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ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Professional development of police commanders: From classroom to work environment for adult learners

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Abstract: This article reports on an evaluation of the South African Police Service's (SAPS) learning programmes, paying particular attention to transfer of learning. The study was framed in Kirkpatrick's four-level model. The research focused on a case study of a specific programme that is presented in the SAPS curriculum, namely the Station Management Learning Programme (SMLP). Interviews were conducted with eight SMLP facilitators in the Gauteng Police Service. The data were analysed by recording interviewees' responses. Thematically, the findings revealed that although transference of learning strategies by facilitators takes place, there may be certain developmental areas, such as pre- and post-training assessment, that are not addressed before and after the commencement of training. This article recommends learning strategies that can assist station commanders in implementing the learnt skills and knowledge from the learning programme in their work environment.

1. Introduction

Gauteng is the smallest province in South Africa with the biggest population of 13.2 million people (2015 South African National Census) and the highest numbers of contact crimes in the country. Contact crimes (which include murder, sexual offences, attempted murder, assault and robbery)

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M.M. Dichaba is a Professor in Adult Education in the College of Education at the University of South Africa. Both researchers are interested in the professional development in their respective fields (police and education). This research evaluated the SAPS learning programmes, paying particular attention to the transfer of learning as a core component of curriculum development and of learning facilitation. Many of the facts that were presented in this report were based on the researchers' experiences as trainers and facilitators.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The Station Commanders (SC) attended the Station Management Learning Programme (SMLP) (SMLP) in the South African Police Services. The SMLP consisted of six different modules. Station Commanders needed to attend all the modules and complete all the assessments before they were declared competent. According to the researcher the objective of all training in the SAPS was that members need to apply the skills and knowledge they obtain during training programmes in the work environment. The SMLP was used as a specific programme for the collection of evidence in the empirical study.

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increased by 4.6% from 2012/2013 (156,218 cases) to 2013/2014 (162,938 cases)—(RSA April to March 2004–2014 in Author A, 2015). Station commanders have an important role to fulfil in the reduction of crime in South Africa. The duties of station commanders include managing their station's performance aspects, such as crime prevention, sector policing and detective investigation, as well as the human and physical resources at the station. The results from the annual performance assessment and inspections conducted by the South African Police Service (SAPS) provincial component "Inspectorate" at the stations on a daily basis confirm that there are various gaps in the performance of station commanders, which results in the station performing poorly. As a result, the Station Management Learning Programme (SMLP) was developed specifically to address the training needs of SAPS station commanders. The SMLP is presented over one year as a modular programme. It is deemed important that station commanders attend the SMLP with the hope of implementing skills and knowledge in the workplace that will help to combat crime in Gauteng. The SMLP consists of the six modules:

1.1. Module 1: The community service centre
During this module the learners received a toolkit of which the content included Policies, Standing Orders, National Instructions, Regulations and Registers pertaining to the SAPS. The module started off with a four-day contact session and it was required of the learner to do self-study and solve problematic areas as indicated in within their working environment (SAPS Division HRD 2013/2014).

1.2. Module 2: Crime prevention
This module deals with the dynamics of crime, emphasising the prevention thereof. The main topic focussed on specifics, such as who, what, when, why and where crime can be prevented. Information on this specific module was supplied during the contact session. However, the learner had to collect and collate information pertaining to their specific circumstances. The module started off with a four-day contact session and it was required of the learner to do self-study and solve problematic areas (SAPS Division HRD 2013/2014).

1.3. Module 3: Crime detection and crime intelligence
This module dealt with the dynamics of investigation and the analysis of crime statistics. The main topic focused on specifics such as who, what, when, why and where regarding crime detection and crime intelligence. Generic information was supplied during the contact session. However, the learners had to collect and collate information pertaining to their specific circumstances. The module started off with a four-day contact session and it was required of learners to do self-study and solve problem areas (SAPS Division HRD 2013/2014).

1.4. Module 4: Communication
During this module the learner was exposed to specific communication skills, such as presentation, skills, interviews, meeting procedures, written communication, dealing with the media and station systems. The emphasis for this module was on practical application (SAPS Division HRD 2013/2014).

1.5. Module 5: Management and leadership
Learners received a reference guide to enable them to compile a toolkit for management and leadership philosophies. Practical application of these philosophies and theories played a central role during the contact sessions. It was expected of learners to submit an assignment reflecting the practical implementation management and leadership skills. It was expected of the learners to analyse a related case study during the assessment of the module. During this module the focus was also on the effective management of human, logistical and financial resources. The point of departures was SAPS policies, regulations standing orders and legislation (SAPS Division HRD 2013/2014).

