Chapter 6:   Evaluating training and development through the implementation of performance management in the Department of Public Service and Administration

6.1   Introduction

Chapter 6 deals with the missing link in training - evaluation. In order to ensure that training priorities are met, it is imperative that training courses be evaluated in terms of their effectiveness and efficiency. The concept of evaluation will be defined and performance management, as a process to ensure the implementation and applicability of evaluation, will be discussed. Performance management in the DPSA has, since 2005 been transformed and the process is currently more developmental in nature and based on collaborative decision-making between the employee and his or her supervisor.

Different models and schools of thought on evaluation will be discussed. The more traditional schools of thought are highlighted but attention is focused on implementing a model of evaluation that will benefit both departmental goals and objectives as well as individual employee development needs. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of the current training system in the DPSA, set within the time parameters as discussed in Chapter one. Defining evaluation will now be given attention.

6.2   Fundamentals of evaluation

Critten (1995:157-158) states that defining evaluation can be equated with trying to define quality - you can recognise the outcome, but defining it is not an easy task. Evaluation deals with determining the total value of a training course. It does not validate the implementation of a training course in terms of its deliverables. Evaluation draws attention to the judgement about the effect of putting the training objectives into practice. Validation becomes part of evaluation in terms of determining the appropriateness and practical applicability of a chosen training course.

The purpose of evaluation is three-fold. Firstly, to gather information that would provide a framework for the improvement of future training courses regarding the same training needs (formative role). Secondly, judgements will be made based on the training course's value in terms of its total effects (summative role) and thirdly, a learning role, in order to ensure that challenges identified during the implementation of a training course are not duplicated (Critten 1995:158).

Critten (1995:158) stipulates that a central principle of evaluation is to '*extract the value*'. However, determining the value of training courses has not been a central concern with either trainers or trainees. Evaluation is described as the fourth step in the training cycle, illustrated in Figure 1.1 (Chapter 1). Without evaluation, determining appropriate performance standards will not be possible and the reciprocal relationship between performance management and appropriate training and development initiatives will not be applied.

Evaluation has become synonymous with collecting information about training courses that have been implemented. The gathering of information will however, not provide the Department with an evaluation of the training course. The information has to be articulated in order to add value to decisions regarding future training and development initiatives.

The problem statement discussed in Chapter 1 highlighted that training in the DPSA might not address departmental and individual needs simultaneously. Due to a lack of evaluation of training courses, employees might be sent on training that does not satisfy their training needs and the outcomes of research discussed in Chapter 4 highlighted that the majority of the DPSA employees felt that their training needs were not aligned with Department training needs (Figure 4.7). A clear link has been identified by the DPSA through its *Performance Management and Development System* between training, evaluation and performance management. The process of strategically implementing performance

management within the context of training and development will now be discussed.

6.3   Implementing performance management to enhance evaluation

Since 2001 the DPSA has been extensively involved in formulating policies for the implementation of a performance management system within the Public Service and within the Department itself. The Senior Management Service (SMS) directorate in the DPSA was responsible for formulating the performance management framework pertaining to the SMS (level 13 and up). The DPSA also formulated the performance management framework for the rest of the Department in 2001 titled '*Performance Management and Development System (PMDS).*'

According to Chapter 5, Section 10 of the SMS Handbook (Department of Public Service and Administration 2001(d)), performance management and development systems need to be integrated with all other departmental processes to be effective. Performance management is thus an approach to how work is done and organised. The approach should focus on continuous improvement of performance, be driven by senior management and should be strategically aligned with all departmental training goals and priorities.

The purpose of the PMDS is to provide policy measures and guidelines for effective and efficient implementation of performance management within the Department. Performance management is aimed at optimising the potential and current employee output in terms of quality and quantity, increasing the DPSA's total departmental performance (Department of Public Service and Administration 2001(b):6). Thus, the policy not only links the importance of human resource training and development with individual development, but also with departmental performance increase.

The objectives of the PMDS are to establish a performance culture that would reward and recognise good performance, be used as a vehicle for implementing the DPSA's goals and priorities, facilitate continuous performance improvement and organisational development. The PMDS aims to continuously enhance individual employee competence through identifying outputs relating to training and development needs. The main principle of performance management that relates directly to the problem statement of this thesis is that performance management should be developmental in that it will identify key competencies required from employees as well as identify the content of the training and development initiatives to which they should be exposed (Department of Public Service and Administration 2001(b):6-7).

The PMDS makes provisioning for equal access of all employees to training and development opportunities. However, Du Toit *et al.* (2001) conducted research, commissioned by the DPSA, into the number of employees who received training during 1998/1999. Table 6.1 indicates the total number of employees per level, then the total number of employees sent for training and the last column of each level portrays the percentage of employee trained for the specific level.

