

## **Chapter 5: A human resource training and development profile of the Department of Public Service and Administration**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Chapter 5 deals with the term “learning”. Different learning styles as well as the learning cycle will be discussed. Andragogy, defined as adult learning, is introduced and the concept of learning is linked with training and development. Two main approaches to training and development, namely behavioural and cognitive, are described. Within the broader approaches to training, different types of training - from the more traditional to the more current - are depicted.

The second part of the chapter focuses on the information gathered through the questionnaires from current employees of the DPSA. The planning, guiding, budgeting and interpreting functions to departmental training and development are analysed and assumptions are made, based on the majority opinion of the DPSA employees. Learning will be restricted to adult learning and the styles, norms and processes that guide and facilitate adult learning.

### **5.2 Adult learning and education**

Adult learning is the process through which sequential and organised activities are undertaken with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, understanding, skills, appreciation and attitudes of adults (Man 2002:1). Adult learning characteristics include (Man 2002:4):

- a) freedom to avoid, engage in or withdraw from the learning experience;
- b) selecting his or her own area of interest;
- c) spacing the learning based on ongoing commitments;
- d) relying on authority is entirely based on competence;
- e) relationships with others offer greater levels of trust and discretion;
- f) seeking information that is relevant to one’s own experience or potential benefit for the immediate future;

- g) displaying a cooperative spirit in integrating the learning of others with own group achievement.

#### 4.2.1 Andragogy

The adult-based approach to learning is called '*andragogy*', which is derived from the Greek word '*aner*' meaning man. The second Greek word '*ago*' means leading. Thus andragogy refers to the leading of man, or in this case, adult learning (Laird 1978:122 *cf.* O'Connor *et al.* 2002:129). While children see themselves as being dependent learners, adults perceive themselves as self-directing. Laird (1978:123) lists a number of features that recognise the maturity of adult learners. The features describe how adult learners are more problem-centered than content-centered. They encourage active participation in the learning process and learners have to take an equal share of the learning responsibility. Laird (1978:123) raises the important aspect that adult education should have learning evaluation as an integral part of the process. Thus, reappraisal and redesign of learning activities should form part and parcel of the adult learning experience.

Man (2002:6) found that adult learners learn best when there are clear learning objectives, when educators support the objectives, when workers are treated as adults and the methods and analyses are relevant to their performance. Learners appreciate the learning experience more when they can use their experience and existing knowledge in the learning process and when the process is interactive and conducive to group discussions.

As defined in Chapter 1, learning can happen deliberately, as a consequence of job demands or through personal commitment to learning (voluntarily) (Truelove 1995:297-298). Knasel *et al.* (2000:15) maintain that learning is based on four assumptions impacting on the understanding of the most effective approach to learning. The four assumptions are that learning is a continuous process,

learning is an active process, all people have an enormous capacity for learning and learning remains important for individual development.

In terms of instilling the principle of lifelong learning as a prerequisite to the implementation of a learning organisation, the process of education should become synonymous with human life. Lifelong learning and education include formal and informal learning extended throughout the life-span of an employee in order to fulfil individual and professional potential to the fullest. Adult education and the concept of lifelong learning can be linked by identifying five norms that ratify the concept. Man (2002:2) states that, firstly, the norm of utility describes adult education as the process that meets the functional requirements of life and work. Second, the norm of structural freedom refers to the types and approaches through which adult education is implemented. Third, the norm of people's interest depicts the understanding of employees regarding new knowledge, methods and techniques. Fourth, the norm of comprehensiveness describes the content and impact of learning or continued education and last, the norm of essentiality or the absolute need for basic education details essential skills such as numeracy and literacy.

Thus, from the above it could be concluded that adult education comprises specific issues that should be addressed in determining human resource development and training efforts. The problem statement of this thesis highlights the importance of strategically linking individual competence to overall departmental effectiveness and efficiency, in terms of realising departmental goals and objectives. The different norms, described above, are important to the implementation of the learning organisation, in the sense that through addressing the functional requirements as well as the structural freedom necessary for adult education, the building blocks of information sharing and systems thinking could be facilitated. In understanding the term "adult education", the way in which it affects and impacts on the learning organisation could also be determined.

Adult learning has an important impact on the choice of training courses. Taking the characteristics of adult training into account means that the type of training that will be provided should be aligned with the way in which adults learn. Developing training courses for adult learners should take into account that adults will not be motivated by good report cards, but that the learning outcomes should be practical and self-benefiting. The most effective way to motivate an adult learner is to show the learner what and how his or her personal work life will be improved. Cognisance should be taken of the fact that the adult learner will already possess experience that could be beneficial to the training process.

Adults should be shown how to integrate the new knowledge with what they already know. This will only be achieved if the learner understands the value of training. Why the learning is useful and why a new skill should be mastered, have to be made known before the training commences. Adult training is self-pacing and as such, adults should be given every opportunity to participate in training initiatives (O'Connor *et al.* 2002:131-132).

The characteristics that describe adult education should be borne in mind when training courses are selected and training priorities are determined. The different stages in the adult learning cycle will now be discussed.

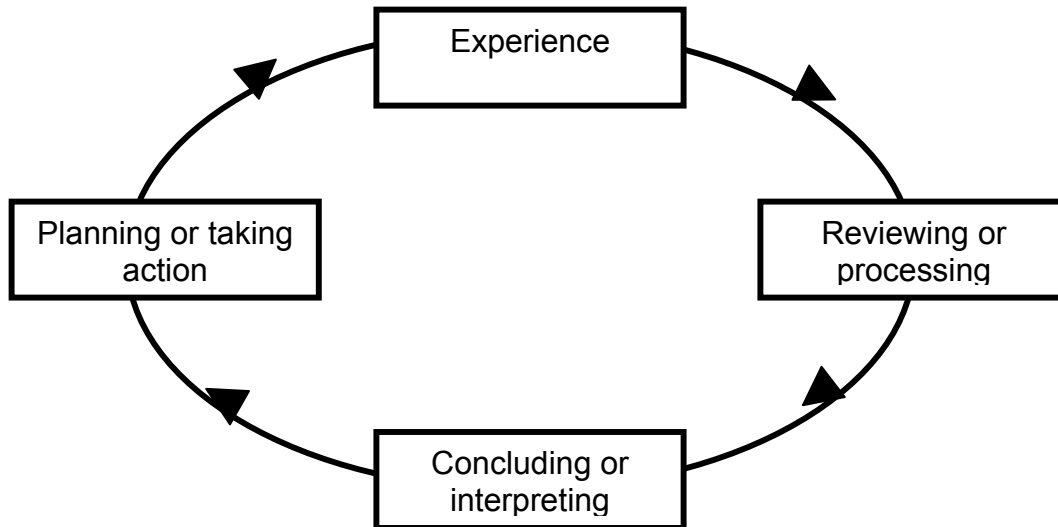
### **5.2.2 The learning cycle**

According to O'Connor *et al.* (2002:132), the learning process includes four stages, namely (1) the learner has a concrete experience, (2) the experience is observed and reflected upon, (3) the experience is abstracted, conceptualised and generalised and (4) the generalisation is tested in new situations that lead to new experiences. Beeby & Booth (2000:7-8) *cf.* Tobin (1993:156-158) divide the cycle into the following four stages, including (Figure 4.1):

- a) experiencing or data gathering;
- b) processing or transforming data into information;
- c) interpreting or transforming information into knowledge; and

- d) taking action leading to conceptualisation when engaging with change issues or from knowledge to wisdom.

