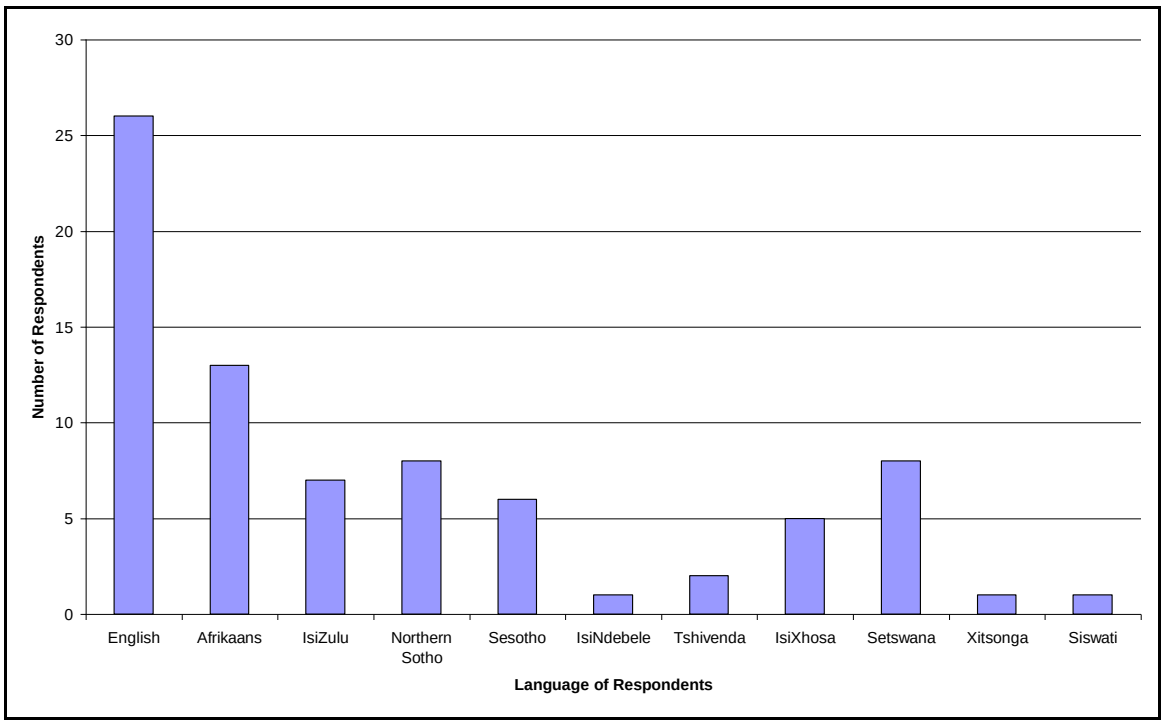


Figure 1: Languages of Respondents n=28

Earle (2008) points out that the core of social work is about communication and building relationships. The ability to communicate with clients represents the foundation of a client - social worker relationship.

Therefore, an understanding of the complexity of communication in having 11 official languages in one country is important in a discussion of South African social workers. Figure 1 represents the diversity of languages that respondents spoke. All respondents understood and spoke English since all 28 respondents answered the research tool in English. The following language groups were spoken by respondents: Afrikaans 13 respondents (43%); IsiZulu 7 (25%); Sesotho 6 (21%); IsiXhosa 5 (22%); Tshivenda 5 (7%); Setswana and Northern Sotho 8 (28%) respectively and IsiNdebele, SiSwati and Xitsonga had 1 (4%) respondent each.

5.2.3 Respondents' Employment Particulars

Respondents' employment particulars were examined with particular attention given to social work experience; work experience outside the field of social work; involvement in occupational social work practice; the type of organisations that respondents were employed in; their main job responsibilities and the duration of time that respondents spent in their current social work position was examined. An understanding of respondents' employment particulars was important for analysing the impact that employment had on respondents' perceptions and opinions of coaching.

5.2.3.1 Social Work Experience

Analysing social work experience is an important variable since social work deals with human behaviour in organisations and corporate settings and could possibly play a role in respondents' understanding and skill to coach.

White females had more social work experience than other respondents. Three (11%) white social workers had between 16 to 20 years social work experience whilst 2 (7%) white social workers had more than 20 years experience with none of

the other respondents having this amount of experience. The historical legacy of apartheid could be a factor that afforded White respondents in this study the opportunity to gain a tertiary qualification. This could possibly have placed White respondents at an advantage in comparison to the [2]Black respondents.

Table 7 indicates that 20 respondents (71%) had more than 6 years but less than 15 years social work experience. The sample thus represented a well experienced cross-section of social workers. Six respondents (21%) had between 16 to 20 or more years experience. Only 2 respondents (8%) had between 1 and 5 years social work experience.

5.2.3.2 Prior Work Experience

Twenty respondents (71%) had not had any other[3] employment experience, outside of social work. Eight respondents (29%) had had other employment, prior to becoming social workers. Table 8, highlights the type of 'other' experience that respondents were engaged in.

Other work experience was divided into 3 areas; namely business related work; work in the helping professions and other work experience. Respondents' work experience, varied from personnel services and sales to nursing and administration. Table 8 indicates the range of other work experience that social workers in this sample had engaged in before entering the field of social work.

Table 8: Other Work Experience

BUSINESS RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE	WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE HELPING PROFESSION	OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE
Personnel Service Logistics Insurance industry Sales Employee relations	Nursing Caregiver in an Institution Absenteeism Management Welfare Officer	Travel industry Administration Housing Manager

n=12

[2] The term Black in the context of the study refers to all African, Coloured and Asian respondents as defined by the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1988

[3] Other employment refers to any employment undertaken outside the field of social work

An Australian study of 148 coaches conducted by Spence, Cavanagh and Grant (2006) showed the previous work experience of coaches. The most common backgrounds included: training (57%); consulting (41%) and counselling (48%). Other backgrounds included psychology (31%), meditation (10%), social work (9%), youth work (8%) and sport (8%). The Spence et al (2006) study illustrates that coaches enter coaching from a diverse range of backgrounds. Social workers appear to be making inroads in coaching albeit it in small numbers. Only (9%) of the coaches in Spence's study had experience in social work. This representation of social workers in the Spence study is significant for the current research study as it confirmed the interest that social workers have in coaching and motivates the need for further investigation in the field.

5.2.3.3 Occupational Social Work Practice

Twenty two respondents (81%) practised as occupational social workers; whilst 4 (15%) indicated that they practiced occupational work only sometimes[4]. One respondent (4%) had never practised occupational social work. Coaching in the context of this study was examined as an organisational intervention. It was therefore appropriate that 81% of respondents practiced occupational social work and were thus possibly more familiar with current organisational interventions.

5.2.3.4 Type of Organisation

The majority of respondents 24 (89%) were from government institutions. Occupational social workers from other types of organisations were not well represented in the study with only 1 respondent (4%) being self-employed. There were no respondents from the private sector represented in the study.

[4] The meaning of 'sometimes' indicates that occupational social work was not respondents main job responsibility. However respondents did on occasion practice occupational social work.

5.2.3.5 Main Job Responsibilities

- ***Role Variety in Occupational Social Work***

For the purposes of analysis and discussion respondents' main job responsibilities were categorised according to micro, meso and macro practice. In the context of this study, micro practice is a one-on-one intervention, meso work involves work in groups or teams and macro work is an organisation or community wide focus.

However, while 22 respondents (81%) indicated they practised occupational social work, only 3 respondents (7%) viewed occupational social work as their main job responsibility. This raises the issue as to what respondents define as occupational social work. It appears that respondents have put on or been given the label of 'occupational social worker' but are in fact not involved with occupational social work as their main job responsibility. There is a need for greater clarity as to who can be called an occupational social worker and what constitutes occupational social work. Occupational social work in South Africa is gearing towards recognition as an area of specialisation, these norms and standards may contribute in levelling the occupational social work playing field and aid in clarifying what the main responsibilities of occupational social work really are. There is, nonetheless, controversy as to the roles that occupational social workers should occupy in the workplace. Inversen (1998) points out that occupational social workers have been employed in a range of areas from job development; job coach; employment advisor; retention support worker to job placement advisor.

The multiplicity roles that occupational social workers play are highlighted in Frank and Streeter's (1985) model of occupational social work. These range from human resources development, organisational development, strategic planning, facilitating team building, to research, mediation and advocacy.

Du Plessis (1994) argues that whilst the practice domain, the culture of the organisation and mandate from management all contribute to the direction of practice, the onus lies on the individual worker to fight turf battles and operate with

political savvy. The question needs to be raised as to whether or not occupational social workers are winning turf battles; given the above result where only 3 respondents (7%) stated that occupational social work was their main job responsibility. Reaching consensus on the future direction of the occupational social work profession is complicated by the varied roles, interests and power struggles that are present in occupational social work practice.

- ***Shift in Practice Focus***

Results of the current study show a move away from a casework focus towards a macro work focus. Only 28% of the sample was involved in micro work and 46% involved in macro work. (See Table 9 below) This is in stark contrast to Du Plessis (1994) study where all 70 (100%) occupational social workers were involved in micro work. This finding illustrated a shift in intervention methods used by occupational social workers from micro to macro practice.

Meso practice appears not to be a focus area for this sample of occupational social workers. Meso practice could add value as an organisational intervention with teams in the workplace. In Googins (1987 cited in Du Plessis, 1990) educational and prevention programmes are mapped out in his five stage model for the evolution of occupational social work. Occupational social workers could add value to organisations in utilising their meso practice skills to provide educational and prevention programmes. Programmes focussing on team building, conflict management and other organisational specific needs and issues are well within the ambit of the occupational social worker. Meso practice is an important area of practice for occupational social workers and the professions future role in meso practice requires further research and investigation

Respondents in the current study practiced occupational social work across a continuum from micro to macro practice and were not engaged in only one method of intervention. Du Plessis (1994) points out that the diversity of occupational social work roles in organisations is due to the variety of settings included under

the rubric 'occupational social work' as well as the wide ranging needs and problems in occupational settings.