1.6. Module 6: Planning and managing operations
The learner was exposed to the theory of planning and managing operations. Scenarios included practical exercises of command and control during execution of SAPS operations. The duration of

this module was twelve days. It was expected of the learner to apply the theory practically and be assessed during training phase (SAPS Division HRD 2013/2014).

This article recognises the transfer problems pertaining to the in-service training, including the identification of factors that affect adult learning, as well as those that facilitate or impede the effectiveness of transfer of learning in most in-service training programmes. From the researchers' point of view, transfer of learning occurs when learners implement the learnt skills and knowledge in their work environment after attending a learning programme. Furthermore, the researchers contend that if learning programmes include transfer of learning strategies in the design and delivery of the programme, it enables learners to implement the learning in their work environment. It is for this reason that the researchers deemed it fit to evaluate the SMLP against transfer of learning criteria to determine whether it is effective as a learning programme.

SAPS station commanders in Gauteng attend the SMLP to equip them with skills and knowledge in order to perform their duties as station commanders. During formative and summative assessments, they display competence in applying the skills and knowledge imparted during training. Formative assessments are conducted in the form of group discussions and feedback sessions, while summative assessments are conducted on an individual basis—for example, they take the form of assignments based on the content of the modules. These assignments are assessed by the facilitators and station commanders are then declared competent, depending on their corresponding performance.

The problem is that there is no real evidence that transfer of learning strategies are used for the SMLP. As a result, the SMLP needed to be evaluated to determine its effectiveness against transfer of learning criteria. There must be real evidence that the learners can implement what they learnt during these learning programmes and that the acquired knowledge can make a significant difference in their performance.

The study sought to identify the transfer of learning criteria that could be used to enhance transfer of learning from the classroom to the work environment for adult learners. This research can contribute significantly to the way learning programmes are developed, presented and evaluated by the SAPS. The researchers believe that the transfer of learning criteria could assist facilitators, learners and line managers to transfer learning in the workplace.

2. Literature review

Transfer of learning is defined as the effective application by programme participants of what they learnt as a result of attending an educational or training programme (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Caffarella, 2002; Blume, Ford, Baldwin & Huang, 2010; Elnaga & Imran, 2013; Haskell, 2001; Khalfani, 2014; Nassazi, 2013). A number of other factors that affect transfer of learning were identified, such as learner characteristics, professional background, learner motivation, programme design and delivery, and organisational strategies (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013; De Rijdt, Stes, Van der Vleuten, & Dochy, 2012). Transfer of learning is important because learning needs to be transferred to assist learners in implementing their acquired skills and knowledge in the workplace.

One of the biggest problems associated with most in-service training programmes is the lack of transfer of learning. The researchers identified the following barriers to transfer of learning that can prohibit adult learners from implementing the skills and knowledge that they have acquired through the training:

- There is a lack of support for the use of the new competencies on the job.
- Trainees are uncomfortable with using their new competencies.
- Trainees perceive training programmes to be impractical or irrelevant (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013, p. 16; Dichaba, 2011, p. 166; Harris, 2000, p. 358).

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Caffarella and Daffron (2013, p. 217) further identified seven factors that are crucial for the process of transfer to take place, namely the planning process of the learning programme, the learners' characteristics and motivation, the design and delivery methods, the learning context, immediate application, the workplace environment and elimination of barriers to the implementation of learning in the workplace. It is worth noting that programme participants bring to education and training programmes a set of personal experiences, diverse backgrounds, varying motivational levels to use what they have learnt and differing attitudes and values (Caffarella, 2002; Merriam, 2001). The above-mentioned attributes determine whether programme participants eventually transfer what they learnt to their workplace.