Table 6.1   Number of people who received training during 1998/1999

Dept	Senior Managers			Middle Managers			Junior Managers			Lower Ranks			Total (%)
DPSA	51	6	**11.8%**	154	9	**5.8%**	124	4	**3.2%**	109	32	**29.4%**	**50.2%**

Source: Du Toit R, Erasmus J & Van Zyl E. 2001. **Baseline Information on Public Service Training and Education.** Department of Public Service and Administration. p.25.

Only 11.8% of senior managers went for training during 1998/1999. 5.8% of middle managers, 3.2% of junior managers and 29.4% of the lower ranks had access and opportunity for career development. The study indicates that training

and development did not receive much attention before the formulation of the human resource development strategy. Managers realised the importance of developing employees in order to adapt to changes in terms of service delivery and customers, but employees were either not presented with training opportunities or their workloads did not permit absences from work for training purposes.

It should however also be mentioned that the new performance management system had not been implemented during 2001. It was only implemented during 2002 and thus outside the time framework for this thesis. The impact of the new PMDS in the DPSA, being its first year of implementation, cannot be determined in absolute terms. However, it could be argued that the principles of the performance management systems (on paper, at least) will assist with the implementation of a learning organisation in the DPSA.

The link between performance management and training and development is crucial. It can almost be seen as parts of an unbroken cycle. If performance management is not implemented correctly, it will not influence management of skills or competence gaps. Training priorities will not be determined according to departmental needs, but will be based on individual perceptions of what is lacking and what is appropriate. Without the strategic link between performance management and training, neither individual nor departmental training goals and objectives will be achieved.

6.3.1 Performance management cycle

The performance management cycle begins with establishing standards of performance. Because of the interrelationship between planning and control, control should start as early as the planning stage. A performance standard is a projection of an expected or planned performance outcome, taking into account a specific time frame. During the setting of performance standards the objectives

and goals should be specified in order to facilitate the assessment of actual performance (Smit & Cronje 1997:401).

The DPSA has decided that the performance agreements of individual employees will be based on the Department's strategic plan, in order to ensure strategic alignment between departmental training priorities and individual training goals and objectives and, the functional plans of the individual components. The *Performance Management and Development System* came into effect on 1 April 2001 and performance assessment will take place on a quarterly basis. The formal annual assessment will coincide with the fourth quarterly assessment (Department of Public Service and Administration 20010(b):10-11). Botes (1994:206-207) states that a process involving performance management will ensure that employees are properly supervised, are correctly placed, promotions and transfers will be one to the best advantage of both the Department and the individual employee and, most importantly, careers will be systematically and purposefully developed.

The performance assessment report is the main source of training information for the DPSA. Employees are able to identify shortcomings in knowledge and experience. The performance contract should stipulate the individual development plan. Section 35, Chapter 5 of the SMS Handbook (Department of Public Service and Administration 2001(d)), stipulates that in order to address the gap that might exist between the required competency profile and the actual competencies, a training and development plan should be designed through a collaborative process between the manager and subordinate(s). The principle of including a personal development plan as part of the performance contract of all employees, is in the process of being implemented in the DPSA (Hendricks 2002).

The DPSA has stipulated that all performance agreements should contribute to the achievement of departmental objectives highlighted in the strategic plan of

the Department. In order to address the gap between current capacity and required competencies, a personal development plan should be part of the performance management system. The personal development plan will comprise of a training and development plan specifically designed for the individual employee. The training and development needs will not only be identified through performance assessments but also upon appointment when a work plan is developed (Department of Public Service and Administration 2001 (b): 12,17).

The following figure indicates the extent to which the DPSA is able to link performance targets with training received. The arguments made reflect the perceptions of individual employees who participated in the questionnaires.

Figure 6.1:   Establishing performance targets based on training received
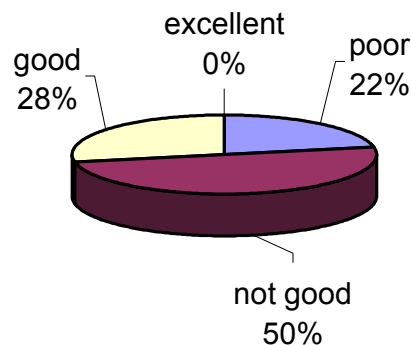

The question was designed to ascertain the extent to which the DPSA is able to establish performance targets based on training received. The majority of respondents (72%) indicated that the Department is perceived to be unable to transform itself or its individual performance targets according to the training received. The outcome of this question thus, suggests that currently the performance management system does not inform training and that when training has been received, the course is not evaluated against predetermined training objectives. Thus, training takes place for the sake of being able to show that employees have had access to training opportunities, but it could be argued

that the provisioning and implementation of training courses are not evaluated or strategically linked to enhancing either individual or departmental capacity.