**Figure 5.1 The learning cycle**



Source: Mumford A. 1995. Putting learning styles to work: an integrated approach. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, Volume 27, Number 8:7.

The gathering of data has three primary sources, namely other employees, written materials and observation. Data is, however, rather useless if the learner does not place the data into some kind of context. Data is without value unless somebody uses it and even though employees are overloaded with data on a regular basis, information is what is needed.

Transforming data into information means that data receives a purpose and relevance. By creating opportunities through, for instance, training and development, data is made relevant and will attain a practical purpose, if applied. Information becomes knowledge through its implementation. Knowledge implies understanding and an important aspect to remember in the conversion of information into knowledge, is timing. Employees are constantly exposed to information, but if they do not apply the information directly, knowledge and

understanding will be lost and the training course would have been a waste of valuable resources. When intuition is added to knowledge, wisdom is created. As an employee becomes proficient in his or her chosen job, intuition about what will work and what will not, is developed (Tobin 1993:156-161).

The creation of new knowledge is an attribute given to humans. Wisdom cannot be given to anyone, but what the DPSA can do to ensure that their training courses culminate in wisdom being created, is to ensure that a learning environment that will nurture the development of wisdom is created. The environment will encourage individual learning, the application of learning to the employee's job and the sharing of ideas among group members (Tobin 1993:161-162).

The stages in the learning cycle influence the different levels of learning, namely individual, group, interdepartmental group and department-wide learning. Individual learning means that the learner has to become involved in reflecting and being open to experiences, while also paying close attention to inner thoughts and feelings, however discomfoting due to change or new experiences. Group learning involves taking into account both the content issues relating to the task as well as the process issues relating to group dynamics. Interdepartmental group learning requires that conscious attention be paid to the effects of different cultural perspectives on the process and content of learning. Negative group dynamics could have a detrimental effect and cause distortion in the learning experience. Department-wide learning requires that levels one through three are integrated in order to fulfil learning at a departmental level (Beeby & Booth 2000:7-8).

From the above, it could be argued that in order to facilitate the implementation of a learning organisation, department-wide learning should be evident. However, the lack of a strategic link between individual learning and departmental-wide learning is part of the problem statement of this thesis. The perception can thus

arise that a greater need for clarity on the content of the different stages of learning is evident in the DPSA. The DPSA, if it is to succeed as a learning organisation, needs to implement the different stages of learning in all its human resource development and training efforts. The learning cycle will be influenced by the different learning styles that can be identified in adult training and education. The learning styles also relate to the content and complexity of training course material as well as the capabilities of the adult learner. Learning styles need to be kept in mind when training human resources in the DPSA.

### 5.2.3 Learning styles

The style of learning is often ascribed to the learner's preferred approach to the learning activity. O'Connor *et al.* (2002:132) suggest that the approach to learning will depend on the style that the learner is most comfortable with and may even be a combination of several styles that facilitate the learning process.

Four prominent learning styles are identified by O'Connor *et al.* (2002:132-133), including:

- a) diverging style combining preferences for concrete experiences and reflective observation;
- b) assimilating style combining the learning steps of abstract conceptualisation and reflective observation;
- c) converging style combining the learning steps of abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation; and
- d) accommodating style combining the learning steps of concrete experience and active experimentation.

The converging style is used to find the practical use for ideas and theories. Dealing with technical tasks and problems are preferred over social or interpersonal issues. Converging learning is more appropriate for specialist and technology careers. The diverging style is more aimed at observing situations before taking any action. Generating ideas, through for instance brainstorming,

possessing a broad cultural interest and gathering information characterises this learning style. The arts, entertainment industry and service careers benefit from this type of learning style (O'Connor *et al.* 2002:133).

The assimilating style is used to understand a wide range of information and putting it into a succinct logical form. Abstract ideas and concepts as well as less focus on people are more appropriate to this style of learning and the information and science careers benefit from this style of learning. The accommodating style aims to learn primarily through hands-on experiences. New and challenging experiences draw the attention of the learner and they tend to focus more on their instincts than on logic. This learning style is important for effectiveness in action-oriented careers such as sales or marketing.

Although, different learning styles can be identified, it is important to take into cognisance the functional nature of a department when deciding on the most appropriate learning style. In the DPSA, and for the purpose of implementing a learning organisation, aspects of all the different styles could be relevant, depending on the type of training and the employees to be trained.

Mumford (1995:2) matches four different learning styles with the learning cycle as illustrated in Figure 4.1. First, the activists that learn best from short-term activities such as competitive team tasks - thus they relate better to having an experience (stage one of the learning cycle). Second, the reflectors that learn best from activities where they are able to stand back, listen and observe - thus reviewing the experience (stage two of the learning cycle). Third, theorists that learn best from activities where, what is being offered, is part of a system, concept or theory and the relevance has to be proven - thus concluding from the experience (stage three of the learning cycle) and last, the pragmatists that learn better from activities where there is an obvious link between the subject-matter and the problem or opportunity and they can try to emulate the model in their



own work situation - thus planning the next steps (stage four of the learning cycle).

The above describes the ability of the learning style to adapt to the content and objective of the development and training effort. Thus, when an employee is sent for financial management training and the content of the course requires the employee to be able to, independently, draw up a budget, deciding which items to account for and where they should be placed, it reflects a pragmatic style of learning. In instances where employees are just required to represent information presented to them, without critically analysing the relevance, they would be depicted as activists – able to relate, because of the shared training experience.

Dymock & Gerber (2002:2) maintain that learning begins with the experiences that employees have in everyday functioning. The extent to which employees are able to put into practice what they have experienced in life, will depend largely on how accommodating the training culture of the Department is and how well the individual employee is able to relate to departmental training priorities, goals and objectives. Descriptive data, later discussed in this chapter, will indicate that employees of the DPSA find it difficult to identify with departmental training priorities due to a lack of feedback and information regarding governmental training priorities.