The focus of practice in South African social work has undergone major transformation in recent years. As Gray (1998 in Gray and Fook: 2004) points out, the social development framework in South Africa provides the macro policy perspective within which social workers are asked to transcend traditional boundaries and make an impact on problems of mass poverty, unemployment and social deprivation, through greater use of diverse social work methods.

Table 9: Main Job Responsibilities

MICRO WORK	CASEWORK 10 (23 %)	EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES 2 (5%)			
MESO WORK	Group Work 2 (5%)				
MACRO WORK	Community Work 5 (11%)	Workplace Interventions 2 (5%) Project Management 2 (5%)	Consulting in Human development Personnel Development 3 (7%) Training/ Presentations/ Lecturing 5 (11%)	Occupational Social Work 3 (7%)	Disability Management 2 (5%) Absenteeism Management 1 (2%)
***OTHER**	Supervision / Management of Social Workers 5 (11%)	Social Work Administration 2 (5%)			Total 100%

n = 28

These include methods such as advocacy, community development, empowerment, consultation, networking, action research, and policy analysis. It is postulated that the strong community development approach and call for diverse methods have impacted the manner in which occupational social workers deliver services with a growing emphasis on a macro practice framework, as can be seen from the findings above.

5.2.3.6 Length of Employment in Current Social Work Position

The results showed that the majority of social workers have remained in their current social work positions for extensive periods of time. Figure 2 below shows that 12 respondents (42%) were employed in the same social work position for at least 6 to 10 years. Fourteen respondents (50%) have been in their current positions for more than 11 years. This demonstrated a high staff retention rate in government institutions. Respondents who have remained in their current positions for 6 to 10 years were employed in government institutions.

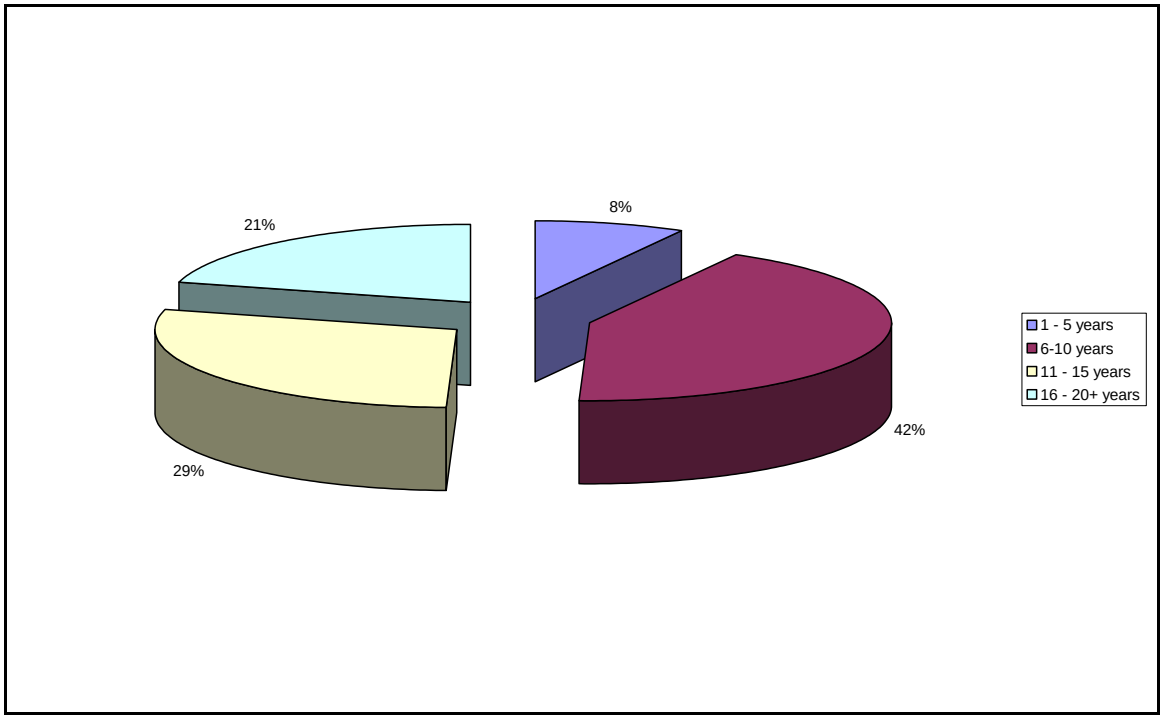


Figure 2: Duration in Current Social Work Position n=28

The Recruitment and Retention Strategy of the Department of Social Services (2006) was examined to shed further insight into this finding. The Department of Social Services implemented a Recruitment and Retention Strategy for social workers; which advocated the re-grading of social work salaries. Also included are specific strategies to recruit and retain social workers (Draft Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers in South Africa, 2006b). In line with the Recruitment and Retention Strategy the South African Police Service and the

South African National Defence Force have re-graded social work salaries (Earle, 2008). As a result of budgetary constraints, the non-governmental sectors have not implemented the salary re-grade. This has resulted in large numbers of social workers leaving the non-governmental sector in favour of lucrative government positions (Earle, 2008).

A study conducted by Brown and Neku (2005:309) in which 10 South African social workers were interviewed echoed the above view: “Employment in the government sector is more beneficial financially.” According to Brown and Neku (2005) social workers in the non governmental sector with 1 to 10 years work experience get paid between R4000 - R7000 per month. The majority of respondents (89%) participating in the study were from either the South African Police Service or the South African National Defence Force where a salary re-grade has been implemented. The difference in salary scale between the government and the non-government sector could be a contributing factor in the high retention rate of government social workers in the current study.

An analysis of respondents’ employment particulars depicts a wide diversity of roles that occupational social workers are engaged in. According to Googins and Godfrey (1987) the varieties of occupational social work functions are merely the explorations of a developmental era and reflect the social needs of a new client system. This statement by Googins and Godfrey was made approximately 22 years ago; it appears that not much has changed in the field of occupational social work since then. The challenges in determining roles and fighting for professional turf remain the same. Has South African occupational social work actually evolved since Du Plessis’ (1994) thesis entitled ‘Issue Resolution in the Evolvement of Occupational Social Work Practice in South Africa?’ The issues facing the profession appear the same; the occupational social work profession is challenged to move towards providing unique solutions to address these challenges.

5.3 Education and Training

5.3.1 Primary Social Work Degree

Fourteen respondents (54%) completed their social work degree during the years 1995 to 2005; 11 respondents (42%) qualified in the years 1984 to 1994 and 1 respondent (4%) qualified during the years 1973 to 1983. (See Table 10) This indicates a well-experienced sample with many years of exposure in the helping profession. This study was interested in testing whether respondents who completed their social work degrees at different times had more or less of an understanding of coaching. It was found that the year in which respondents obtained their social work qualification played no role in promoting respondents' understanding of coaching. Respondents who obtained their degrees earlier, between 1973 and 1983 showed no difference in understanding of coaching from respondents who qualified between 1984 and 1994.

Table 10: Completion of Social Work Degree

PERIOD OF QUALIFICATION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
1973 - 1983	1 (4%)
1984 - 1994	11 (42%)
1995 - 2005	14 (54%)

n=26

5.3.2 Continuing Education[5] for the years 2007/2008

According to Du Plessis (2001) continuing education is one of the factors that determine whether social workers will have a positive impact on the workplace. It is, therefore, important to examine respondents' engagement in ongoing education. Results also showed that only 13 respondents (46%) were engaged in continuing education prior to 2007.

However, results indicated a low level of current involvement in ongoing education. For the academic year 2007/2008 only 6 respondents (22%) enrolled for post-

[5] Continuing Education refers to any form of ongoing learning, ranging from post graduate degree or diploma courses to in-house staff workshops.

graduate courses and 21 respondents (78%) had not registered for any post-graduate courses in 2007/2008.

Economic reasons were considered a factor that hindered social workers from studying further (Earle, 2008). Post graduate studies require funds to complete and income is considered lost for the duration of the study period. Furthermore, there is little incentive for social workers to pursue post graduate studies. Additional qualifications are not always rewarded with remuneration in the job marketplace. Fortune and Hanks (1988) note that contrary to expectations social workers with higher levels of education did not earn more but ironically somewhat less than social workers with basic qualifications. There are varied reasons for social workers not pursuing further study. These issues require attention from the social work fraternity in order to ensure a highly skilled, knowledgeable and relevant social work force.

In Earle's (2008) study of South African social workers, continuing education was only undertaken if it was required for work in a specific area of specialisation, for example play therapy, social work in health care or occupational social work. Continuing study was considered if it supported movement into an alternate career such as law, employee assistance programmes human resources, management and the like.

5.3.3 Nature of Courses completed prior to 2007

Only 13 respondents (46%) engaged in continuing education prior to 2007. Respondents attended a diverse range of courses. The diversity of courses revealed the variety of interest and wealth of experience that the current sample possessed. One of the areas of study included 5 respondents (18%) who studied HIV/AIDS counselling. Certificate courses and short courses in the following fields were also undertaken: 4 respondents (40%) studied Play Therapy; 2 (20%) studied Education, Training and Development (ETDP) and 2 (20%) studied courses in Trauma De-briefing.

The low percentage of respondents (18%) who studied further in the HIV/AIDS area is a cause for concern. HIV/AIDS is a critical issue for social workers in South Africa to address and the low percentage of social workers studying in this area raises questions around the level of knowledge and skill that social workers possess in the HIV/AIDS field.