The reasoning behind training and development initiatives is to enhance the capacity, not only of the individual, but more importantly of the Department. Performance indicators such as have been identified in the SMS Handbook as Core Management Criteria comprising 11 competencies, should influence the identification of training priorities. Three competencies, namely people management and empowerment, financial management and client service and customer care, have been identified as compulsory competencies for all senior managers. In most cases, the identified competencies for senior managers have also trickled down to the lower management levels, where aspects such as people management is crucial. Training courses can be used as ways in which performance can be improved. Figure 6.2 investigates the extent to which the DPSA is capable of rectifying performance through training.

Figure 6.2:   Identifying ways for improving performance through proposed training courses
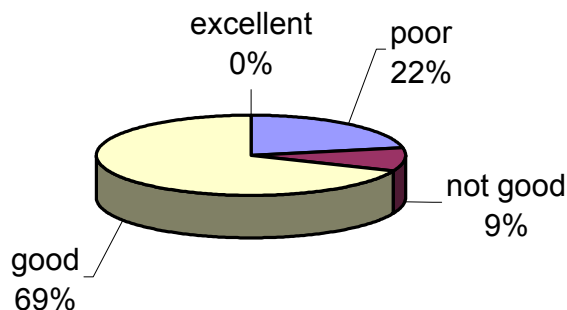

69% of respondents stated that they are able to identify ways of improving individual performance after training has taken place. The question was asked to determine the involvement of individual employees in assessing the importance of training opportunities. Once a training opportunity has been identified,

employees are placed in a position to determine how their performance will improve if they received the training. However, if some sort of control mechanism (in this case a performance agreement) is not attached to the implementation of newly acquired skills, chances are that due to the fact that reinforcement does not occur, new knowledge will not be transformed into wisdom (Chapter 5).

Performance assessment implies that progress should be determined in terms of attaining goals and objectives that was set during the last assessment period. Figure 6.4 looks at the extent to which the DPSA is perceived to be capable of assessing progress relating to performance due to training. The figure explains whether or not assessment is measured against the fulfillment of departmental training goals.

Figure 6.3:   Assessing progress toward achieving departmental training goals
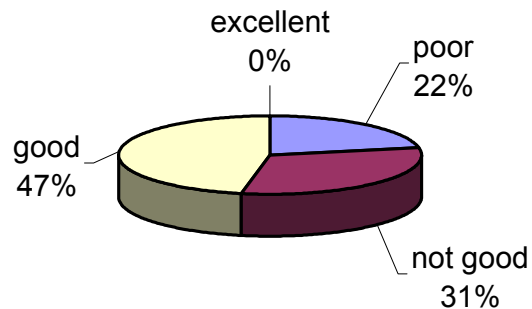
Taking into account the research already analysed in Chapter 5 and the results thereof, the outcome of this question concurs with previous information. The majority of employees (53%) stated that they are not able to determine the extent to which they are fulfilling departmental training goals and objectives. As discussed in the previous chapter, this lack of information filtering down from management, indicates that employees do not realise the strategic importance of training and development in terms of realising departmental effectiveness and efficiency.

Because of the lack of information provided by senior management, employees decide which training would satisfy their own perceptions regarding personal career development. The following figure provides an indication of the perceptions of employees pertaining to personal career development.

Figure 6.4:   Assessing progress toward achieving personal training goals
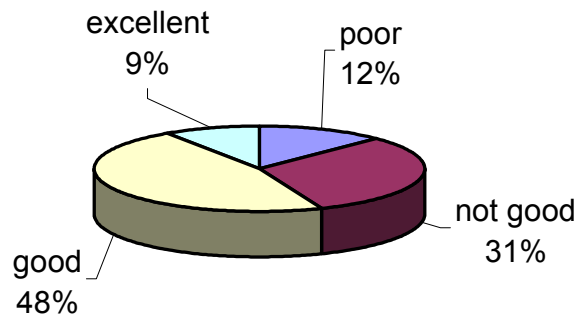
The majority (47%+9%) implies that they are able to determine the extent to which individual employee training goals and objectives are being met. The outcome of the table thus indicates that in most cases training takes place for the sake of individual fulfillment that does not necessarily coincide with departmental training priorities. For instance, senior managers could decide that they need to further their educational qualifications, something that might take three to five years. However, according to their performance contracts, they have only been appointed for a period of three years. Thus, the training does satisfy individual development needs and if they finish their qualifications, it would also benefit the Department, but finishing their qualification might not happen during the period of their employment. The Department can, thus, not justify spending resources on individual development if the development is not aligned with departmental goals and objectives.