The four main outcomes of learning, according to Shukla (1997:64-73) are adaptation to change, innovation, continuous improvement and transformation. Learning helps a department such as the DPSA to adapt to environmental changes, Learning involves the creation of knowledge that would help the Department to be innovative in terms of responding to demands and opportunities existing inside and outside the Department. The competitive advantage created through innovation lies in the fact that the Department is able to define the standards for quality of products and services. The Department will also be able to sustain a competitive advantage when they learn to make

continuous improvements in their already existing products, processes and services. Internally, continuous improvement will result in increased productivity and decreased costs. The Department will be able to derive even more benefits from learning if the learning is encouraged throughout the whole Department. Departmental transformation involves more than just structural changes, and will, thus, focus more on mind-set changes in employees. It is not sufficient to change the way in which a Department is structured. It is also necessary to change the way in which employees perceive, interpret, think and feel training and development.

### **5.3 Approaches to and types of training**

Two approaches to training are identified by O'Connor *et al.* (2002:134), namely the behavioural and cognitive approaches. The behavioural approach is based on three basic assumptions. Firstly, observable behaviour rather than ideas or mental activity must occur to confirm that learning has taken place. Secondly, the environment shapes the learners and, not the other way around. Thirdly, how closely in time the teaching and learning bond together and become reinforced is crucial to how successful the training and learning experiences are perceived to be (O'Connor *et al.* 2002:134).

The cognitive approach to training views learning as changes in mental structures - how one thinks. Training has to be preceded by definite learning objectives, which break down the big picture into smaller mental, problem-solving modes. Learning involves more than just reacting to stimuli. It also involves the reorganisation of experiences in order to make sense of the environmental stimuli. Problems are either solved or unsolved and there is no state of almost being solved. The major difference between behavioural and cognitive theorists lies in where the control over the learning activity resides. For a behavioural theorist control resides in the environment or the instructor whereas for the cognitive theorist control lies within the individual learner himself or herself (O'Connor *et al.* 2002:138).

Traditionally, training occurred either on-the-job or off-the-job. On-the-job training can be defined as the type of training that would happen while the employee is present in his or her current work situation. On-the-job training should start with some sort of induction or orientation training for new employees. Van der Waldt & Du Toit (1997:395) maintain that orientation training will introduce the new employee to an unknown work environment. High turnover and costs will be reduced through an effective orientation training course because negative influences and feelings of ineffectiveness could be reduced. The positive outcome of orientation training is that productivity will increase and interpersonal relationships between employees will improve.

On-the-job training focuses on reviewing and learning from experience and is centered on learning from action and problem solving. Knowledge is created and shared with all working in that specific group within a department and thus team dynamics will be enhanced because functions are implemented collectively (Dymock & Gerber 2002:1). Robbins (1995:271) defines on-the-job training as the training that places employees in actual work situations. Koontz *et al.* (1984:440-442) and Robbins (1995:271-273) categorise on-the-job training into planned progression, job rotation, coaching and mentoring, multiple management and apprenticeships.

Planned progression is a career pathing technique used by managers to indicate the path that subordinates need to follow in order to move vertically in the hierarchy. The requirements for advancement are known and it is thus a step-by-step approach that requires that functions be implemented effectively and efficiently at each level. Job rotation is used to broaden the knowledge base of employees. Job rotation can, however, only be identified as a type of training if it will not hinder departmental productivity. Rotation can also not be used as a device to get rid of a difficult subordinate, but rotation should also benefit the trainees and not just the Department (Koontz *et al.* 1984:440-441).

Coaching is based on establishing a trust relationship between the manager and subordinate. Managers will need patience and wisdom in order to be successful coaches and subordinates have to continuously be recognised for their good performance. Mentoring is when senior managers tutor, coach, counsel and guide less experienced employees (Koontz *et al.* 1984:440-441 *cf.* Robbins 1995:272). The concept of multiple management is regarded as important to the DPSA (Hendricks 2002). Multiple management implies that junior, middle and senior managers are placed on *ad hoc* committees or work teams in order to stimulate development. Trainees are given the opportunity to interact with more experienced employees and trainees may even be expected to take a management role in a committee, thus exposing trainees to management development (Koontz *et al.* 1984:441-442).

Off-the-job training can be classified as classroom learning and is more based on the acquisition of a set of technical skills through formal teaching activities. Learners are provided with knowledge, skills, concepts, and the emphasis is placed on developing cognitive skills (Dymock & Gerber 2002:2). Thacker (2002:2) maintains that the main aim of classroom learning is valuing replicability and control. Off-the-job training can also be labeled as proficiency training. Proficiency refers to technical, communication, human, analytical and conceptual skills. Training becomes necessary in order to ensure that the different skills are applied correctly (Van der Waldt & Du Toit 1997:395). Robbins (1995:273-275) identifies specific methods to implement off-the-job training including vestibule training (employees learn their jobs on the equipment they will be using, but away from the actual work situation), seminars and conferences, programmed instruction (individuals learn a small block of information and are tested immediately to determine if material was understood) and outside reading, encouraging employees to read literature that would, for instance, keep them abreast of new developments in their respective fields.

Koo (1999:1) proposes action learning as the most extensive type of training currently. Action learning is the approach to training that is based on the distinction between doing things oneself and talking about getting things done by others. Action learning is implemented to make managers learn how to manage better by tackling the problems that they experience on a daily basis. Action learning is not the same as academic simulation and should be holistic in the way it views the learner, the management process and the learning experience.

Action learning values collaboration, personal autonomy, active engagement and personal relevance in the learning experience. The test for action learning is whether or not learning can be linked to understanding and action and thus reinforcing application (Thacker 2002:2). Action learning is highly situational, flexible and combines social processes with individual learning needs. Learners are being motivated to learn for themselves, to make more rational decisions because they understand the values, assumptions, actions, rights and prerogatives that affect any given situation (Koo 1999:1-2).

Action learning benefits the learner because he or she learns to learn. Since the learner manages the learning experience himself or herself, self-awareness of own and group performance is enhanced. The social aspects of the learning experience will be reinforced due to the fact that the learner learns through himself or herself as well as through the others in the group. Specific process objectives need to be followed in order to make action learning successful, including to (Koo 1999:3-4):

- a) help each other define the purpose, time scale and desired end results;
- b) help each other test and clarify training ideas;
- c) help motivate each other to take action;
- d) share ideas on how to resolve difficulties encountered by others;
- e) share information from own experiences;
- f) monitor learning progress;
- g) manage themselves and review the effectiveness of management;

- h) take charge of individual and group learning; and
- i) review and improve individual and group learning.

