CRITICAL ISSUES IMPACTING ON SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION: TRENDS AND OPTIONS

by

HILLIGJE GERRITDINA VAN DIJK

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the degree

Doctor Philosophiae (Public Administration)

In the Faculty of Humanities
University of Pretoria

Promoter:	Prof. C Thornhill	Pretoria
Co-promoter:	Prof. JO Kuye	May 2003
	Prof. DJ Fourie	

Foreword

I dedicate this work to my parents, Ferdi and Antoinette. They have been my foundation and my inspiration. They have grounded me and enabled me to fly and pursue my dreams. Their courage and guidance will, forever, direct my path in life.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to:

- God, who through His Grace and Wisdom provided me with the opportunity to continuously develop and express myself.
- my exceptional family, my sister, brother and grandparents for all their love, reassurance, comfort and motivation;
- Professor Chris Thornhill, my mentor and promoter, for his patience, advice and encouragement;
- Professors Jerry Kuye and David Fourie, for their support and precise guidance; and
- my friends, for their constant encouragement and patience with me, my ideas and my total inability to focus on anything besides my thesis;

**Critical issues impacting on skills development in the
Department of Public Service and Administration: trends and options**

compiled by

Hilligje Gerritdina van Dijk

Supervisor   :   Prof. C Thornhill

Co-supervisors   :   Prof. JO Kuye

                              Prof. DJ Fourie

Department   :   School for Public Management and Administration

Degree   :   Doctor Philosophiae

Abstract

This study is an in-depth overview of the critical issues impacting on skills development in the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA). The South African Public Service consists of individuals with their own potential and career paths. The thesis has convincingly argued that managers in the Public Service need to align the potential of their employees with organisational strategies and policies. The study has shown that the training of employees becomes a necessity when departments want to keep track and meet the expectations of their internal and external environments. The thesis proposes and has proven that an integrated approach to human resource development through the process of performance management is a vital requirement, which is critical for skills acquisition. The study, further, notes that if performance management is implemented appropriately, a viable learning organisation could be created. Linking the system of performance management with the learning organisation offers a unique perspective on integrated human resource management, and thus, an important contribution is made to understanding the theory of Public Administration as it applies to skills development.

This thesis propounds the notion that evaluation seems to be the missing link in training and development of human resources in the DPSA. Research clearly indicates that the only way to ensure that training priorities are met is to make training evaluation part of the design of a training course. The model proposed in this thesis, for the evaluation of training, entails adding value to both individual and departmental performance. Detail reviews from this thesis, which are supported by both quantitative and qualitative imperatives, suggest that it now becomes essential that senior management initiates a process where individual positions, their importance and contributions, are aligned with the effective and efficient realisation of departmental strategies.

The cumulative effect of this thesis resonates on an analysis of both theory and practice regarding the creation and implementation of a learning organisation, which is a landmark for *international best practices* in the study of public human resource development and training in South Africa.

Key terms:
1. Public service
2. Department of Public Service and Administration
3. Skills development
4. Integrated human resource management
5. Human resource development
6. Training
7. Adult education and training
8. Adult training cycle
9. Training evaluation
10. Performance management
11. Learning organisation.

Table of content

Abstract

Chapter 1:   Outline, need and purpose of human resource development in the Department of Public Service and Administration

Chapter 2:   Theoretical constructs in public administration

Chapter 8:   Recommendations and conclusion

List of figures

List of tables