Part of the performance management system is offering incentives to employees to better their performance. Both the SMS Handbook and the *Performance*

Management and Development System of the DPSA emphasise the important effect of offering rewards and recognition to performance, not only performance in terms of departmental goals and objectives but also, individual performance. Rewards and recognition will now be discussed.

6.3.2 Recognition and reward

Part of the *Performance Management and Development System* is the use of rewards and recognition as incentives for improved individual or group performance. The departmental policy regarding rewards is prescribed in terms of the *Public Service Regulations*, 2001, and dictates decision regarding promotion, pay progression, performance bonus allocation, non-financial rewards or the initiation of incapacity processes.

The SMS Handbook (Chapter 5, Section 26) prescribes examples of non-financial rewards that may be allocated to senior managers, including increased autonomy to organise their own work, explicit acknowledgement and recognition in publications or public awards in recognition of a specific achievement or innovation. The executing authority, in this case, the Minister of Public Service and Administration has it in her discretionary powers to allocate performance rewards (cash bonuses) to senior managers. There is a provision that only employees who have signed the performance agreement are eligible for performance rewards.

Botes (1994:216-217) describes specific factors that could influence performance decisions made by a supervisor. The attitude of employees regarding the implementation of a new system, as would be the case in the DPSA, the supervisor's own subjective norms and the tome of the appraisal meeting are some of the factors contributing to decisions made during performance assessments.

Performance management is the process that measures individual employee performance against set performance standards. Evaluation becomes part of the process, especially where training and development initiatives have been identified that would address poor performance. The different models and schools of thought on evaluation will now be discussed and a recommendation will be made on the most appropriate model for evaluation in the DPSA. The model not only addresses individual performance, but strategically aligns individual performance with departmental performance.

6.4　Models for evaluation

Critten (1995:159) identified various models and schools of thought on evaluation as illustrated in Figure 6.5.

Figure 6.5　Models and schools of evaluation
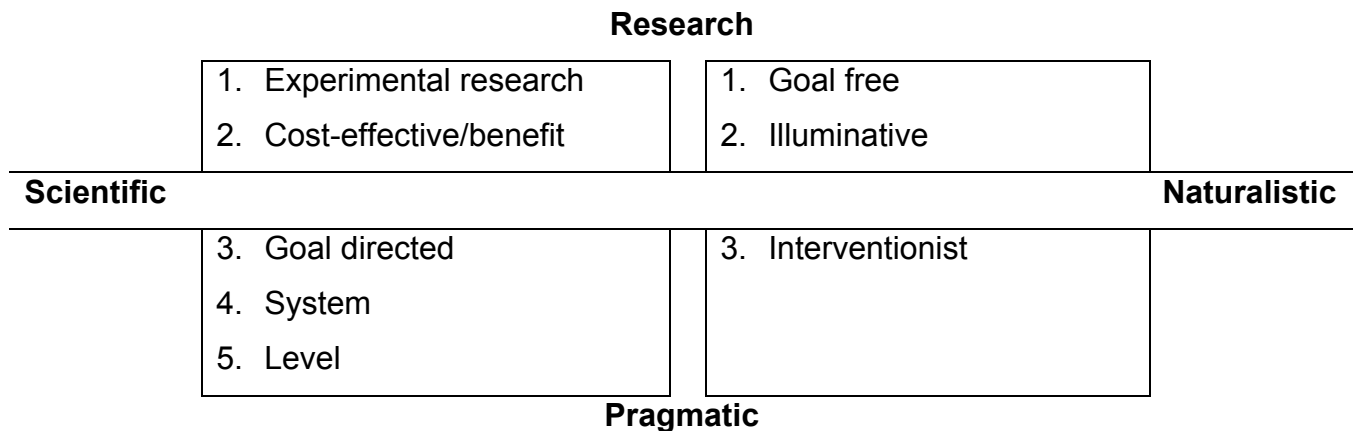
Source: Critten P. 1995. **Investing in People: Towards corporate capability.** Third Edition. London: Butterworth Heinemann p.159.

Dividing up the various schools of thought on evaluation, two dimensions, were identified including methodology and style. Methodology ranged from scientific comprising quantitative methods to naturalistic describing qualitative methods. The style of the schools of thought ranged from research based on a guiding

theory containing rigorous procedures to a pragmatic style based on practical interest and operational decisions.