Action learning can also be categorised as competency based training and education. According to Drejer (2000:1), competence is a way of explaining a department's competitiveness – why some departments perform better than others with similar functional characteristics. Competence comprises specific generic elements, namely that technology is often the most visible part of competence, since it represents the tools that human beings use to implement their functions. Human beings are the most obvious part of competence because if a human being does not use the technology, nothing will happen. Organisation refers to the formal managerial systems under which human beings operate and the culture refers to the informal organisation (structure) of the Department. The departmental culture influences human beings with regards to the norms and values that guide daily functioning (Drejer 2000:3).

The competency based type of training should comprise the following six steps in its design. Spencer & Spencer (1993:290-291) state that the first step involves recognition, through which learners are able to convince themselves that the competencies being taught do exist and are important to being able to do their jobs effectively and efficiently. The second step is understanding - explaining the new competency concept in order to facilitate correct application of new competencies in current job positions. The third step entails self-assessment, which would provide learners with feedback on their own levels of competence measured against the levels that predict ideal performance, thus, indicating the skills gap between what is available and what is needed. The fourth step contains the practice of the taught skill in realistic job simulations in order to obtain coaching feedback on what is needed to raise the current performance standard. The fifth step encompasses the actual job application through which learners should set goals and develop action plans for how the new competency will be applied in their current positions. The last step describes the follow-up

support that encompasses activities such as sharing competency goals and plans with managers, rewarding initial experimentation with the use of new competency behaviours and holding regular goal progress review meetings in which trainees support and encourage one another in the application of new competencies.

Training and learning will not automatically result in competence being built or increased. Drejer (2000:5) maintains that learning takes place as a result of a critical reflection of one's own experiences rather than as a result of formal training and remembering theories. Competence identification and training are closely aligned with performance management and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. Competency based learning reflects the principles important in the implementation of the learning organisation, including self-assessment, feedback, support and reflection.

The latest type of training deals with the effective utilisation of technology to enhance the learning experience. On-line learning is based on the principle of reproducing the student-tutor relationship more effectively and efficiently. Bork (2001:1) maintains that on-line learning has the potential of bringing learning to far more people at a lower cost to the learner. The goals of on-line learning are thus twofold, namely much better learning for all and affordable learning. On-line learning is fully active, focusing on the learner and not on the authority figure providing the information. Aspects that characterise on-line learning include that any person anywhere, any time, can be reached and can participate in training. Learners are much more active, knowledge is created and learners are kept interested in the learning experience.

On-line learning requires a level of proficiency and commitment to the learning experience. Before on-line learning can be proposed as an effective type of training, trainers need to be sure that the trainees will be committed to learning, will share their learning experiences with others and will be appropriately skilled

to utilise the technology. On-line learning can be very effective in a learning organisation but then, the building blocks or principles of the learning organisation need to be in place.

#### **5.4 The training and development profile of the Department of Public Service and Administration**

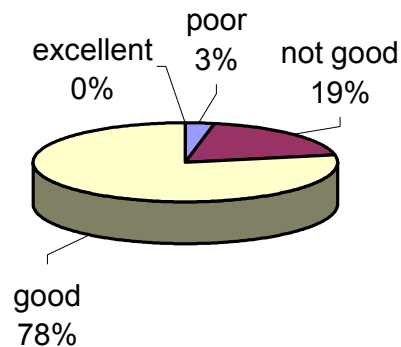
Training and development in the DPSA was assessed by using a questionnaire distributed to the targeted employees (as discussed in Chapter 1). In focusing on creating a training and development profile for the DPSA, attention was placed on four distinct managerial functions, including planning, guidance, budgeting and interpretation. Training and development will not take place without proper and appropriate planning and thus the extent to which the DPSA is able to plan for its training priorities will now be discussed.

##### **5.4.1 Planning**

For the purpose of this thesis, planning will relate to the ability of senior management to determine, identify and implement the training courses that would satisfy the DPSA's training priorities. Planning the DPSA's response to long term training demands were tested, through the use of a questionnaire, as well as its ability to effectively and efficiently determine the technical and financial feasibility of identified training courses. Employee perceptions regarding their own individual involvement in determining training priorities were also tested through the use of questionnaires. First the long term planning for training priorities will be discussed in Figure 5.2.

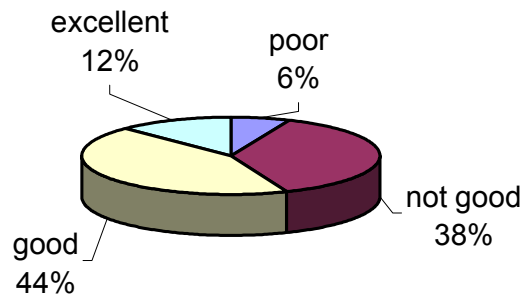


**Figure 5.2: Developing and adjusting long term training goals as necessary**



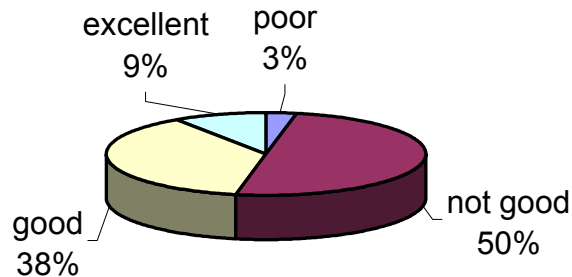
The DPSA is able to develop and adjust their long term training goals as necessary. 78% of respondents stated that the DPSA could forecast appropriate training needs for the future and adapt their training opportunities accordingly. A total of 22% of respondents suggested that the DPSA should re-evaluate the way in which they determine, develop and adjust their training opportunities to long term goals of the Department. The DPSA has the ability to decide what the long term training priorities for the Department should comprise. The challenge for human resource development and training and ultimately, for the implementation of the learning organisation, lies in the DPSA's ability to effectively communicate important training priorities to employees and ensure that the training priorities coincide with employee training and development needs. Figure 5.3 provides an indication of the degree to which the DPSA is able to develop alternative strategies for accomplishing training goals.