Business training was examined as a variable that could possibly enhance respondents' understanding of coaching. The only business related field represented in the sample was Human Resource Development which was studied by 1 respondent. This respondent did not show an increased understanding in coaching.

The respondents in the current study indicated that business related studies were important for social workers' interested in coaching. Some of the fields of study suggested by respondents to prepare for a career in coaching included: Project Management, Supervision Course, Law Degree (LLB), Industrial Relations and Diplomacy, Occupational Social Work, Management Training and Human Resources Management.

Lack of involvement in continuing education may result in respondents having a limited knowledge of developments in the field of social work and must be taken seriously by the social work fraternity. This could be a contributing factor in the slow pace of the evolvement of the profession. According to Du Plessis (1994) occupational social workers effectiveness in the workplace will be determined by their ongoing education. The second part of this chapter examines the various issues that may affect how respondents think about, and understand coaching.

5.4 Respondents' Understanding of Coaching

When comparing respondents understanding of coaching with the international and South African accepted definitions of coaching it was found that the majority of respondents showed a limited understanding of coaching. According to the International Coach Federation (ICF), "coaching is an interactive process that

helps individuals and organisations to develop more rapidly and produce increasingly satisfying results," (Valliantos, 2001:1). Coaching and Mentoring South Africa (COMENSA) view coaching as "a professional, collaborative and outcomes-driven method of learning that seeks to develop an individual and raise self-awareness so that he or she might achieve specific goals and perform at a more effective level" (cited in Rostron, 2006:6).

From the above definitions we see the achievement of goals, goal setting and experiencing satisfying results as key components of coaching. The majority of respondents (83%) did not agree that goal setting was an outcome of coaching. There were only 4 (17%) definitions by respondents that described coaching with the outcome being the achievement of goals.

The section below highlights some of the respondents' key understanding of coaching and examines the correlation between this and literature definitions of coaching.

5.4.1 Keywords used by Respondents' to describe Coaching

- ***Encouraging/Supporting***

Only 2 respondents (8%) saw encouragement and support as linked to coaching. The coaching process is designed to inspire and encourage individuals. However, coaching is a far more comprehensive, planned process than only providing encouragement and support. Encouragement and support could be seen as by-products of a collaborative coaching process.

- ***Mentoring***

Seven respondents (30%) concurred on coaching being a form of mentoring. According to Law, Ireland and Hussain (2006) coaching and mentoring are very different concepts. Mentoring may be regarded as person-development centred approach, which primarily embraces career issues and personal development. It may be a long term relationship, which continues through job changes. On the other hand, coaching is performance centred, relatively short term and focusses

more on personal effectiveness within the organisation. In Peltier's (2001) view coaching can be related to mentoring but coaching as a discipline has a multifaceted focus which extends beyond mentoring. The study focus was in keeping with this multi-faceted approach to coaching.

- ***Training and Development***

Downey (cited in Palmer and Cavanagh, 2006) views coaching as the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another. Similarly Parsloe (1995 cited in Palmer and Cavanagh, 2006) asserts that coaching is concerned with the immediate improvement of performance and the development of skills by a form of tutoring or instruction – an instructional approach. Table 11 indicates some respondents understanding of coaching.

Table 11: Respondents Understanding of Coaching

RESPONDENTS UNDERSTANDING OF COACHING	**RESPONSE**	**QUOTATION**
Encouraging/Support	2 (8%)	"Coaching is when you ***encourage*** an individual, group and/or community to continue or start with certain tasks." "Motivating and ***encouraging*** employees to achieve the best in their work."
Mentoring	7(30%)	"A ***process of helping*** a new and upcoming social worker in the filed of practice." "Professional ***guidance*** and ***mentoring*** given by an experienced person to a novice."
Training and Development	5 (20%)	"Coaching is more like ***training*** and facilitating." "It's like providing support to one is in the field of ***training***."
Assisting achieve full potential	4(17%)	"Coaching is helping an individual improve in life and utilize every opportunity to ***attain success and self-fulfilment***." "To assist and render support to a person/s in order for them to ***reach their potential*** with regards to specific goals."
Supervision	1 (4%)	"I think it has something to do with ***supervision***."
Guidance/Direction	4 (17%)	"Is all about ***guidance***." "Giving ***direction*** and advice like a soccer coach."
Manager	1 (4%)	"***Monitor*** and ***evaluate*** implementation of the operational plan. Guidance/assistance/support. Being a ***manager***."
Total	**24 (100%)**	

n =24

Coaching can be viewed as a form of learning and development. However, the aim of coaching as espoused by Parsloe is to improve performance and not educational training.

According to Garvey (2004) one to one helping activities such as coaching have a key role in any learning and development strategy. Five (20%) respondents indicated that coaching was a form of training and development; however respondents did not link this to the improvement of performance.

- ***Assisting achieve full potential***

According to Guest (1999) coaching is designed to empower each individual to understand their potential and to identify how they can achieve it. This is in line with the International Coach Federation (ICF) and Coaching and Mentoring South Africa's (COMENSA) definitions of coaching which emphasise *developing more rapidly and performing more effectively* (Rostron, 2006; Valliantos, 2001). Coaches work with clients on a one-to-one basis to set and achieve key development objectives, which take into account the needs of the organisation as well as the experience, maturity, knowledge and career path of the individual (Guest, 1999). Coaching encourages the creation of goals, which can then be broken down into manageable, measurable steps. Four respondents (17%) stated that coaching involved goal setting to assist clients in reaching their full potential.

- ***Supervision***

The view from one respondent (4%) was "I think coaching has something to do with supervision". There was no coaching literature found that supported a direct link between coaching and supervision. Hoffman's (cited in McKendrick, 1990) definition of supervision from the social work perspective is seen as primarily concerned with effective service delivery and the supervisor having administrative, educational and supportive functions in relation to service delivery. The International Coach Federation (ICF) definition of "coaching is that it is an interactive process that helps individuals and organisations to develop more rapidly and produce increasingly satisfying results," (Valliantos, 2001:1). The

Hoffman definition of supervision and the International Coach Federation's (ICF) definition of coaching have striking similarities. They are both concerned with improvement and they both serve a supportive function. Supervision differs in the administrative and educational aspects which coaching does not focus on.

- ***Guidance/Direction***

There were 4 responses (17%) that specified coaching to be a form of guidance, direction and leadership. Bobkin (2002) notes that leadership development, goal implementation, teams and individuals, responding to project derailment, succession planning, career development and accountability measurement were common sub-areas of coaching. Tomlinson (2002) agrees that coaching is a one-to-one leadership development fit.

- ***Manager***

Only 1 respondent had the view that coaching was a form of management. This view is not supported by the literature on coaching. "Coaching is an interactive process that helps individuals and organisations to develop more rapidly and produce more satisfying results" (International Coach Federation in Valliantos, 2001:1). Management on the other hand is "the process of setting and achieving goals through the execution of five basic management functions: planning, organising, staffing, directing, and controlling; that utilise human, financial, and material resources". (www.crfonline.org/orc/glossary/m.html, 2008) As can be seen management and coaching are two distinct areas.

5.4.2 An Analysis of Some Respondents Understanding of Coaching

According to Peltier (2001: xx) "coaching involves someone from outside the organisation using psychological skills to help a person develop into a more effective leader. These skills are applied to specific present-moment work problems in a way that enables this person to incorporate them into his or her permanent management or leadership repertoire". The main tenets of Peltier's (2001) definition will be utilised in analysing individual responses to coaching and

also in a discussion on the role that work experience plays in respondents' understanding of coaching.

The main tenets of the above definition are:

- Psychological skills are applied to present – moment work problems; and
- The goal being to develop effective management or leadership skills that the client can incorporate into their leadership repertoire.

Two respondents' definitions of coaching were analysed below. They both show a comprehensive understanding of the objectives of a coaching relationship.

"Assisting persons to achieve their full potential in whatever field they are involved in. Facilitating the process of goal-setting, prioritising, focussing on the things most important to the individual, facilitating the process of achieving personal understanding, identifying own value system and addressing other issues such as personal, financial management, career development, problem-solving, anger management, relationship building etc."

"Enhancement of skills related to performance on the job, as well as enhanced emotional intelligence and management of self and others. Also coaching is a means of developing innate leadership abilities and learning about optimal team performance".

Both respondents stated that coaching was about improving performance, leadership ability and they placed equal emphasis on enhancing emotional intelligence and achieving personal understanding. Respondents, who were not sure of what coaching entailed, made the following comments:

"That's a new term for me and I don't have all the necessary knowledge how to go about this."

"I know nothing about coaching."

"I never read or studied any material in coaching."

5.4.3 Work Experience and Respondents' Understanding of Coaching

Of the 8 respondents with work experience outside the field of social work it was found that only 1 (12.5%) respondent's definition of coaching included both the main tenets of Peltier's (2001) definition.

Seven of the 8 (87.5%) respondents' explanations of coaching did not meet the Peltier (2001) criterion for coaching. Six respondents (55%) with 12 to 17 years work experience viewed coaching as mentoring. Two respondents (18%) in the 12 to 17 year work category showed a comprehensive understanding of the term coaching. Three respondents with between 6 to 11 years work experience (50%) considered themselves skilled to coach, but 2 respondents (33%) stated they were unskilled to coach and unaware of the coaching process. These finding indicated that work experience did not influence respondents' understanding of coaching. Twenty-five respondents' (96%) indicated that they would be interested in attending a coaching course to find out more about coaching.

Some responses included:

"It sounds in fact like mentoring and guiding but in fact no proper understanding."

"I have no background knowledge on coaching."

5.5 Differences and Similarities between Counselling and Coaching

5.5.1 Perceptions of the Coaching-Counselling Fit

The majority of respondents (92%) observed that there was a linkage between the field of coaching and social work. Twenty-three respondents (92%) were of the opinion that the attributes of social work corresponded with the attributes of coaching while 2 respondents (8%) were not sure if the attributes corresponded. Respondents in the current study have a limited understanding of coaching and

therefore their understanding of the attributes that make an effective coach could possibly be skewed.