Another inhibiting factor to transfer of learning could be forgetfulness in adult learning. Research evidence indicates that most forgetting takes place soon after learning, whether or not the learning material is verbal or perceptual motor in nature (Athanasou, 1998, p. 236; Caffarella & Daffron, 2013, p. 16). Therefore, it is important for trainees (in this case, station commanders) and facilitators to discover the causes of failure to remember as well as errors in remembering, and to try to reduce these effects (Athanasou, 1998, p. 236). Haskell (2001) proposes that the use of numerous examples promotes effective learning and transfer of learning. In addition, learners who are provided with opportunities to study examples of a problem fare better than learners who are merely given opportunities to work out a given problem (Haskell, 2001). The literature presented so far underlines the problematic nature of transfer of learning—an issue that deserves priority in the SMLP. If the assertion made by Phillips, Jones, and Schmidt (2000) holds that learning does not transfer to the job in the vast majority of cases, then there is much work to be done. The SAPS invested in the SMLP to help station commanders achieve the highest learning level possible. However, if these station commanders do not apply their learnt skills at their workplace, it would lead to a negative impact or ineffectiveness of this learning programme. Brinkerhoff and Apking (2001, p. 17) contend that making training work is all about being sure that learning drives performance, as it is performance, not just capability that contributes most to the impact of training.

2.1. Transfer of learning techniques

The literature presents a list of specific techniques that are used to facilitate learning transfer. The following were identified as techniques for increasing transfer of learning: active involvement by participants in the planning of the training programme; using a realistic, work-related situation; the ability to support the application of the newly acquired language; close supervision and supervisory support; follow-up (post intervention); mentoring and coaching; action learning; access to assessors; and relevance of the training intervention (Dichaba, 2010; Harris, 2000; Meyer, Lees, Humphries, & Connell, 2007). Similarly Govaerts and Dochy (2014, p. 78) contended that a key factor in the transfer process is support by the supervisor before, during or after the training. Although a few of these techniques involve direct instructional activities, the majority are designed to be used within the context in which the learning transfer is taking place (Caffarella, 2002, p. 218). The researchers investigated the techniques and compared the SMLP against them.

There is no question that transfer of learning poses a challenge to organisations and to the planning staff who are responsible for ensuring that transfer occurs. Programme planners need to take into account the programme participants, programme content, changes required to apply learning, organisational context, and community and societal forces (Caffarella, 2002, p. 218). Although a few of these techniques involve direct instructional activities, the majority are designed to be used within the context in which the learning transfer is taking place (Caffarella, 2002, p. 218). According to Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2005, p. 15), for trainers to get leaders to transfer training to behaviour, and for leaders to get their employees to transfer learning to behaviour, considerable discipline and consistent effort are needed. The following section discusses the theoretical framework that underpins this study.

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3. Theoretical framework

Perhaps the most referenced approach to evaluation is that of Kirkpatrick (1959, 1976, 1994, 1998) and Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2005), who suggest the following four levels of measuring the effectiveness of in-service training in the workplace:

- **Reaction level:** Whether the participants like or dislike the programme.
- **Learning level:** The extent to which the subjects have assimilated the knowledge offered and skills practised in the training programme, as well as whether the learning objective has been met. Do the participants score more on being tested after the training than before?
- **Behaviour:** An external measure of changes in job behaviour—that is, how did individual behaviour change back on the job?
- **Results:** The effects of training on the organisational dimension. What is the impact of training on job performance? (Kirkpatrick, 1959, 1976, 1994, 1998).

In essence, measures at Level 1 are directed at assessing trainees' affective responses to the quality (e.g. satisfaction with the instructor) or the relevance of training (Bates, 2004, p. 341). Level 2 learning measures are quantifiable indicators of learning that took place during the course of the training. Level 3 addresses the extent to which knowledge and skills gained in training are either applied on the job or result in exceptional job-related performance. Finally, Level 4 outcomes are intended to provide some measure of the impact that the training had on broader organisational goals and objectives (Bates, 2004, p. 342).

Alvarez, Salas, and Garofano (2004) describe Kirkpatrick's model as the simplest and the most common model used for training evaluation. Usually levels 1 and 2 are measured within the training setting, and they are fairly easy to measure. Levels 3 and 4 are measured outside the training setting and are typically more difficult to measure, but they are relevant to discussions of transferring the training beyond the training setting. The model is often implemented sequentially in the belief that each level requires successful completion of the previous level(s). Therefore, reaction to training is related to learning, learning is related to behaviour and behaviour is related to results.

The extent of the success of investment made in training can be indicated through the proper evaluation of learning programmes. Researchers need to find better ways to translate the results of training research into practice. There is an increasing concern in organisations that the investment made in training must be justified in terms of improved organisational performance—increased productivity, profit and safety; reduced error; enhanced market share; knowledge and skills gained; as well as educational value added (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001). Return on investment (ROI) explores ways and means of quantifying the value of training, so that the value of training for the organisation can be measured (Meyer, Opperman, & Dyrbye, 2003, p. 2). At the centre of the concept of ROI in terms of training are the questions: Does training add real value? How do we know the value of training? and How do we measure the effectiveness of training? (Meyer et al., 2003, p. 2).