**Figure 5.3: Developing alternative strategies for accomplishing training goals**



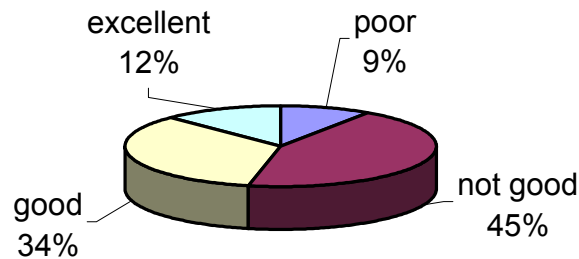
The majority of respondents (44%+12%) stated that the DPISA offers a variety of ways and means to accomplish training goals. What this indicates, is that the DPISA is able to identify a variety of different training courses that would attain the same outcomes. More than one training provider is available to offer the same training content in various ways. What it would also indicate, is that the DPISA, through a process of in-house learning, is able to transfer the appropriate knowledge to employees and need not rely on either departmental training courses or private institutions to provide training to employees. With regard to the implementation of a learning organisation, this would be an important contribution. The learning organisation is one offering continuous learning and thus able to transfer knowledge as an important aspect of creating a lifelong learning environment. Figure 5.4 and 5.5 determine the financial and technical feasibility of training courses provided by the DPISA.

**Figure 5.4: Assessing the financial feasibility of alternative courses of action**



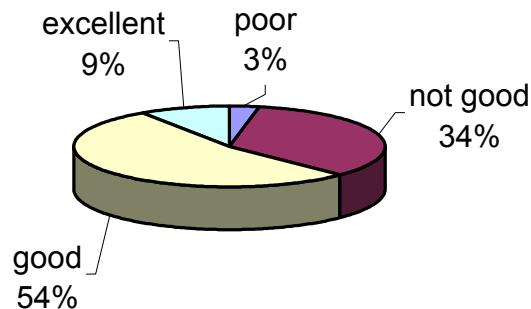
The majority of respondents (53%) indicated that determining the financial feasibility or viability of different training courses is not done in an effective and efficient manner. Especially when donor funding is used, the financial management of training courses should be strictly applied. Financial management is also a means of controlling or measuring the positive outcome of a specific training course. Close financial management, control and auditing will ensure that appropriate targets or objectives are set for a training course and proper review will ensure that the specified objectives have been appropriately met.

**Figure 5.5: Assessing the technical feasibility of alternative courses of**

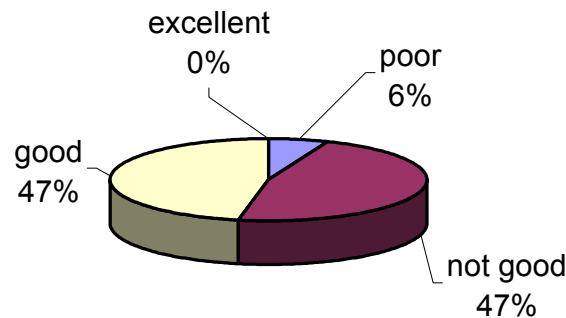
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The technical feasibility of a training course relates to the way in which the DPSA determines whether or not training is appropriate and useful in terms of departmental goals and objectives. A total of 53% of the respondents indicate that the DPSA needs to re-evaluate the manner in which it determines the technical feasibility of training courses. Training will only be appropriate if the learning process is implemented appropriately. Thus, data needs to become information, information turns into knowledge and knowledge leads to the creation of wisdom, as discussed earlier in this chapter. For instance, examples have been used of employees attending computer literacy courses, a valid training need. However, only 10 computers were available for training 40 employees, thus four employees had to share one computer. Furthermore, some of the participants had no access to computers in their current positions, thus all new information or even knowledge could not be reinforced in order to change it into wisdom. The resources utilised for the training course should thus be determined in terms of its technical feasibility before a training course commences.

**Figure 5.6: Developing plans for the department that include costs, employee or material needs**



The majority of respondents (53%+9%) state that the DPSSA makes enough provisioning for costs, personnel and/or material needs in planning for its training courses. From the responses received in the questionnaire, it could be argued that the DPSSA, once the training course has been identified, is able to correctly determine what the costs, material needs and personnel utilisation will need to be in order to effectively and efficiently implement the selected training course. Only 38% of the respondents indicated that the DPSSA does not effectively and efficiently utilise its resources when implementing selected training courses. Thus, training efforts could suffer if not all employees understand the resource implication of providing training courses. This manifests itself in employees being targeted for training and then not showing up for the training course. The costs of just duplicating material for 50 learners when only 25 show up, is a waste of resources if employees are not held accountable for their lack of interest in selected training courses. Hypothetically, if a training course is offered at the rate of R2 000 per learner and if only 50% of the learners show up for a training course, R50 000 will be misspent. If this trend continues throughout the year, a large sum of money will be wasted and the department will not be able to justify its human resource development expenditure. Figure 5.7 provides an indication of the extent to which personal career paths are planned for and promoted in the DPSSA.

**Figure 5.7: Developing personal career paths**

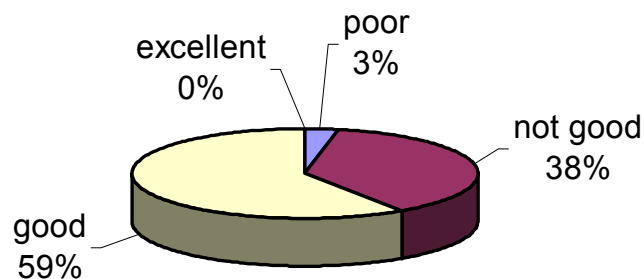
A total of 53% of all respondents suggested that training courses that are provided do not fulfil their career paths or that the concept of planning for a career path through appropriate training courses, does not exist. Career pathing is an integral part of performance management (as is discussed in Chapter 6). However, even if career pathing is indicated and employees do not accept the path being identified for them, the exercise becomes fruitless and the concept of career pathing becomes an exercise in semantics. Career pathing needs to inform training so that appropriate training courses can be identified that would not only satisfy individual employee career needs, but also strategically fit into the departmental human resource management plan. Identifying the strategic link between individual and departmental development will increase the possibility for the DPSA to transform itself into a learning organisation.

Planning can not be discussed in isolation, especially when training and development initiatives are determined. Only when managers are able to plan effectively and efficiently for training, will they be able to guide training courses, realise training goals and identify development priorities.

#### 5.4.2 Guidance

Guidance, in terms of the research conducted, relates to the extent to which the DPSA is able to anticipate and solve possible obstacles to the implementation of training courses. Guidance also refers to the ability of management to identify training courses that would satisfy departmental training needs as well as establishing priorities among competing training courses. Guiding employees through training and setting realistic deadlines for the completion of training courses are important tasks of the DPSA manager. Guidance will closely link up with the ability of the individual manager to manage the performance of all his or her subordinates. Guidance offered during the performance management reviews will advise the training initiatives to be undertaken and if managers are not equipped to manage individual performance, training and development will be hampered. The ability of management to determine obstacles to training and development within the DPSA will now be discussed (Figure 5.8).