Campbell (2001) notes that coaching is value laden and action oriented where coaches give advice, share personal experiences, values and beliefs. Counsellors according to Campbell are trained to remain value free, objective and to avoid advice giving and limit personal sharing. Both counselling and coaching are seen by respondents as an advice-giving process. In examining differences and similarities between coaching and counselling it was found that some respondents' viewed coaching as: imparting practical skills to do a job - 4 respondents (8%); 4 (8%) saw coaching as training or facilitating and 4 (8%) viewed coaching as growth and development. Thirteen respondents (48%) viewed coaching as mentoring or training for the job where knowledge and skills related to job function is taught.

Counselling was viewed by 8 respondents (15%) as a therapeutic process; by 11 respondents (21%) as assisting with personal problems. Three respondents (6%) were of the opinion that counselling is about utilising a specific set of counselling skills. There were 9 (17%) respondents that concurred that coaching and counselling was similar to advice giving or guidance. However, the main distinction emerged as coaching being related to 'mentoring/ job training' and counselling being a 'therapeutic process to assist clients with personal problems'.

5.5.2 Social Workers Suitability or Unsuitability to Coaching

The majority of respondents, 18 (79%) stated that social workers were suited to coaching. Respondents saw a correlation with the mandate of coaching and social work in assisting individuals meet goals and develop personal skills to deal with future problems. One (4%) respondent stated that only some social workers were suited to coaching and 1 respondent (4%) was not sure if social workers were suitable or unsuitable. (See Table 12)

According to the Recruitment and Retention Policy of the Department of Social Development (2006 cited in Earle, 2008), the social work profession has been undermined and has experienced an undermining of belief and confidence in the ability of the profession as a whole. The self image of social workers and the image that the profession portrays to members of the public is a central issue in social workers moving to other methods of service delivery such as coaching.

Table 12: Social Workers Suitability or Unsuitability to Coaching

RESPONDENTS OPINIONS REGARDING SOCIAL WORK AND COACHING	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	QUOTES FROM RESPONDENTS
Social Workers are Suited to Coaching	18 (95%)	"The training of social workers and client-centred theory focusses on client self-determination. Also the strengths perspective is excellent for bringing out and emphasising the positives in individuals." "Social workers are suited as they are in the fore front in rendering counselling." "Suited - depending on personalities." "Have all the skills to coach."
Social Workers are Not Suited to Coaching	1 (5%)	"Social Work is a helping profession and coaching is something else." "Not all are comfortable with being a coach." "Not sure, maybe they need training."

n = 19

5.6 Respondents Perceptions of their Skills and Ability to Coach

Eleven respondents (48%) in this sample indicated that they were skilled to coach; 10 respondents (43%) were uncomfortable with coaching and only 2 respondents (9%) were not sure if they were skilled to coach.

Nine respondents (82%) with between 6 to 11 years work experience answered the question as to whether they would regard themselves as suitable to coach or not. It was found that 5 respondents (45%) regarded themselves as suitable to coach; 3 (33%) stated that they would not be comfortable coaching; and 2 (22%) stated that they were not sure if they would be comfortable coaching. A further 2 respondents (9%) were not sure if they were ready to coach. A total of 12 respondents (52%) were not comfortable with coaching. With more than half of

respondents not being comfortable with coaching, there is a limited likelihood of these occupational social workers pursuing coaching as a methodology. However, there was overwhelming interest from 25 respondents (96%) for more information on coaching. Occupational social workers armed with knowledge and confidence in coaching might in time consider coaching in their occupational social work practice. This result is supported by the fact that 18 (95%) stated that social workers were suited to coaching.

Central to this debate is that social workers lack knowledge of what coaching entails. This poses the question as to why social workers have not made attempts to date to find out more about coaching. There are numerous coaching courses on offer both from independent service providers and from tertiary institutions. There is a plethora of articles on coaching in human resource journals.

The link below is of an EBSCO[6] database search of 'coaching' conducted on the 3 July 2008; the search produced 4864 articles related to coaching (http://0-web.ebscohost.com.innopac.wits.ac.za/ehost/results?vid=5&hid=104&sid=251d5279-cc8b-4e17-bf9e-7455f82cf12e%40sessionmgr108).

Social workers requiring information on coaching can consult a range of sources for information, from popular magazine articles, local libraries and bookstores as well as search for information from the internet. Coaching has been a buzz word in the world of work and in South Africa for more than 10 years (Rostron: 2006; O' Flaherty: 2004). The availability of information on coaching is not the issue, but more so the reasons why social workers have not accessed the material available. Since results show that social workers are still at the 'accessing information stage' when will competence and debate as to the role of coaching in occupational social work take place? The literature indicates that related fields of study such as psychology have formed whole new branches of study with ethical guidelines and empirical research to undergird practice.

[6] EBSCO is the name of a database from the University of the Witwatersrand

Social workers in this study lack the confidence to coach; since they do not have the necessary skills and knowledge on coaching. Val Biljon (1970 cited in Ross, 1997) studied 120 South African social workers and found that according to a Personality Test; social workers were evaluated as pedantic, perfectionist, they lacked self-confidence; and their sense of social responsibility and diplomacy were below average. This is a disturbing finding since occupational social workers operate in a sometimes hostile corporate environment, with a sharp business focus on the bottom line and service delivery. Although the above research was carried out in 1970 it nevertheless raises issues that present day social workers need to take cognisance of.

5.6.1 Respondents' Opinions on Conducting Coaching Sessions

The findings indicated that 24 respondents (89%) were based in governmental institutions. Respondents' from government institutions may not be as exposed to coaching as occupational social workers in the corporate sector. The possibility of applying for formal study grants within an organisation is further limited to courses that relate directly to social workers' job descriptions. Government spending as relates to further study is highly regulated. Often the Personal Development Plans drafted by Human Resource Departments, must show a direct benefit to the organisation of courses undertaken by employees. Social workers must find direct justification for enrolment in a coaching course which could be viewed as not directly related to their job function.

Du Plessis (1994) identified five factors that negatively impacted on social work services in the workplace. These included lack of management support; employee's ignorance regarding the role of the social worker; the authoritarian nature of occupational settings; occupational social workers' reluctance to offend others and lack of requisite knowledge to change their practice approach. Occupational social workers must first acknowledge their own value, skill and ability in order to provide high quality services. Once social workers possess personal confidence in their own abilities, only then can it be shared with other professionals, management and clients in the workplace.

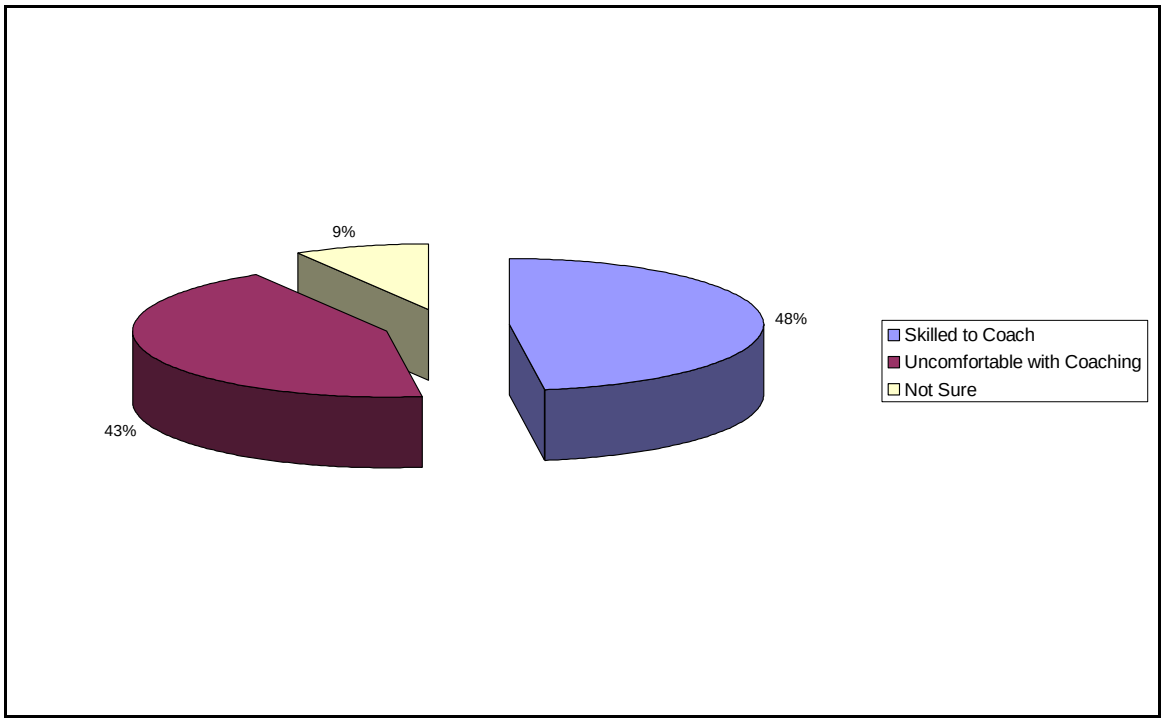


Figure 3: Respondents Opinions on Conducting Coaching Sessions n = 23[7]

5.6.2 Mentoring and Coaching Talents Inventory

The 'Mentoring and Coaching Talents Inventory' was devised for use in the South African Navy by South African authors Meyer and Mabaso (2001 cited in Meyer and Fourie, 2004). Since the above tool was designed for use in the Navy, it likewise may make it well suited to a sample that consists of 89% police and defence force personnel. The purpose of the tool was to ascertain respondents' aptitude and skill set to mentor and/or coach.