Evaluating transfer of learning forms part of measuring the extent of ROI. In this regard, this study evaluated the SMLP to determine whether transfer of learning criteria are used before, during and after the learning programme. Many factors should be considered when planning, implementing and evaluating an effective training programme. Various questions can be asked, for example, What happens when the trainees leave the classroom and return to their work environment? How much transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes takes place? What change in job behaviour took place as a result of attending the learning programme? In line with Kirkpatrick's argument, this study evaluated the SMLP to investigate whether the programme was developed and presented in accordance with the set criteria for transfer of learning. The focus of this article is that which training facilitators perceive as transfer of learning and how they think transfer of learning could be enhanced to ensure that the station commanders implement the skills and knowledge in their work environment.

4. Research methodology

For this study, a qualitative research design was adopted. Such a design allows the researcher to investigate behaviour as it takes place naturally in non-contrived situations. Therefore, there is no manipulation of conditions or experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) posit that such design is sought as a means of addressing critical problems and improving practice. In this study it was envisaged that the design could help uncover curriculum designers' perceptions regarding the transfer of learning criteria to enhance the implementation of learning in the workplace. This understanding was expected to culminate in improved practice in other learning programmes in the SAPS.

The sample comprised eight purposively selected SMLP facilitators from the SAPS in Gauteng. The researchers selected facilitators because they were well informed about the researchers' area of interest and therefore were deemed the best choice to provide information needed to address the aim of the study. The facilitators were further included in the study because they organised and facilitated the SMLP. The purpose of the 60 min interviews was to collect data from the facilitators about the process they followed to facilitate the programme. The interviews with the facilitators provided valuable data on transfer of learning strategies that could be implemented in the learning and work environment before, during and after the station commanders' attendance of the SMLP. The responses from the interviews were recorded and were used to support and clarify the notes that were made during the interviews about transfer of learning strategies. The researchers used the following steps in the process of analysing qualitative data, as suggested by De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, and Delport (2011, p. 403): *Preparing and organising the data, reducing the data, visualising and representing and displaying the data.*

The study was approved through ethical clearance from Unisa and permission was granted by the SAPS Provincial Commissioner: Gauteng. The participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could decline to answer any of the interview questions if and when they so wished. Furthermore, they were advised that they could withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. With their permission, the interviews were audio-recorded to facilitate the collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. Lastly, the participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality and that their consent to audiotape interviews will be obtained.

5. Findings and discussion

Assessing the effectiveness of training needs often entails using the popular four-level model developed by Kirkpatrick (1994). This article is focused more specifically on the understanding of the station commanders' reactions, learning, learning transfer and experience of the learning programme. Emergent themes from the data analysis that are discussed below are the participants' reaction during the facilitation of the SMLP, the participants' learning during the facilitation, transfer of learning to the workplace and intervention mechanisms.

5.1. The participants' reaction during the facilitation of the SMLP

Key to Kirkpatrick's Level 4 of evaluation is the need to know the participants' reaction during the learning experience, so that when evaluation is done there are measures in place to use. Reactions are not considered outcomes, but rather measure how effective the training content and design were for the task to be learnt. The facilitators (Fs) indicated that there were diverse reactions from station commanders, as they had a mixed learner group in their training class, from people with Grade 8 to people with a doctoral degree. Grade 8 or 8th grade is the term used for the year of education in South Africa.

> F1: Some learners just needed to attend the intervention and others really wanted to be there.

F5: About 40% of the learners really wanted to be there and was desperate to learn and make use of the opportunity.

F4: The station commanders were positive when they attended the programme. They listened and comprehended what was taught during the programme.

F6: Some focused on the past while others' attitude was aggressive and defensive.

F1: Some of the station commanders indicated that they were there to learn. Some had an attitude of: "What can they teach me?"

From the responses from the facilitators, it can be seen that the station commanders attended the programme for different reasons. Some just attended for the sake of attending and others needed the training badly. In general, the reactions of the participants were mixed. In this case, for the success of the learning programme to be realised, the learning needs of station commanders need to be taken into account before commencement of training.