The **experimental research school of thought** draws a direct correlation between training and performance changes. Using this school of thought suggests that a direct link can be drawn between training activities and an increase in departmental effectiveness and efficiency. However, the evaluator needs to be very clear as to what will be measured, who wanted the results and who will conduct the evaluation. The utilisation of this school thus rests on the assumption that the methods of data collection, the nature of data collection and the cross-checking of relevance will be predetermined (Critten 1995:160).

Costing, cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis deals with evaluating training courses in terms of its financial value. The issue of putting a financial value on the output of training has always been a contentious issue. However, training cost data and budgets are set up more as an internal administrative control than for the purpose of estimating real economic costs. The costing of training courses can be allocated in three stages during design, delivery and evaluation. The reason for deciding on a financial evaluation of training is to ensure consistency between training and non-training strategies. Cost-effectiveness is not merely a means of getting feedback from the improvement of the training function but also to contribute to the task of assessing and improving the overall efficiency of the Department (Critten 1995:161-165).

The **goal-directed school** of evaluation can be closely linked to the cost-effectiveness school due to the fact that without clearly stipulating the training objectives, financial value cannot be determined. The goal-directed school is based on three components, namely, the statement of performance, the specific conditions under which action should occur and the criteria describing acceptable performance (Critten 1995:171-172). Thus, training evaluation will be based on the predetermined goals and objectives stated at the beginning of the training

course. Employees should continuously refer back to the goals in order to ascertain whether the training course is still on track and whether the goals and objectives stated are realistic in their application.

The **systems school** of evaluation is based on identifying the training needs between the present level of skills and expected standard, producing a training course that identifies who will be trained, when, how and by whom, implementing and recording the training carried out and evaluating the results of the training against the original identified need. The role of the learner in evaluation is a passive one and the evaluator can only really be used to evaluate the transfer of knowledge (Critten 1995:174-176).

Levels of evaluation is a goals based school of thought on evaluation in as far as it argues that objectives should be stipulated for each level of training course and it is also part of the systems school because it provides for the systematic collection of feedback at each level. The levels of evaluation model proposes a cause and effect chain to linking training with performance and is aimed at providing an evaluation tool for trainers, comprising four steps in order to determine the four critical levels of evaluation. According to Critten (1995:178-179) the first step is providing reaction to context evaluation. Second, learning providing input evaluation, third, behaviour providing reaction evaluation and, the last step, providing results for outcome evaluation based on ultimate outcome, intermediate outcome and immediate outcome.

Goal free evaluation is based on the unanticipated consequences of training because emphasis on measurable objectives can prevent describing the actual outcome of a particular training course. Describing measurable objectives cannot justify the complexity of the process that constitutes a training course. The school of thought evaluates the actual effects of training courses against the defined needs. Specifying objectives indicate the intention of the trainer while evaluation should be based on evaluating the achievements and not the intentions. Thus,

reflection is placed on what has actually been produced that reveals the uniqueness and significance of a specific training course (Critten 1995:183-184).

Illuminative evaluation requires that trainees be given pre-tests and be submitted to different experiences. After a period of time, their attainments are measured to indicate the efficiency of the method of training. The evaluator may make no assumptions about the evaluation process and his or her role is restricted to providing a comprehensive understanding of the complex reality encompassing the training course. The complex reality refers to the social-psychological and material environment in which trainees and trainers have to co-exist. This school of thought is aimed at sharpening the debate of creating a learning environment in a department. The learning environment represents the network of cultural, social, departmental and psychological variables that determine performance and training. The variables interact with each other in order to establish a new set of circumstances, pressures, opinions and work styles associated with each different training course.

The **interventionist school** proposes a practical outcome of evaluation. Evaluation studies should be a service rather than a research function, in order to ensure that the department is provided with useful information regarding the training course. Proponents of the interventionist school argue that the stakeholders in the training course should have a vested interest in the outcome of the training and thus evaluation becomes a process of negotiation between the evaluator and the stakeholders. The goal of evaluation is not predetermined but will focus on the central issues of relevance to the identified decision makers and information users (Critten 1995:186-187).

The most comprehensive model of evaluation, according to Critten (1995:188) will be based on the following six primary principles, including that:

a)　　evaluation is a dynamic process which generates value;

b)   the schools of thought on evaluation can only provide perspectives from which to examine and describe the training data;

c)   training data are complex and diverse and should be comprehensively described in order to have any meaning to the evaluator;

d)   the evaluation in itself will have no meaning or value if it is not given value by the stakeholder;

e)   value given to the evaluation will be based on the personal judgement of the stakeholder; and

f)   the ultimate value of the evaluation is when more than one stakeholder is able to reach consensus on the value of the training course.