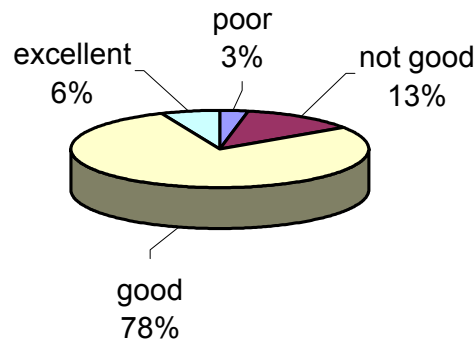
**Figure 5.8: Anticipating obstacles to achieving departmental training goals and identifying means to overcome them**



It can be argued that the DPSA is able to identify appropriate training courses that would enhance departmental effectiveness and efficiency, then it could also be argued that the majority of respondents (59%) indicated that the DPSA is also able to identify possible challenges to the implementation of departmental training courses as well as strategies to overcome them. Thus, the research has shown that the DPSA is capable of planning for their long term training goals and

objectives and guiding the Department to implement those training courses that would benefit departmental goals and objectives.

**Figure 5.9: Identifying specific training courses needed to accomplish departmental training goals**



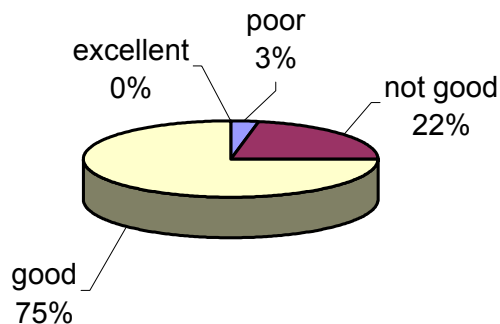
Taken with the results of the previous question, the majority of respondents (78%+6%) indicate that the DPSA is well equipped to identify specific training courses that have to be implemented in order to satisfy departmental training goals and objectives. A minority of respondents (16%) implied that the DPSA is not able to identify specific training courses needed to accomplish departmental goals. In their cases, the research shows that the DPSA's training goals are not as clearly communicated to everybody as would have been anticipated. The uncertainty of identifying training courses appropriate to departmental training needs indicates that some employees might not be aware of what the important training and development focus areas are and because of this ignorance, the training that takes place does not satisfy departmental needs. It could, furthermore, be argued that employees might feel that the training courses they attend add no value to either themselves or their positions in the DPSA.

Adding value to individual and departmental performance are important aspects in the implementation and management of the learning organisation. Through evaluation, the content and applicability of training courses can be assessed and the resources spent on the implementation of training courses, can be justified.



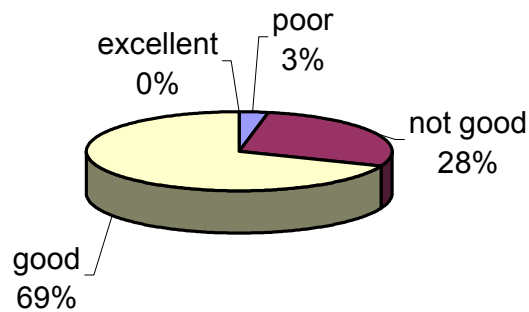
Learning needs to be meaningful in order to facilitate the creation of a learning environment. For this purpose, training courses need to be evaluated and individual training priorities need to be aligned with departmental training goals and objectives. Figure 5.10 displays the outcome of the DPSA's perceptions on its ability to establish training priorities among competing training courses.

**Figure 5.10: Establishing priorities among competing training courses**



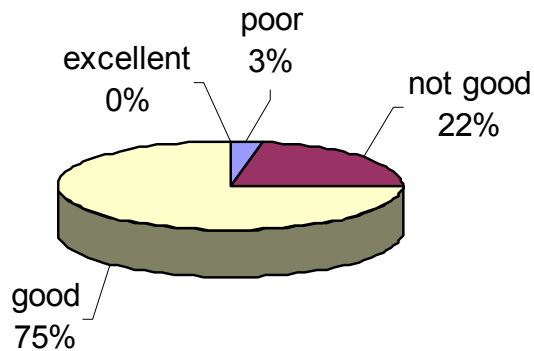
The majority (75%) of respondents attested to the fact that the DPSA is able to establish priorities among competing training courses. Thus the Department can clearly link their departmental training objectives to the training courses that are available. The fact that the DPSA is able to establish the link between departmental training needs and appropriate training courses show that the strategic link between departmental objectives and training offered, exists. The only challenge is then to make sure that departmental training needs coincide with the training needs expressed by individual employees. The strategic link between the individual and the Department needs to be clearly identified if training is to be significant in terms of individual commitment to departmental training goals and objectives.

**Figure 5.11: Setting realistic deadlines for completing departmental**

**training courses**

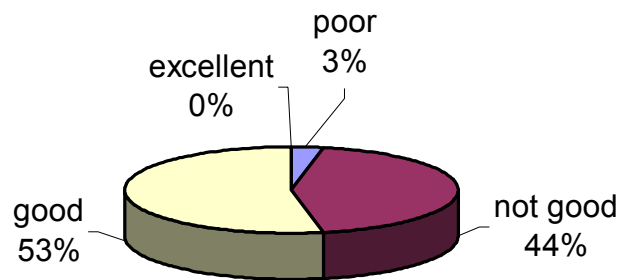
A total of 69% of respondents declared that the time frames set by the DPSA to complete departmental training courses are sufficient. The results thus indicate that once training courses have been identified, sufficient time is appropriated for employees to respond positively to the training courses, thus, indicating that the training course would be appropriate to them. The important aspect here is that participating in training courses does not necessarily ensure successful training. The training, once again, should satisfy both individual needs and departmental training goals in order for it to be justifiable. Once training has taken place, evaluating the appropriateness of the training course needs to be conducted to ensure that the Department invests its resources in training courses that would enhance departmental effectiveness and efficiency, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

**Figure 5.12: Identifying specific training courses needed to accomplish**

**personal training goals**

The question asked in this portion of the research links individual needs with departmental goals. A total of 75% of respondents recorded that employee participation in selecting appropriate training courses is necessary to ensure employee understanding of, and commitment to departmental training goals and objectives. Only when employees understand the importance of their individual positions in the efficiency and effectiveness of the department, will they be able to successfully participate in determining what training courses would satisfy departmental training goals. Guidance, once again, becomes a crucial part in the implementation of training courses within the DPSA. Managers need to be able to communicate the importance of individual positions in order to fully identify skills gaps as well as where and what type of training course would satisfy that particular need.