5.2. Participants' learning during the facilitation

The ability to recall simple rules and know a range of simple facts about the job area is crucial for participants' learning. Of even more importance is the knowledge with which to analyse any particular situation for its key elements and therefore to make a decision about whether Procedure A is more likely to be successful than for example Procedure D. In terms of the required skills it is essential that the most appropriate procedure or method of doing something is chosen, given the nature of the problem, the organisational context and so on (Bramley, 1997, p. 39). On what participants had learnt during the facilitation, the facilitators responded as follows:

F5: Some were only there to hear the facilitation sessions out and not necessarily take up any information. Some indicated that when they leave the programme they have the best intention to go and implement the learning in their work environment.

F4: Station commanders gained a lot from the operational training skills. The leadership skills were more 'nice to know'.

F8: Their attitude towards the policies and procedures changed.

F6: In the beginning they appeared to know it all and were not open to listen to a junior member with a lower rank—however, after the programme they thanked the presenter and said they had learnt something.

F2: The module was very practical and the station commanders could immediately implement the learning—for example updating of staff information on the SAPS's personnel computer system.

F7: They said that they actually learnt from the station commanders who were coming from smaller stations. Therefore, the experience needed to be mixed—in other words, the station commanders from bigger and smaller stations need to attend the SMLP together in the same class.

From the above assertions it is clear that an effective learning programme requires that each facilitation session conducted by trainers motivate the participants to draw upon and share their experiences with one another. The use of a range of learning approaches that are best suited to meet the needs of station commanders is suggested. In this case, support during training can alert the facilitators to any difficulties in group dynamics and help them to make changes to the learning programme, if needed.

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5.3. Transfer of learning to the workplace

The facilitators' responses highlight the connection that exists between the learning environment and the workplace. It can be inferred that the station commanders left the learning environment with some level of intention to transfer what they had learnt to their workplace, but various environmental factors may undermine this motivation almost immediately. Lack of transfer of learning from training to the workplace has the potential of impeding the in-service training of police commanders. Evidence regarding transfer of learning emerged from comments such as the following:

> F8: Yes, they do apply what they learn and it is making a difference. After they attended the client service centre module, they apply the policy documents**.**

The participants indicated that some station commanders immediately applied the learning at their workplace after attending the programme. F7 highlighted this as follows.

> F7: Some of the station commanders contacted the facilitators and indicated that they were promoted after the course and that they were implementing the learning in their work environment.

This is in line with Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick's (2006, p. 23) four levels of programme evaluation, and with Level 3 (behaviour) in particular. Behaviour is defined as the extent to which change in behaviour took place due to the participant attending the learning programme. One participant stated as follows:

> F7: After training, the station commanders indicated that the SMLP was valuable and they were applying what they had learnt, as well as motivating members that work with them.

It is worth noting that when the station commander is not able to demonstrate on the job what he/she has learnt, the trainer (the facilitator in this case) tends to retrace the route of the course to where the training started.

5.3.1. Transfer of learning strategies used to assist station commanders to implement learning in the work environment

Craig (1996) refers to pre-course assessments as a transfer strategy. The facilitators confirmed that most participants did not complete the pre-course assessments. It is worth noting that successful change begins with a pre-assessment by trainees and the identification of specific challenges associated with the change effort (Joyner, 1998, p. 864). One facilitator made the following comment on pre-course assessment in the SMLP:

> F5: Pre-course assessment was in place, but the bulk of the learners did not complete it due to several reasons that range from the replacement of station commanders to the fact that the information about the pre-course assignments was communicated to the station commanders too late. The fact that the station commanders have a very busy work schedule also contributes to the lack of submission of the pre-course assignments.

Facilitators need to realise that they are training adults and therefore each training session should be needs-oriented. The SMLP could promote genuine development if trainers ensure that the programme and development strategies are context-sensitive. F5 commented as follows:

F5: There was also post-course assessment in the form of a portfolio of evidence that had to be submitted after the learners had completed the modules.

Caffarella (2002, p. 218) states that portfolios as a transfer strategy constitute a structured set of accomplishments that demonstrates via selected artefacts, written material and evaluation by others the attainment of specific competencies, standards or outcomes. F1 added that: *Group work and communication between learners were used to transfer the learning.*

Meyer et al. (2007) observed that social support increases transfer of learning. In the same breath, Caffarella (2002, p. 218) states that teams of people, formed before the learning programme, are committed to work together before, during and after the learning programme to assist one another in transfer of learning and that teams can meet regularly to share problems or practices related to learning transfer. This was confirmed by a facilitator during the interview:

FS4: Mentorship and coaching [were] used.