Answers to the standardised statements were categorised as follows:

1. Not ready to mentor or coach.

2. Need major development

3. Good potential to become a coach or mentor

4. Will be an excellent coach

[7] Five respondents did not answer the above question.

Despite social workers having limited knowledge of coaching the results of the mentoring and coaching inventory indicated that occupational social workers possessed the talents to develop a career in coaching. Results from the mentoring and coaching talents inventory correlated with other findings in the study which showed that social workers were of the opinion that they were suited to coaching. The study found that 18 respondents (78%) viewed social workers as suitable to coach.

Figure 4 shows that 14 respondents (58%) have '*Good potential to become a coach or mentor*'. According to the inventory scale a further 10 respondents (42%) should be excellent coaches and mentors. The results indicated that this sample of occupational social workers had the appropriate skill and aptitude to become coaches. None of the respondents, in the current study were *'Not ready to mentor or coach'* and likewise none of the respondents *'Needed major development'.*

Respondents in the 6 to 11 year work experience category were rated as follows: 50% would be 'Excellent coaches/mentors' and 50% would 'Have good potential to become a coach and mentor'. Respondents with the similar number of years work experience scored differently on the inventory scale. It can, therefore, be concluded that work experience was not a deciding factor in as far as respondents' ability to adapt to coach is concerned.

It was found that a respondent with more than 25 years experience scored less on the inventory with a score of 136 points, which puts the respondent in the 'Good Potential to Coach' category. While a respondent with less than 2 years experience scored 147, this put this respondent in the 'Excellent Coach/Mentor' category. This may show that the number of years of social work experience does not necessarily determine the suitability of an occupational social worker to coach.

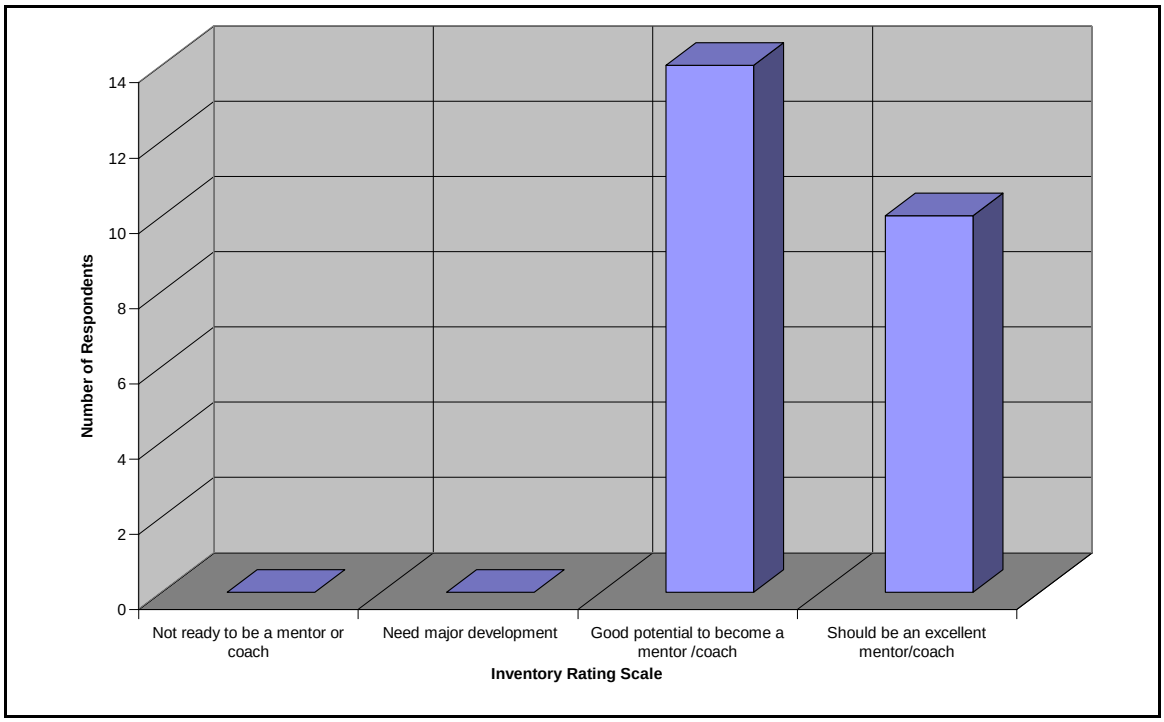


Figure 4: Mentoring and Coaching Talents Inventory n = 24[8]

Factors such as personality, willingness to coach, adaptability to the work environment and openness to learning must be considered (Meyer and Fourie, 2004 cited in Meyer and Mabaso, 2001).

Respondents who scored the lowest on the inventory scale were analysed. The lowest score amongst the four respondents was 118 and the highest 127. It was found that none of these respondents had worked outside the field of social work. Two (50%) of the four respondents studied at a post-graduate level and 1 (25%) respondent had studied in a business-related field. The respondent with post graduate study scored (121) this was the second lowest score in the total sample. The following was stated by this respondent when defining coaching: "*I think it has something to do with supervision".* The above statement was not an accurate definition of coaching and highlighted a lack of knowledge regarding coaching. Post graduate study in a business related field may therefore not necessarily be a factor that increases respondents' understanding of coaching.

[8] Four respondents' did not answer this question.

The respondent who scored the highest (171) on the Meyer and Fourie (2004) inventory scale; had no other work experience and had not studied at a post graduate level. The respondent was of the opinion that coaching was mentoring. This highlights that respondents need not necessarily understand coaching to rate high on the 'Mentoring and Coaching and Talent Inventory Scale" but instead the scale assesses aptitude or inherent skill to coach.

According to Sherman and Freas (2004) coaching remains as much an art as a science and that most important qualifications required to coach are character and insight, which are distilled as much from the coach's personal experience as from formal training. They argue that individuals with acute perception, diplomacy, sound judgment, and the ability to navigate conflicts with integrity will make suitable coaches.

5.7 Interest in a Coaching Course

Twenty five respondents (96%) indicated that they would be interested in attending a coaching course, whilst only 1 respondent (4%) stated that they were not sure if they would be interested in attending a coaching course. None of the respondents indicated that they would not be interested in a coaching course.

The occupational social worker keen to pursue coaching as a form of intervention requires exposure to the area of coaching through not only extensive personal research but also an investment in a coaching course. This, in essence, means that social workers would need to sacrifice personal time, energy and resources to attend coaching courses. In addition, the challenge is for management to support and advocate spending on a relatively new field of study. This poses the question as to why social workers in comfortable and secure positions should even consider a coaching course. For the traditional occupational social worker justifying the significance and relevance of coaching could prove to be a challenging task. Asking permission to practice coaching could simply be viewed as more work that the social worker has inflicted on him/herself. The costs of commercial coaching courses are yet another factor that could serve to hamper social workers' entry into

the field of coaching. Partaking in a coaching course could be considered a 'nice to have' and 'interesting to know about'; but may have no immediate incentive for social workers. Registered social workers in South Africa operating under the auspices of South African Council of Social Service Profession's (SACSSP) are bound to render services that are ethically sound and approved as good practice. Coaching, being in its infancy is currently not an issue for debate amongst social workers and therefore not even considered by the SACSSP as a legitimate form of intervention. There is growing interest in coaching and it may well be considered an option in years to come.

Respondents' expressed the following comments in this regard:

"I would still love to read/study more about coaching."

"I am interested to know about coaching."

"Would like to know about and experience more about what coaching entails."

Du Plessis (1997) cites professional curiosity, growth and support as principles for evolving practice. Respondents in this study exhibited professional curiosity since 96% of the sample stated that they were interested in attending a coaching course. Respondents displayed a limited understanding of coaching which suggests that respondents do not keep up to date with workplace developments and one can therefore question the level of respondents' professional curiosity.

5.7.1 Exposure to Coaching

It was found that none of the respondents in the current sample had training in the field of coaching. Only 2 respondents (7%) had enlisted the services of a coach with most respondents (93%) not exposed to coaching. The responses from these 2 respondents indicated that they had a limited understanding of coaching but weren't comfortable with their current skill to coach.

[9]Some of the reasons for not engaging the services of a coach were: 11 respondents (73%) were never exposed to coaching and thus have had no information on coaching; 2 respondents (13%) have never considered coaching an option; 1 respondent (7%) cited a lack of finances and 1 respondent (7%) stated that it was not a preferred method of intervention in their current workplace.

Twenty two respondents (85%) indicated that their clients had not requested the services of a coach. Four respondents (15%) had clients that were in need of coaching or had previously requested the services of a coach. Occupational social workers have a professional responsibility to clients. They are, therefore, obligated to provide clients with information on coaching based on informed decision making and personal research in the field.

5.7.2 Permission to Practice Coaching

Nine respondents (43%) stated that opportunities for social workers to coach do exist. Seven respondents (33%) stated there were no opportunities for social workers to move into the field of coaching. Five respondents (24%) were not sure if there were opportunities for social workers to commence a coaching career or to use coaching as an occasional method of intervention.

Eleven respondents (46%) indicated they would be given permission to practice coaching should they request it; 5 respondents (21%) stated they would not be given permission and 8 respondents (33%) were uncertain if permission would be granted. There was uncertainty from more than half of the sample (54%) regarding permission to practice coaching. Ten respondents (43%) indicated that they were uncomfortable with coaching and 2 respondents (9%) were not sure if they were skilled to coach. Occupational social workers pursuing coaching are dependent not only on permission and skill to coach but on a range of intra-professional and organisational forces.

[9] Only 15 respondents answered the follow-up question enquiring about reasons for not engaging the services of a coach.

The lack of autonomy that occupational social workers' possess negatively impacts on the growth of the profession and the size of the footprint that the profession leaves in organisations. Traditional turf and boundary issues require confidence from occupational social workers in negotiating the various areas of practice. It is hoped that the current research paper provides the impetus for continued discussion and healthy debate on future practice orientations in the field of occupational social work.