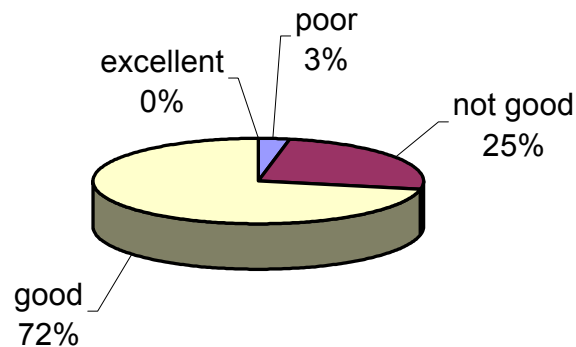
**Figure 5.13: Providing or being provided with specific guidance on how**

**accomplishment is to be measured**

In determining the outcome of this question, the majority of respondents (53%) indicated that they are provided with feedback of how guidance is to be measured in the DPSA. This question closely links up with how successful performance management is being implemented in the Department (an aspect that forms part of the evaluation of training and development and thus will be discussed in Chapter 6). The extent to which employees are personally involved in the decisions that affect them is based on frequencies obtained from administering the questionnaires to respondents (Figure 5.14).

**Figure 5.14: Involving staff or being involved personally in making work**

### decisions that affect employees



A total of 72% of respondents confirmed that they are involved in making decisions, regarding their individual performance. Performance management is based on the principle of consultative decision-making and as such, an employee would have to be personally involved in determining where his or her strengths and weaknesses lie. Training would directly be influenced through this process and the result of this question indicates that the DPSA's decision-making processes are based on participation of all those affected by the decisions.

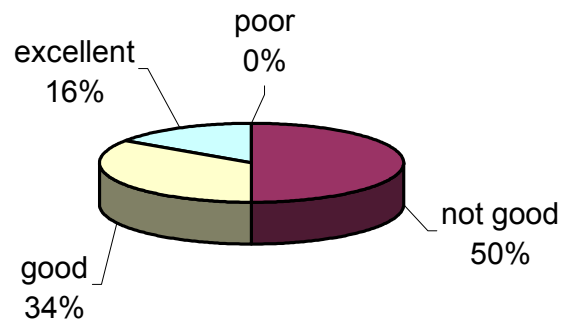
Participation is a characteristic of a learning organisation and the DPSA is able to create the impression of trying to implement a departmental structure that facilitates participative decision making. The extent to which employees are involved in decisions regarding the financial implications of training and development are discussed below.

#### 5.4.3 Budgeting

Budgeting is an important aspect of any training course. Strategic human resource management is also defined as a process that has to take place within the budgetary constraints of a department. For the discussion regarding budgeting, employee perceptions were tested on areas including their participation in compiling the training budget and management's ability to report

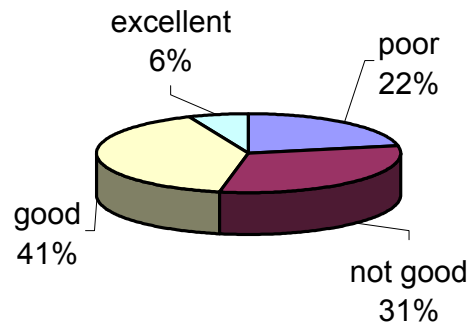
back on the content of the training budget. Figure 5.15 provides an indication of the perceptions regarding the input into the training budget.

**Figure 5.15: Preparing or providing input into the department's annual training budget**



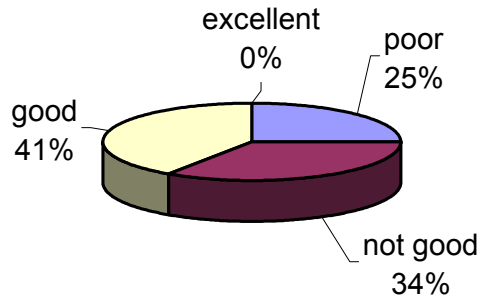
The outcome of this question indicated that employees are divided regarding the provision of input or receiving of input into the annual departmental training budget. As managers, input into the annual human resource management budget is crucial and what the response indicates is that 50% state that input is given or received and 50% indicate it is not. Managers need to know the extent to which they have access to available financial resources to identify, implement and evaluate training courses. Thus, the feedback is an important prerequisite and situations may arise where training courses are identified without allocating the appropriate resources for it. The result – even though the training would satisfy both departmental and individual training needs, it is not implemented, because of a lack of information regarding the availability of money for training courses. As discussed earlier in the chapter, information and knowledge can only become wisdom if what is learned is reinforced. Linking allocation of resources to identifying and implementing training courses is an important requirement that should always be considered.

**Figure 5.16: Providing or being provided with the necessary information regarding the annual training budget**



The majority of respondents (53%) stated that information regarding the content of the training budget is not communicated to all affected employees. Previously, mention was made of linking the provision of input into the training budget and content (implementation) of the budget. The outcome of the response to this question indicates that even though employees state that they provide input into the annual training budget, they do not always receive feedback on their input. This could discourage employees from becoming involved in the decision-making process from the start. If an employee is asked what type of training would enhance his or her individual capacity and thus strengthen departmental capacity, but he or she is not involved in the final decision on budgetary allocation for training courses, employees might deduce that the participation is just to placate them, and does not really reflect the true nature of participative decision-making.

**Figure 5.17: Explaining and justifying the departmental training budget requests orally or in writing**



The majority of respondents (59%) declared that it is not expected of them to explain and justify the departmental training budget. Thus, once again reinforcing that employees perceive participation in decision-making as lip service and not a true reflection of the principle. The results suggest that employees are asked to provide input, but they are not asked to defend their individual training needs. Departmental training needs influence the selection of training courses and whether or not the individual concurs with the decision, is incidental.

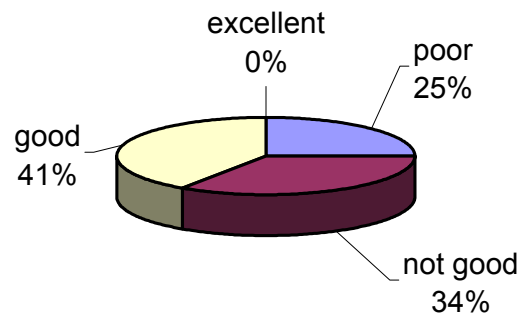
From the above, it could be argued that employees do not perceive their participation in the formulation of the training budget as being positive. In order to implement a learning organisation, communication should be a two-way process and employee participation should comprise real input into the formulation of budgets that would affect them and their training capacity. The learning organisation will not be implementable if management makes decisions and requires employees to comply with it. The decision making process should be based on a reciprocal process and the importance of communication will be further discussed in Chapter 6. Interpreting training information will not be discussed.