For the purpose of this thesis, the model most appropriate for evaluation within the DPSA, was developed by Critten (1995:193-199). Evaluation is divided into six stages and the process of evaluation intends to meet the evaluation needs of both the individual and the Department. The principles for the successful implementation of this model are that everyone is a learner, that every one should act as a resource to each other, that everyone details his or her competencies to be achieved and resources to achieve them with and that every manager sees his or her role as increasing the value of their employees in terms of increasing the range of skills and competencies (Critten 1995:194).

The six stages of the evaluation model are contracting, describing, focusing, confronting, consolidating and disseminating. Through this model it can be proven that evaluation is a dynamic process that everyone is capable of implementing. However, the evaluation should be done in the Department in order to have the desired result and should, thus, be driven by senior management to achieve maximum value. The first stage, contracting, should comprise a meeting convened by the senior management to brief the trainees on the goals to be achieved. The evaluator should ensure that the group, to undergo training, is clear on their vision so that the benefits and process can be visualised to portray the desired results. Description aims to help trainees become fully

aware of the aims that have to be achieved and the range of resources available to them. Thus, a full description of what the illuminative school of thought called the learning environment. Focusing involves the evaluator helping the trainee to draw together the common themes from the description stage and focus on the meaning for the trainee. Individual development planning characterises this stage (Critten 1995:195-196).

Stage four deals with confronting. There is a very fine line to be drawn between focusing and confronting and the evaluator needs to facilitate this stage to ensure that the trainee draws as much knowledge as possible from the learning experience. The trainee should be able to make the personal breakthrough of achieving a new competence and mastering a new skill. Thus, during this stage the trainee obtains the ultimate value for himself or herself personally. Stage five is the consolidation and the evaluator takes charge of the process. All the different individual values now have to be put together so that the total picture of change can be visualised (Critten 1995: 196-197).

Stage six is the dissemination of information back to everyone in the Department that was involved in putting the training course together. Reflection will be given of the extent to which predetermined objectives were reached, the amount of resources used and the individual, group and departmental value derived from the training course (Critten 1995:198).

Probably the most significant aspect of this model is that is will inform future training courses as to the applicability and the framework for evaluation. The use of this model, for the purpose of this thesis, lies in the link created between individual and departmental performance. Training is not only strategically linked to departmental goals and objectives but the evaluation of the training courses will also focus on benefiting and realising not only departmental training needs but individual training needs as well.

Wexley & Latham (2002:161-162) identify reasons why the evaluation of training courses could be contested. Most often, senior management does not require training evaluation. If employees stay abreast of new developments and are able to adapt to changes in the environment, then the training must have served its purpose and a formal evaluation is perceived as being not necessary. Senior managers might also not want to indicate that they have no idea as to how to conduct the evaluation of training courses and they, thus, ignore the issues and hope that the training serves a departmental purpose. When evaluation does take place, determining exactly what needs to be evaluated could also be perceived as challenging. Thus, senior management might not know if a cost analysis is sufficient, or if the achievement of training objectives should also have been considered. Finally, evaluation is perceived as being a costly and risky exercise and as such, should not be implemented if it will take additional resources in an already overextended budget. It could be argued that the perception exists that money would rather be spent on identifying new training courses than on realising that money already spent was wasted on a training course that did not add value to the effective and efficient functioning of the department.

The solution to the barriers to obtaining sound evaluation lies in educating senior management on the importance of evaluation and highlighting the departmental benefits that would be gained through the process. Thus, senior managers need to be taught on how to evaluate, what to evaluate and how to determine the degree to which the training goals and objectives of the department have been realised. Evaluation needs to be included in the budget so that the financial allocation is specified from the beginning. Continuous evaluation throughout the course would also alleviate the burden of trying to find the right information after the training course has already been implemented. The importance and benefits to be gained from evaluation should not be underestimated and commitment on behalf of senior management, would strengthen the process considerably.

With regard to the learning organisation, evaluation is an integral part of the extent to which the DPSA will be able to adapt to changes suggested through the evaluation of training courses. Training should enhance departmental capability, which would lead to departmental learning and the DPSA learning from its own experience – the true characteristics of a learning organisation. This issue will, however, be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

6.5   Weaknesses and strengths of the training system

During 1998/1999 the *Training Review Report*, commissioned by the DPSA, investigated and reported on training within the Public Service. The DPSA specified various different training opportunities available to employees. The training opportunities included (Du Toit *et al.* 2001:19) f**ormal** training through tertiary institutions, **management** training, **computer** training focusing on basic computer literacy and the use of various software packages, **office based** training related to any type of training in respect of office and administrative practices, **policy specific** training in respect of specific or general policies applicable to the department, and **departmental training** referring to courses specifically aimed at specific line function activities of the department.