Du Plessis (1994) mentioned nine principles for the evolvement of occupational social work practice: 1) acceptance of the social worker as a professional; 2) accessibility of the social worker; 3) management support; 4) professional curiosity, growth and support; 5) professional flexibility; 6) 'organisation-wide vision on the part of the occupational social worker; 7) dual accountability to employees and management; 8) ecologically based service efforts; 9) evaluation of practice output and input.

The first of these principles is the acceptance of the occupational social worker as a professional this principle will allow for independence in terms of practice and methodology decisions. The onus is on the occupational social worker to highlight the range of services that can be offered. Clients may simply lack knowledge on the types of services offered. The onus is on the social worker to recommend coaching and not for the client to request it.

Du Plessis (1994) refers to professional flexibility as well as organisation-wide vision as principles in the evolvement of occupational social work. Not only do occupational social workers with aspirations to practice coaching need to examine their level of professional flexibility but also whether they have the ability to adopt an organisation-wide vision. It is imperative that occupational social workers see themselves not as isolated service providers but develop a sense of organisation-wide goals and strategies. The occupational social worker is trained to deal with macro issues in organisations and communities.

5.7.3 Coaching - Positive or Negative Effect on Clients?

Nineteen respondents (70%) agreed that coaching would add value to the occupational social work services offered to clients. Five respondents (19%) were not sure if coaching added value and 3 respondents (11%) stated that coaching would not add value to occupational social work services. The 19 affirmative responses (70%) show that coaching was recognised as value-adding for the occupational social work profession.

Seventeen respondents (65%) were of the opinion that coaching would not have a negative impact on clients. Seven respondents (27%) were not sure if coaching would have a negative impact on clients; however, 2 respondents (8%) stated that coaching would have a negative impact on clients. Occupational social work is direct involvement in workplace issues, the sample consisted of 22 (81%) practicing occupational social workers. Despite direct involvement in the workplace occupational social workers in this sample were not familiar with coaching.

Furthermore, 22 respondents (85%) have not had any clients specifically requesting coaching services in their practice. The scope for practising coaching may to some extent impeded by the practice boundaries put in place in certain workplaces and professional bodies. The autonomy to make practice decisions does not always rest with the occupational social worker but is determined by management. The lack of autonomy in as far as professional practice options are concerned limits the ability of professionals to make practice choices in the best interest of the client. This hampers the growth and development of occupational social work as a professional field, as non-professionals make practice decisions on behalf of the profession. The mandate of the occupational social worker is the well being of the client in the environment, should the occupational social worker choose to use coaching to meet this mandate the onus should rest on the practitioner and not on the organisation. Lawyers, doctors and other service-based professionals make practice decisions in the best interest of their clients or patients and are not necessarily questioned by professionals outside of their area of expertise as to their choice of intervention.

5.8 Professional Background and Training Suitable for a Coach

5.8.1 Social Work Training

In examining respondents' opinions regarding social work training as preparation for a coaching career it was found that 11 respondents (65%) indicated they either were not sure or had no concept of what coaching entailed, while 6 respondents (35%) affirmed that social work training supported a career in coaching. Respondents showed a varied understanding of coaching. At least 10 respondents (40%) affirmed that social work training supported a career in coaching; 12 respondents (48%) were not sure if social work training supported a career in coaching; while 3 respondents (12%) stated that social work training would not support a career in coaching.

5.8.2 Coach Training

Table 13 highlights the areas of training that respondents stated were important training requirements for a coach. Five respondents (17%) viewed training in management and leadership as essential for a coach. Five respondents (17%) saw training in the helping professions as important training. There were 4 responses (13%) in favour of communication training.

Table 13: Respondents Opinions on Coach Training

TRAINING FOR A COACH	NO. OF RESPONSES (FREQUENCY)
Supervision	3 (10%)
Mentoring	2 (7%)
Record Keeping	2 (7%)
Project Management	2 (7%)
Conflict Management	2 (7%)
Communication	4 (13%)
Management/Leadership Training	5 (17%)
Ethics	1 (3%)
Coach Training	1 (3%)
Policy Studies	1 (3%)
Human Resource/Organisational Development	2 (7%)
Helping Professions	5 (17%)
Total no of Responses	30 (100%)

n=30

Twenty-three respondents (92%) were of the opinion that the attributes of social work correspond with the attributes of coaching; however only 2 respondents (7%) viewed social work as vital training for a coach. Of interest, only 1 respondent (3%) viewed occupational social work as important training for a coach. It can, therefore, be deduced that occupational social workers in the current study, do not see alignment between occupational social work and coaching.

Three respondents (10%) stated that a coach should be trained in supervision and 2 respondents (7%) viewed training in mentoring as essential. There was concurrence amongst respondents that supervision and mentoring were essential training for a coach. Despite the fact that 25 respondents (96%) stated they would be interested in attending a coaching course, only 1 respondent stated that a coach should undergo formal training with an accredited coaching training programme.

The following topics were viewed as important for inclusion in a coach training course: project management - 2 respondents (7%); management training - 5 respondents (17%); policy studies[10] - 1 respondent (3%); and human resources - 5 responses (7%). Ten respondents (33%) were in favour of training in a business related field.

Twenty respondents (67%) do not view business training as important for a coach. This finding contradicts Peltier's (2001: xxvi) view which states that "if a therapist attempts to provide coaching without significant knowledge of the business world or the corporate environment, including its vocabulary, its motivations, its assumptions and its bottom-line orientation, he or she is destined to fail." A survey conducted by Spence, Cavanagh and Grant (2006) reflected the training backgrounds of 148 practicing coaches at the International Coaching Federation, Australian Conference in 2006 (see Table 14). Sixty two percent of respondents in the study had formal coach training at either a coach school and/or tertiary level.

[10] The type of policy study was not specified by respondent

Only 20% of the sample studied in a coaching related field such as psychology or social work. It is interesting to note that the above authors identify social work as a 'coaching related field'.

Table 14: Type of Coach Training

TYPE OF COACH TRAINING	%
Coach Training School	62
Tertiary Institution	20
Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)	11
No formal training	5
Other	2

Taken from a study by Spence, Cavanagh and Grant (2006) n =148

5.8.3 Professional Background Suitable for a career in Coaching

The majority of respondents favour social work and psychology as suitable backgrounds for coaches. Twelve respondents (42%) rated social work and 8 respondents (29%) psychology as an appropriate background qualification for coaches. A business background was seen by 1 respondent (4%) as apt for a coach.

In a study of 2529 professional coaches it was found that coaches had come to coaching from a wide variety of prior professional backgrounds, for example consultants - 41 %; managers - 31 % , executives - 30 %, teachers - 16% and salespeople 14% (Grant and Zackon, 2004 in Palmer, 2006). Interestingly only 5% had a background in psychology and no social workers were respondents in the study. Figure 5 gives an indication of the views of respondents in the study.

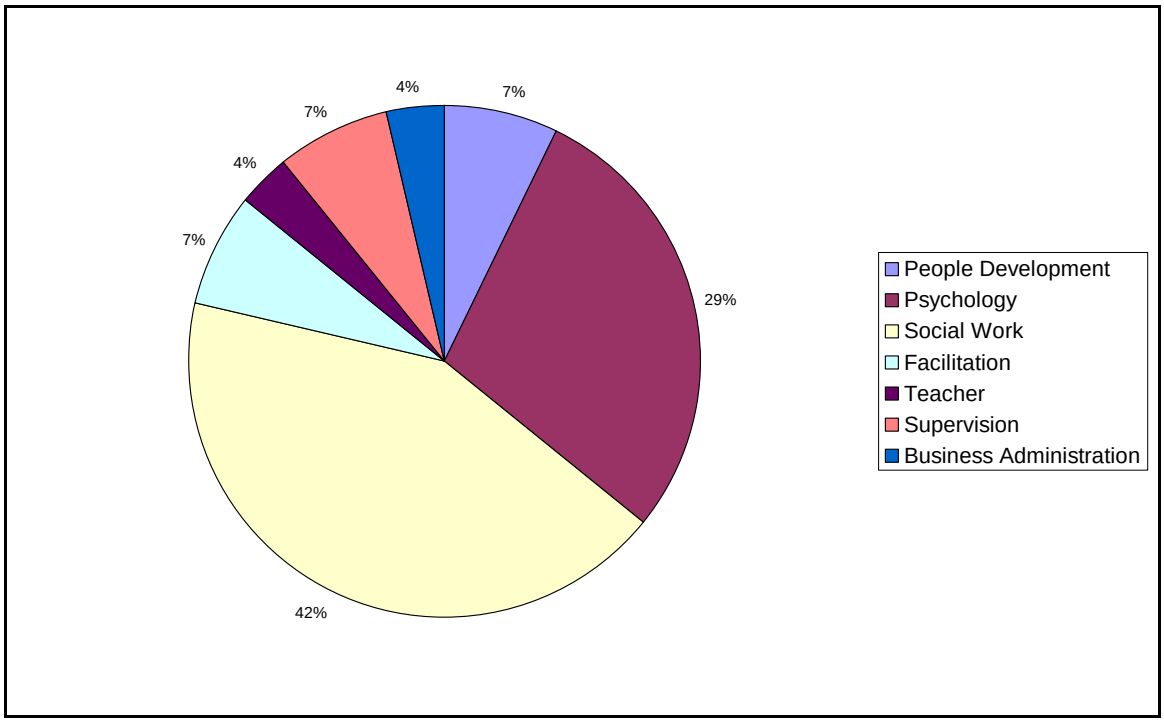


Figure 5: Respondents Views on Professional Backgrounds that Suit a Coaching Career n = 29

A survey on the backgrounds of Australian coaches by Spence, Cavanagh and Grant (2006) found that the consulting industry (24%) was the most common background of coaches. The authors highlighted the disparity between consulting, human resources, counsellors, psychologists and social workers, the latter group accounted for only 20 % of the sample.