#### 5.4.4 Interpretation

The training and development profile of the DPSA comprises not only how training priorities are planned and budgeted for, but also how they are interpreted by employees. Thus, the extent to which the DPSA is able to explain and clarify training priorities to employees relates, directly to the degree to which a learning organisation can be implemented. The strategic alignment of government priorities with departmental priorities and thus also with individual priorities is an important principle for the implementation and management of the learning organisation. Figure 5.18 provides insight into the ability of the DPSA to explain and clarify governmental training priorities to employees.

**Figure 5.18: Explaining/clarifying broad training priorities of government to employees**

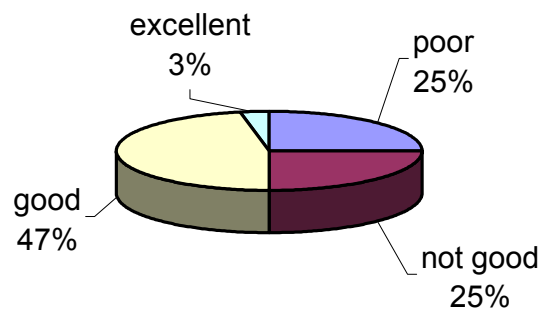


A total of 59% of respondents attested to the fact that, according to their perceptions, the DPSA is not able to explain and/or clarify government's broad training priorities to employees. It could be argued that this is indicative of a lack of capacity on the part of the Public Service Education and Training Authority (PSETA) to effectively and efficiently communicate with all public service departments regarding the priorities, goals and objectives in terms of training and development. The interpretation of national training priorities should affect the training and developmental goals and objectives of the DPSA that, in turn should influence individual employee training priorities. Figure 5.2 through to 5.6 indicated that the DPSA is able to determine and implement departmental

training priorities, but the majority of respondents also confirm that they are not involved in decisions affecting the nature of the training courses to be implemented by the Department.

Thus, based on the perceptions expressed in the administering of questionnaires to employees in the DPSA, the department is unable to strategically link government priorities with departmental and individual priorities and training being provided satisfies departmental priorities, but, not necessarily broad government priorities or individual training needs. Figure 5.19 explains the extent to which employees are kept abreast of external issues that will impact on training and development in the DPSA.

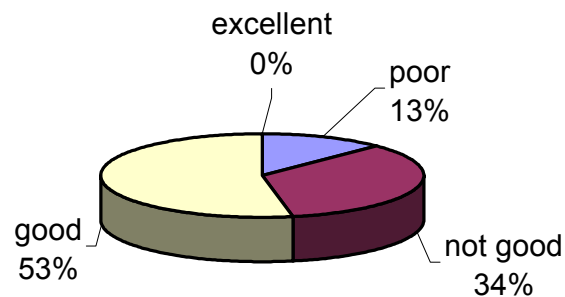
**Figure 5.19: Keeping subordinates informed about external issues that impact on their training**



The outcome of this question proves that employees are divided about the extent to which the DPSA keeps them informed of external issues impacting on their training. External issues would include aspects such as the supply of specific training courses, facilitators' availability and donor funding for training courses. Figures 5.16 and 5.17 also attest to the fact that the majority of employees confirm the fact that communication in the DPSA is not effectively or efficiently implemented. The importance of communication to the learning organisation will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7. For the purpose of interpretation,

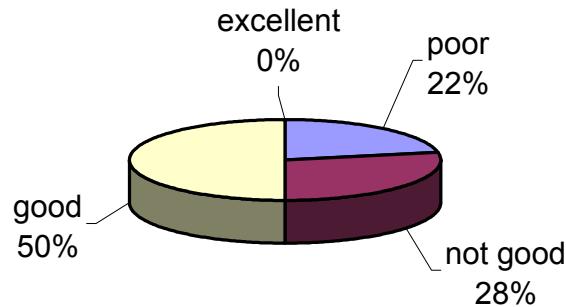
communication is a cornerstone to ensure that the correct information regarding training courses is disseminated.

**Figure 5.20: Extracting and applying information pertinent to training from higher management directives**



The challenge for effective communication does not seem to be communicating from the top to the bottom, but rather from the bottom to the top. The majority of respondents (53%) indicate that they are able to extract and apply training information supplied by senior management directives. This would also concur with the research discussed in Figures 5.2 to 5.6. The employees are capable of determining senior management training priorities and thus are able to plan and implement training courses that would satisfy senior management goals and objectives. The challenge lies in the fact that senior management should inform subordinate employees of departmental training goals and objectives and in turn should also consider the training needs, as identified by lower ranked employees, to ensure that the two are aligned with one another in order to fulfill both individual and departmental needs.

**Figure 5.21: Ensuring that departmental training courses reflect higher management directives/policies**



A total of 50% of respondents suggest that they are able to make sure that training courses reflect senior management directives. The other 50% of respondents argue that they are not able to implement senior management training directives. The dilemma places employees in a precarious position because once again the indication is that the strategic link between departmental training priorities and individual employee training needs do not always exist. The process of performance management, if implemented correctly, should address this challenge in a strategic manner. Performance management, as a way to determine the success of training courses will be discussed in Chapter 6.

From the above, it could be argued that the DPSA has not been able to provide for the foundation of a learning organisation. Before the five disciplines of the learning organisation (as will be discussed in Chapter 7) are to become a reality, specific principles have to characterise the learning environment, including sharing information, open communication channels, reciprocal trust and respect and strategic alignment of training priorities between the DPSA and its employees. The extent to which evaluation could facilitate the creation of a favourable learning environment will be discussed in the next chapter.

## 5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, attention was focused on the adult learning style and cycle. The requirements for adult training and education were highlighted. The two approaches to training and development, namely behavioural and cognitive, were described and within the broad approaches to training and development the different types of training were addressed. Emphasis was first place on the more traditional types of training including on-the-job training and off-the-job training, but current types of training such as competence based training and on-line learning were also discussed.

The second part of the chapter dealt with the research gathered from the DPSA employees through the use of a questionnaire. The results from the questionnaire were divided into the planning, guiding, budgeting and interpreting of training priorities, goals and objectives. The main argument that can be derived from the research is that the DPSA is able to determine and implement training courses that satisfy departmental training needs but that the strategic link between the departmental and the individual sometimes lacks. Employees do not always feel that their inputs into the training priorities are taken seriously because they do not receive any feedback on their inputs. Also employees themselves are not able to judge when and how departmental training priorities will meet individual training needs.

In the next chapter the evaluation of training will be discussed in context of implementing a sound performance management system. The DPSA has developed a performance management system for both senior management and the rest of employees and how training and development will be facilitated through performance management, will be discussed.