Caffarella (2002, p. 215) states that facilitators need to provide follow-up assistance to learners for transfer to take place, for example mentorship. Caffarella (2002, p. 218) states that coaching as a transfer of learning strategy could assist learners in making specific changes in their life roles. Caffarella (2002, p. 218) further states that mentoring as a transfer strategy is a caring relationship in which a person with more experience works with a person with less experience to promote professional and and/or personal development. Another facilitator indicated that:

F7: Making use of line function experts provides practical knowledge that enhances the transfer of learning.

Schmidt (2013) states that, to effectively facilitate learning to adults, the facilitator needs to have experience as a facilitator and knowledge with regard to the subject.

5.3.2. Proposals to enable the station commanders to transfer the learning from the classroom to the workplace

Caffarella and Daffron (2013, p. 218) propose that, before the learners attend the learning programme, support from supervisors and peers needs to be obtained. The facilitators agreed with Caffarella and Daffron (2013) when they indicated the following:

F3: There needs to be support from supervisors to assist the learners to complete the assignments and the programme.

F5: You can assist them, but then you have to have the learner and the facilitator integrated into a mentor/mentee relationship.

F8: A practical job exercise of the course that needs to be completed within the first week after completing the course.

F7: Using current relevant learning material will assist with the transfer of learning, because the current material is outdated.

F6: Conduct post-training evaluation by having a one- or two-day session where all the learners do an evaluation of the work that they have learnt.

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> F4: Establish a forum on the intranet where station commanders can ask specific questions in terms of the learning content that they have learnt and how to deal with different issues.

Allied to this support, Caffarella (2002, p. 210) states that chat rooms can be used for transfer of learning, where learners can use the world-wide web to carry on a dialogue about the transfer activities by adding comments to a running discussion. Therefore, it could be suggested that a forum be established to support learners to transfer the skills after their training.

5.4. Intervention mechanisms

When asked what intervention mechanisms can be used to achieve positive results from the SMLP, the following responses were given by the facilitators:

> F1: Facilitators should have a pre-course and post-course meeting with trainees to discuss strategy before and after the learning programme.

> F1: The age groups of the station commanders who attend the programme differ. Some are in their 30s and some are in their 50s. Their comprehension is not the same and I suggest that people of the same age group be grouped together in one class.

In addition to these responses, other facilitators had the following to say:

> F5: The problem is that people are appointed without the necessary academic qualifications. To be a station commander demands an analytical ability, as well as a specific level of education.

> F1: I will bring the senior managers and the young constables to the course together so that the seniors can share information with the less experienced constables.

The conflicting responses by the facilitators indicate that a training needs analysis, which must precede any learning programme, was not conducted. The researchers suggest that pre-training assessment be properly undertaken in good time before the actual training commences. The researchers also contend that having learners from different backgrounds and differing ages in one class will be beneficial to the whole group, precisely due to their differences.

> The following were training gaps in the SLMP that were identified by the facilitators.

> F7: I would like to see a platform for people who do research in the SAPS where the results of the research can be communicated to management and top management. The findings of such research need to be presented at the courses.

> F4: We also need to identify line managers who are experts in their field to present the modules.

The above assertions suggest that facilitators should make every effort to help trainees draw upon what they already know and connect what they are learning in the training to what they need to do on the job. The design of the learning programme should include activities and exercises to promote transfer of learning. The facilitators made the following suggestions:

> F1: The programme should not be staggered the way it is currently done and a logic start for the programme need to be Leadership and Management.

> F4: The course needs to be presented in the provinces and the facilitators need to be of the same quality level and standard. The course needs to be presented continuously as one programme without the breaks in-between.

The following assertions by F2 and F4 suggest that trainers need to design activities that engage station commanders and tap their existing knowledge and skills. Similarly, transfer of learning from the training centre to the workplace is most likely to occur when the learning situation closely resembles the work situation. Therefore, using realistic exercises that address the challenges being faced by police station commanders at their working stations is crucial.

> F2: There should be a physical skill added to the programme in order to really solve problems in more complex situations.

> F4: We need to look at the operational challenges that station commanders face and try to align those to the strategies of the police in general.