Of greater significance to the present discussion is the observation that relatively few respondents (20%) reported any formal training in psychology or the helping professions, that is, counselling, social work, and nursing. This result was somewhat unexpected given the fact that the above professions are dedicated to the mental and physical health needs of individuals. According to Spence et al, psychologists need to have a stronger presence in the coaching field and the limited presence requires further investigation. The call for psychologists to become more involved in coaching is echoed by a number of authors, Brotman: 1998; Garman: 2000; Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson: 2001, Cavanagh, Grant and Kemp: 2005; Green: 2005; Spence and Grant: 2005 in Spence, Cavanagh and

Grant (2006). Psychology is much further down the path than occupational social workers in determining the way forward in as far as coaching is concerned. A dearth of literature on the relationship between occupational social work and coaching exists. There is much in the literature in as far as the future of psychology and coaching is concerned but only three commentary articles were found for the field of social work and coaching (Pine, 2000; Caspi: 2005 and Valliantos, 2001). Occupational social workers have a responsibility to clients and to the social work profession to remain at the cutting edge of trends and developments.

5.9 Conclusion

The findings show that occupational social workers, whilst keen to learn more about coaching, currently lack the knowledge and skills to successfully incorporate coaching into their practice repertoire. Occupational social workers appear to be involved in a multiplicity of roles which further complicates how occupational social work is defined. It was expected that occupational social workers operating in the workplace would have a more of an understanding of coaching; however, this appeared not to be the case. The anticipated value of the study is that it would be used as a study from which further studies can draw. Findings illustrated that more basic questions pertaining to 'Continuing Education amongst Occupational Social Workers' and 'Respondents Understanding of Occupational Social Work' were required. The findings have located where occupational social work is currently and this provides an invaluable tool in determining future research, education and practice directions.

CHAPTER 6: MAIN FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

One of the principles of evolving occupational social work practice is professional flexibility; this principle of change points to the changing of practice methodology to meet new service demands and furthermore seeking new bodies of knowledge to inform practice (Du Plessis,1994). The essence of the current study was to examine occupational social workers level of professional flexibility as relates to coaching.

Occupational social work as an applied practice should critically analyse developments in the workplace. The occupational social work response to workplace developments could be a determining factor in examining the level of impact the profession has in the workplace. An exploratory study examining the relationship between coaching as a possible new methodology and occupational social work in South Africa is thus an important area of research. The findings could significantly influence occupational social workers future practice decisions.

This chapter is divided into three sub-sections: firstly, the overall findings are discussed, secondly, the main recommendations are explained and the last section highlights the main conclusions of the study.

6.2 Summary of Main Findings

The primary aim of the study was to investigate occupational social workers' knowledge, opinions, skill and interest in coaching as an intervention in the South African workplace. The main findings of the study will be discussed in three subsections: The first deals with occupational social workers understanding and opinions of coaching. The second examines occupational social workers skill to

coach. Lastly, the interests of occupational social workers in coaching are explored.

The findings indicate that coaching is currently not a viable practice option for this sample of occupational social workers. Whilst possible synergies between coaching and occupational social work was found on the level of the goals of the respective professions, this synergy warrants further investigation. The study revealed that in terms of knowledge and skill this sample of occupational social workers was currently not 'ready' to embark on coaching as a methodology. Understanding where occupational social workers stand in as far as coaching is concerned is important, as this has the potential to inform future educational and practice decisions. The anticipated value of the study is to assist in creating a platform for debate regarding new methods and the future direction of occupational social work.

6.2.1 Objective 1:

To determine occupational social workers' understanding and opinions of coaching as a form of intervention in South African workplaces.

- ***Respondents' Understanding of Coaching***

According to the International Coach Federation (ICF), coaching is an interactive process that helps individuals and organisations to develop more rapidly and produce increasingly satisfying results (Valliantos, 2001). The majority of respondents (83%) did not agree that goal setting was an outcome of coaching. Four respondents (17%) definitions of coaching described coaching as a methodology with the outcome being, the achievement of goals. The following comments highlight respondents' lack of understanding of coaching:

"It sounds in fact like mentoring and guiding but in fact no proper understanding."

"Unfamiliar in my field."

"I know nothing about coaching."

"That's a new term for me and don't have all the necessary knowledge how to go about this."

In their description of coaching the majority of respondents (83%) noted synonyms for the term coaching such as: encouraging (8%); guidance (21%); mentoring (30%) and training (17%). The majority of respondents failed to give a concise understanding of coaching.

Eleven respondents (65%) indicated that social work training did not aid in their understanding of coaching and specified that they had no understanding of coaching.

Occupational social workers are obligated to keep abreast with developments in the workplace in order to offer comprehensive and appropriate services. Results showed that respondents possessed a limited understanding of coaching. They would, therefore, not be in a position to currently offer competent coaching services to clients currently. From the findings, it may be deduced that this sample of occupational social workers' do not use coaching as a form of intervention. One of the reasons could be the fact that respondents possess limited knowledge of coaching principles and models. The literature shows that coaching in South African organisations is growing (Rostron; 2006) which means that the market for coaching is ripe but that the coaching role is performed by individuals outside the field of social work.

- ***Respondents' Opinions of Coaching and Occupational Social Work***

The majority of respondents view coaching favourably, with 19 respondents (70%), concurring that coaching would add value to occupational social work services offered to clients.

Some responses included:

"Coaching will add value as it will contribute to better standards of service delivery and *accountability."*

"Coaching is a service which employees may value a great deal. Easier for many to accept coaching than to accept counselling (no perceived stigma involved with coaching. Can enhance employees' well being through coaching."

There is, therefore, an overall positive response to coaching as a possible method of intervention in occupational social work. However, there appears to be a gap in terms of occupational social workers' interest in coaching and their current knowledge and skill to coach.

Respondents had diverse views on whether they would be granted permission to coach in their current organisations with 11 respondents (48%) indicating they would be given permission to coach; 8 respondents (35%) unsure if permission would be given and 4 respondents' (17%) stating that they would not be given permission to coach. There are different sentiments in as far as the inclusion of coaching in current organisations is concerned.

Since the majority of respondents (83%) have a limited understanding of coaching, respondents opinions with regard to coaching in current occupational social work settings is likewise limited.

6.2.2 Objective 2:

To examine occupational social workers current skill to coach

The majority of respondents (52%) indicated that they were uncomfortable with coaching and not sure of their ability to coach. However, 11 respondents (48%) indicated that they would consider themselves currently skilled to coach. None of the 11 respondents (48%) who considered themselves skilled to coach could give a definition of what coaching entailed. Since these respondents could not adequately define coaching, their perceived skill to coach could be disputed. Respondents' skill claim could be based on their incorrect understanding of coaching and thus a skewed perception on their current ability to offer reputable coaching services.

The ‘Mentoring and Coaching Talents Inventory Scale’ measured respondents’ potential or innate qualities to develop as a coach. The results were favourable with 14 respondents (58%) scores indicating that they have ‘Good potential to become coaches or mentors’ and 10 respondents (42%) being rated as ‘Will be excellent coaches’. Based on these results it can be deduced that whilst occupational social workers are currently unsuitable to coach due to their lack of coaching knowledge, they do possess the right qualities to develop into successful coaches.

This finding was supported by respondents’ opinions on the attributes of social work and the attributes of coaching. Findings show that 23 respondents (92%) were of the opinion that the attributes of social work corresponded with the attributes of coaching. The majority of respondents 18 (79%) furthermore stated that social workers were suited to coaching.

Respondents’ were uncertain as to whether training in occupational social work provided adequate preparation to begin coaching. Only 1 respondent (3%) was of the opinion that occupational social work training was important training for a career in coaching. Findings show that only 2 respondents received post graduate training in occupational social work and 1 respondent trained in Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). The low percentage (14%) of respondents with formal training in occupational social work disqualifies the majority of respondents from adequately addressing the role of occupational social work training as relates to coaching.

In summary, occupational social workers have the innate qualities that would assist them in developing as skilled coaches, but are currently lacking coaching knowledge and training to be able to skilfully coach.

6.2.3 Objective 3:

To ascertain the interests of occupational social workers in obtaining information about coaching

The study found that respondents had a limited understanding and skill to adequately coach but scored high on the ‘ Mentoring and Coaching Talents Inventory Scale’ which rated them as having ‘Good potential to coach’ (58%) and an ‘Excellent potential to coach’ (42%). Given adequate coach training, this sample has the potential to offer high quality coaching services, which could positively influence their current clients and organisations. There is a need for knowledge on what coaching entails. A fair evaluation of the linkages between coaching and occupational social work can only happen once there is a familiarity with the concept of coaching.

None of the respondents in the current sample have had training in the field of coaching. Respondents indicated having a curiosity in coaching with 25 respondents (96%) stating they would be interested in attending a coaching course.

Eleven respondents (73%) had no exposure to coaching and thus had no information on coaching. A huge information gap exists which should be an issue of concern for all occupational social workers. The ability to develop into a vibrant relevant force in the workplace is dependent on how well the individuals, as well as the profession, as a collective take responsibility for the knowledge gaps that exist and whether they attempt to constantly strive to keep abreast with developments.

6.3 Conclusions

This study shows that occupational social workers have limited knowledge of coaching as a workplace development and possible practice options. However, practicing coaching in South Africa goes beyond the level of individual occupational social workers’ knowledge and skill but must also be viewed from the broader regulatory framework for social work practice in South Africa. The South African Council of Social Service Professions (SACSSP) currently does not

approve of coaching as a method of social work intervention. Should occupational social workers be interested in practicing coaching, permission from the SACSSP would first need to be obtained. Adopting coaching in the South African occupational social work context is not a simple matter but also requires approval from the necessary legislative and authoritative bodies.