34 employees received formal training, 24 management training, 30 employees received computer training, 19 employees received office-based training and 6 policy-specific training (Du Toit *et al.* 2001:21). Thus, during 1998/1999, from the 438 employees only 113 employees were offered training opportunities. Once again, the fact that the DPSA had not yet formulated the *Human Resource Development Strategy for the Public Service, 2001-2006,* should be taken into consideration and, as such the emphasis of the Department during this stage was on restructuring and not so much on training and development. More recent statistics have not been made available but with the focus of government on skills development and the implementation of the new performance management systems for senior managers and the rest of the employees, it could be argued

that more training opportunities have since been made available to the DPSA employees.

Different training providers included tertiary institutions for 47.3% of all training, private institutions responsible for 15.3% of all training, the South African Management and Development Institute providing 6% of training, in-house training courses obligated to provide 19.9% of training courses, other departments supplying 11.1% and international institutions offering training courses for 0.4% of employees (Du Toit *et al.*2001:23). Based on the training provided during this period, an assessment was done to ascertain the extent to which the DPSA employees were satisfied with the training received (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2:   Training assessment for period 1998/1999

	Senior Managers			Middle Managers		
	Satisfied (%)	Not satisfied (%)	No training (%)	Satisfied (%)	Not satisfied (%)	No training (%)
Job Performance	78.3	13	8.7	91.3	8.7	8.7
	Junior Managers			Lower Ranks		
Job Performance	100	0	0	91.35	8.7	0

Source: Du Toit R, Erasmus J & Van Zyl E. 2001. **Baseline Information on Public Service Training and Education.** Department of Public Service and Administration. p.

Of the relatively small group of employees who received training, the vast majority of employees on all levels indicated their satisfaction with the training received. The table confirms that training provided during that period before the implementation of the new performance management system, satisfied employees in terms of their individual training and development needs. Unfortunately, the study did not provide a link between individual performance and departmental performance. The next part of the chapter will focus on the weaknesses and strengths of the training system as well as highlight the possible

challenges that managers face when making training opportunities available to employees.

6.5.1   Weaknesses in the training system

Tobin (1993:162) identifies possible reasons why training may not take place. Lack of knowledge of available resources, is the first challenge highlighted in the discussion. Training providers and the DPSA meet on a regular basis to discuss current training trends. However, it does happen that the management then fails to inform employees of existing training courses as well as the departmental resources available for the implementation of those training courses. It could also happen that new technologies are applied in the department without proper training of employees. This could lead to a situation where the infrastructure exists but it cannot be implemented due to a lack of skills and knowledge (Tobin 1993:162-163).

A second challenge is the lack of access to resources such as using the internal mail facilities to disseminate information regarding training opportunities. Sometimes the managers who do receive the information, omit to distribute it among employees due to fear for development. The manager hoards the information in order to keep control over employees and reinforce the *status quo.* Risk aversion could also keep employees from gaining access to development (Tobin 1993:163-164). For instance, implementing new technologies might lead to departmental transformation and employees are not ready for change.

Tobin (1993:164-165) highlights a third challenge, namely the lack of permission to learn. Too often managers are accused of not allowing their employees to attend training courses. The excuse being offered usually deals with the workload of employees. Managers indicate that they do not need to send their employees for training because they are too busy doing their jobs (Du Toit *et al.* 2001:41). This excuse could imply a lack of understanding of the importance of

training or it could indicate a fear on the part of the managers that developing their employees might jeopardise their own positions and status.

The fourth challenge is the lack of permission to apply what has been learned (Tobin 1993:165). Especially, in situations where training might not be linked to performance targets, implementing a new skill would not benefit the day-to-day functions of an employee and thus permission will not be granted by managers to apply a new skill. The situation could deteriorate and then cause a serious lack of morale and motivation among employees. They might, themselves, then decide that training is not worth the effort and thus the whole department could become stagnant.

In order to address the challenges, managers need to focus on the optimal ways of introducing training to employees' regular work routines – one of the core principles of the learning organisation. Du Toit *et al.* (2001:41) identified several additional reasons for some constraints being experienced by the current training system. The first constraint has to do with budgets. Limited funds are available for training and development especially when measured against the high costs of training providers and private institutions. Secondly, most human resource directorates or units prove inadequate in terms of providing training courses. Employees who are suppose to train others have no real qualification themselves or human resource development practitioners are used ineffectively. It was also mentioned that training courses were not always well planned and the most important challenge was that individual training needs were not aligned with departmental training needs and thus the training provided by the department was not really significant to the individual.