Meyer et al. (2007) state that a clear set of selection criteria and a more rigorous recruitment process should be established with regard to training interventions when learners are selected to attend learning programmes, in order to ensure the highest impact operationally and strategically. The facilitators responded as follows about that which should be improved:

> F6: Monitoring and evaluation are contributing factors to the transfer of learning. During the monitoring and evaluation process, the facilitator is evaluated to establish if such facilitator is competent to deliver the programme. In this process the learning material would also be monitored twice a year to check whether it is relevant and up to date with regard to changes.

> F8: On the job evaluation can also be introduced to assist in seeing if learning is transferred to the workplace. The station commander can also be given a portfolio of evidence to complete within one year after the learning programme has been completed.

The post-monitoring of station commanders' progress against the expectations set out in the training involves specialists, facilitators and trainees (station commanders). The best practice of post-training monitoring is for facilitators to review how the station commanders (trainees) progress—that is whether they practise what they have learnt at the learning centres.

Lastly, the findings of this study suggest that before training, individual characteristics and the motivational levels of station commanders who are to attend the training may affect learning transfer. During training, discussions to encourage station commanders' enthusiasm or willingness to apply new skills may affect transfer of learning—that is operational challenges experienced by the station commanders should form part of the learning programme scenario.

The transfer of learning criteria was identified as a set of means to transfer learning from the classroom to the workplace. Pre-course assignments, supervisor debriefing, a support 'hotline', workplace changes and support to the station commanders were found to be lacking. As a result of the findings, it emerged that there is a need for post-course assessments, updating of learning material and the implementation of station commander training notes. Finally, after training, the work environment can motivate or demotivate police station commanders or actually prohibit the application of their new skills and knowledge on the job. The monitoring and evaluation of the SMLP should be extended beyond the classroom to the workplace.

6. Conclusion

The aim of the study on which this article is based was to identify the transfer of learning criteria that can be used to enhance transfer of learning from the learning environment to the work environment for police station commanders. With regard to Kirkpatrick's four levels, this study evaluated the SMLP offered by the SAPS to investigate whether the programme was developed and presented in accordance with the set criteria for transfer of learning.

The focus of this article was on what training facilitators perceive as transfer of learning and how they think transfer of learning could be enhanced to ensure that the station commanders implement the skills and knowledge in their work environment. The research findings were limited to station commanders in the SAPS in Gauteng who attended the SMLP. Given the context of police station commanders' conditions of service, it is important that in-service trainers understand how organisational barriers can inhibit transfer of learning to work stations. Post-training support is believed to influence the degree of application of learning after training. The focus should be on establishing contextually appropriate systems to make the SMLP as supportive as possible for station commanders returning from training.

Nevertheless, it is trusted that the results from the current study will be applicable to other fields of in-service training in the SAPS. Criteria for transfer of learning were developed during the study and these criteria could be used to guide transfer of learning in other SAPS learning programmes. This research, therefore, acknowledges that transfer of learning took place during the SMLP. However, the findings indicate that developmental areas need to be addressed. This research also offers strategies for the transfer of learning criteria before, during and after the learning programme as a means to assist in transfer of learning.

7. Recommendations

It is recommended that, in order for the SMLP to be more effective in terms of transfer of learning, the following aspects need to receive attention:

- Post-training evaluation (or impact studies) needs to be conducted after completion of the SMLP.
- Facilitators need to ensure that the pre-course assignments are received by learners before they attend the course. Measures need to be put in place to remind learners to bring the completed pre-course assignments to the course.
- An information or support hotline for newly trained station commanders needs to be established and implemented.
- Workplace changes need to be made to assist station commanders to implement their new knowledge.
- Station commanders need to be enrolled in a formal mentorship programme for the duration of the time that they attend the SMLP.
- Experienced station commanders should assist in the presentation of the SMLP to bring practical know-how to the classroom during the facilitation of the SMLP.

The above recommendations imply that, before engaging in training, it is important to consider what the training is expected to achieve, what kinds of people will be the most effective trainers and whether the training needs (i.e. uninformed, unskilled state) of the police station commanders are considered a threat to the optimal performance of the in-service learning programme. Once these needs have been identified, activities need to be properly planned to support the police station commanders in applying the knowledge and teaching methodology creatively and confidently. Lastly, this article recommends that further research be conducted to develop a post-training evaluation tool for facilitators to measure transfer of learning to the workplace after the station commanders had attended the SMLP.

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