However, the recognition of occupational social work as a specialised field of practice by the South African Council of Social Service Professions could serve to add impetus and a level of authority to the profession in examining alternate methods such as coaching. More so, recognition of occupational social work as a specialised and thus applied field of practice would necessitate research into improved methods of service delivery.

Related to this issue is the vast array of hats that occupational social workers' wear; is occupational social work in its fullest form truly being practised? Are so – called occupational social workers merely meeting organisational requirements without truly understanding the tenets of occupational social work? An important area for future research is what current occupational social workers view as the 'practice of occupational social work'.

The following section examines recommendations borne out of the current research in examining future practice, research and training options.

6.3 Recommendations

6.3.1 Recommendations for Occupational Social Workers

- ***Image and Identity Issues*** - Social workers interested in coaching must address the issue of the 'Image and Identity of the Social Work Profession'. Social work has been at the interface of social issues, such as poverty, crime, social injustice and uplifting the plight of the disempowered. Coaching is on the opposite end of the continuum dealing with the empowered client with career/leadership issues. Social workers require a paradigm shift in understanding the broad scope of practice that the social

work profession can deal with. The image that social workers have of themselves will influence the manner in which they are viewed in the workplace. Occupational social workers must display self-confidence in their personal and professional abilities to deliver the required services.

- ***Personal Responsibility for Ongoing Learning*** - Occupational social workers must take responsibility for their own learning and recognise that in order to be relevant to the needs of organisations, they are duty-bound to keep abreast with developments. To this end it is recommended that occupational social workers subscribe to business and organisational/industrial related journals. The findings of this study show a lack of knowledge as to what coaching entails. Should occupational social workers choose to include coaching in their practice repertoire, a multi-level approach is needed to address the knowledge gap.

- ***Promoting the Value of Occupational Social Work*** – Occupational social work faces a constant power struggle in the workplace. There is competition to maintain and gain professional turf and autonomy. Occupational social workers must promote their value to organisations. It is recommended that this be achieved by means of evidence based practice. Occupational social work interventions must be evaluated and the value of interventions be empirically reported.

- ***Cross - Discipline Associations*** – There is great value for occupational social workers to associate with professionals from other disciplines. The cross-pollination of information will assist in widening the occupational social workers perspective on organisation-wide issues.

6.3.2 Recommendations for Professional Associations

Occupational social work is in need of a strong professional identity, a research-based theoretical foundation, recognition by professional organisations, and a more clearly defined niche of professional specialisation (Bargal and Barak, 2000).

These above mentioned aspects are long term goals that require gradual but progressive effort to achieve. Long term goals for a profession need to be spear-headed by professional associations that have the ability to mobilise support. The below recommendations are made in an effort to strengthen professional associations muscle. A strong unified collective voice is required for the recognition of occupational social work to be adopted as a field of specialisation. Therefore, the role and effectiveness of professional associations must be evaluated.

- ***Advocating Role*** – The value of occupational social work will only be heard through the development of strong professional associations. Professional associations must develop a louder voice that promotes the value of occupational social work at a business and government level.

- ***Occupational Social Work Research*** – There is a need for ongoing research in the field of occupational social work. Sources of funding from government and private enterprise must be explored for specific issues in occupational social work research. It is recommended that occupational social work professional associations appoint researchers to explore the latest trends and developments in business and organisations. These trends should be written and reported from an occupational social work perspective and made available to all occupational social workers.

- ***Initiatives to Improve the Membership Base of Occupational Social Work Professional Associations*** – In order to extend their influence; active measures must be taken to constantly expand the membership base of professional associations.

- ***Improved Communication Initiatives*** – Professional associations must ensure effective communication strategies with its members via the electronic media. Communicating via email is commonplace practice in the corporate world. Monthly newsletters and regular emails could create a stronger sense of community amongst professionals.

6.3.3 Recommendations to Organisations

- ***Autonomy in Practice Decisions*** - Organisations and more specifically management should trust the level of professional integrity that occupational social work has. Likewise, occupational social workers also have a role and responsibility to play in developing a credible level of trust and professional integrity within organisations. Developing the respect of management could assist in management extending occupational social workers practice repertoire and providing the space for more autonomous practice decisions.

- ***Access to Information Technology*** - It is recommended that organisations employing occupational social workers make internet access available. Lack of access to internet and email facilities greatly impedes access to communication and information.

- ***Promotion of In-Service Staff Training*** - It is recommended that organisations support in-staff training initiatives. In-staff training initiatives can act as a source of ongoing education and serve to keep occupational social workers updated and informed.

6.3.4 Recommendations for Research

- ***Conceptualising Occupational Social Work*** - The diverse settings of occupational social work could negatively impact the scope of occupational social work practice. Occupational social workers operating in confined boundaries may take on the requirements of management and lose the essence of what occupational social work entails. Research is required to explore the current meanings attached to the term occupational social work. The influence that secondary settings have on the practice of occupational social work requires further exploration.

- ***Examining Social Work and Technology***- Research investigating the impact or lack of impact that technology has on social work is an important

area of future study. One of the methods of data collection for the current study included dissemination of an online survey. However, this method proved unsuccessful as only 5 respondents utilised this facility. It was found that respondents could not utilise this service as they did not have access to email and internet facilities. The following research questions require further investigation. Do social workers have access to email/internet facilities? What is their level of knowledge in as far as technology is concerned? Is there a downplaying of the importance of computer facilities for social workers in organisations? Could the lack of access to information technology be due to funding issues?

- ***Occupational Social Workers Interest in Ongoing Learning*** - The central question raised as a result of this study is the reasons occupational social workers lack knowledge on coaching? Print and online sources from both the popular and academic perspectives provide a wealth of information on coaching. How is it that occupational social workers are not exposed to this? What does personal responsibility for learning mean? What are some of the reasons for not being more proactive with learning? Research investigating the factors that impinge or promote ongoing learning in occupational social work is required.

- ***Exploring the Occupational Social Work-Coaching Fit*** – Findings in the study showed that occupational social workers have intrinsic qualities that make them suitable to coach. Googin cites Shain's definition of health promotion programmes as a "wide gamut of interventions having as the common denominator the intention to mobilise the self-regulatory drive of individuals and groups to govern their own health and well-being" (1987:43 cited in Du Plessis, 1990). It is within this broad framework of workplace well-being that occupational social workers can use coaching as one of the methodologies to render wellness services. Further research, investigating, the occupational social worker-coaching fit and the role, this can play in promoting workplace wellness is required.

6.3.5 Recommendations to Universities

- ***Develop a more Scholarly Culture*** - Measures to improve the research and journal output within occupational social work must be put in place. These efforts whilst the responsibility of all occupational social workers should be modelled by tertiary institutions. This is reinforced by Bargal (2000) who emphasises that occupational social work must develop a more scholarly culture.

- ***Improved Professional Training*** - The quality of occupational social education rests on the ability of educators to recognise macro trends and position students with education to match these trends. Occupational social work training should have a greater emphasis on organisational and business trends. Furthermore the marketing of occupational social work and business development should be incorporated as important components of professional training.

- ***Introductory Coaching Courses*** - It is recommended that tertiary institutions include an introductory course on coaching as part of the Occupational Social Work Curriculum. An introductory course will serve to expose future Occupational Social Workers to developments in the field. The specific themes to be covered in such an introductory course are recommended below.

- ***Recommendations towards an Introductory Coaching Curriculum for Occupational Social Workers*** - Occupational social workers have a unique niche of practice and the ensuing issues that they face are similarly distinct. The results of this study show that occupational social workers have inherent qualities to develop as coaches. Occupational social workers require a specially designed course in coaching that will meet their training needs. The recommendation is that the themes below be included in a curriculum for social workers and be used for debate and discussion.

Table 15: Towards an Introductory Coaching Curriculum for Occupational Social Workers

MANAGING OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS TRAINING NEEDS	DEVELOPING BUSINESS ACUMEN	UNDERSTANDING THE PRINCIPLES OF COACHING	UNDERSTANDING THE COACHING PROCESS
Topics and Themes			
Image and Identity of Social Workers	Examining economic and global developments	Definitions of coaching	Examining the various models of coaching
Value of Social work Training	Understanding corporate and organisational culture – language, politics, dress sense	Theory of Coaching	Understanding Coaching Techniques
Coaching and Social Work / Therapy differences and similarities	Understanding the basic principles of business	Ethics in Coaching and Social work	Practical Application of coaching models

- ***Marketing of the Social Work Profession*** - Occupational social work and social work are faced with fierce competition from other disciplines. Universities need to place greater emphasis on educating students to promote the profession. According to Doelling (2005), education does not need to address marketing issues in a well-established field with a solid identity and a clear niche. Since social work is a diffused profession that operates in a variety of settings with different levels of competition, education on the marketing of the profession is critical.

6.4 Concluding Comments

The maturity of a profession is determined by the ability to not only objectively review its status and future evolvement but more importantly it lies in being able to put mechanisms in place to effect change. Occupational social work cannot remain

‘unchanged’ in a continuously changing environment. Occupational social workers ability to take cognisance of the changing environment and make the necessary adjustments will determine the future strength of the profession. Caspi (2005) rightly points out that social work history has many examples of developments that have challenged the profession to either redefine or protect its scope of practice.

Adopting alternate methods of intervention in the field of occupational social work will depend on the collective voice and opinion of occupational social workers. This exploratory study signifies only the beginning of a journey toward discovering and exploring synergies that can better place the occupational social work profession in an influential position in the workplace. Occupational social work has made significant strides in the workplace; this study represents a progressive step toward understanding the implications of alternate roles and methodologies that occupational social workers could play in the workplace.

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

Chinese Philosopher Loa Tzu

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