A third major constraint with the current training system is time. Employees struggle to attend training courses due to work demands. Thus, the concern has been raised that not enough training courses are being offered to cope with the need to ensure better performance. The application of technology was identified

and a fourth problem where the department specified a lack of technology to conduct proper training courses and, lastly, a lack of formal policy and guidelines for training hinders the Department in terms of trying to align their strategic departmental goals and objectives with training goals and objectives. Hendricks (2002) also stated that the DPSA, currently, has a draft training policy in place but that the policy has not been finalised. The implementation of the new performance management system that should inform training objectives has also not been tested in terms of its applicability to both departmental training goals and objectives and individual training needs.

6.5.2 Strengths of the training system

Using a competency based approach to training makes provision for the possible establishment of a link between individual performance and departmental effectiveness and efficiency. Du Toit *et al.* (2001:42) maintain that competency based training also promotes employees' interest in training in order to develop individually and enforce a learning environment within a department. The focus on career development through training should be enhanced with appropriate career counselling services so that the product of training and development could be further improved upon.

Partnerships with tertiary institutions in the training of employees, is another strength of the training system. Quality training, according to Du Toit *et al.* (2001:42), could be positively encouraged through the strengthening of partnerships. Ensuring that the evaluation of training courses, in order to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the training content, is built into the partnership, will further strengthen and increase the use of tertiary institutions as training providers to the Department.

Training bursaries offered by the Department is an incentive to promote individual performance and the strength of the training system. The benefits offered by the Department to facilitate a learning environment, should be

protected and promoted. Modern technology, although not always enough, is a major strength in the training system. Technology enhances training, making it more appropriate and allows employees to adapt to changes in the technological environment that would impact on their daily functions (Du Toit *et al.* 2001:42).

The biggest strength reported by employees during the *Training Review* conducted in 1998/1999 (Du Toit *et al.* 2001:42), is the support of senior management with respect to the importance of training and development for the DPSA. Although it may seem to be a conflicting statement, the emphasis that government places on human resource development and training within the Public Service is communicated by senior management. However, individual managers may, because of reasons discussed in previous paragraphs, restrict employee access to training. Herein lies the challenge – to effectively and efficiently communicate senior management intentions to all managers on all levels within the department, thereby ensuring the fulfillment of departmental training priorities.

Robbins (1995:265-266) suggests that specific signals identify a need for training in departments. Such signals include any time when new processes or equipment will be introduced affecting employee performance, an increase in the number of errors, an increase in the number of complaints received from customers and a drop in individual or group productivity. In order to strengthen a training system the trainers always need to keep in mind that learning will be enhanced when the learner is motivated and that learning requires feedback. The learning process will further be improved if the training content is enforced through practice and transference (Robbins 1995:268-269).

From the above it could be concluded that evaluation is an important and integral part of successful training and development. Evaluation could be facilitated through the use of appropriate models, as has been suggested earlier in the chapter. Also, the fundamentals of evaluation need to be understood in order to

communicate the importance of evaluation to senior management. Performance management is a process that could ensure that evaluation adds value to continued training and development. Performance management is based on a participative decision making process where individual employees are able to explain their training and development needs whilst allowing managers to incorporate individual needs into departmental training priorities and thus aligning individual development with departmental effectiveness and efficiency. The whole principle of the evaluation of training and development initiatives is important to the implementation and management of the learning organisation, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

6.6   Conclusion

The importance of evaluating training courses has been illustrated through the discussions in this chapter. Evaluation is the process through which the value of the training course is identified. Value should be determined in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Using the performance management system can enhance the evaluation of training courses. In the DPSA, new performance management systems have been developed for both SMS and all other levels.

The performance management system informs the training and development priorities of both the Department and the individual. The performance contracts include a personal development plan highlighting the training and development initiatives to be undertaken by the employees. The research indicated that training courses are not always linked to both individual and departmental training priorities, but rather to only one of the two. In most instances, due to a lack of communication from senior management regarding departmental training priorities, training courses only satisfy individual training and development needs.

The different models and schools of thought on evaluation was also discussed and the model developed by Peter Critten that evaluated training courses to benefit both individual and departmental priorities, was, for the purpose of this

thesis, identified as the most appropriate model of evaluation. The process involved in implementing this model, was discussed and the current strengths and weaknesses of the training system was described.

In the following chapter the implementation and management of a learning organisation will be discussed.