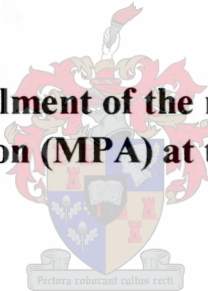# THE LEARNING ORGANISATION
AND PRODUCTIVITY:
A CASE STUDY OF THE ATHLONE
DETECTIVE SERVICE

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Public Administration (MPA) at the University of Stellenbosch

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis my own original work

and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a

degree.

ABSTRACT

The transformation of the South African Police Service (SAPS) did not simply brought about a change in name; it meant a different new style of policing. A completely new concept of how a police service should function within a democratic society, had to be developed and learnt. One of the significant changes was the transformation of the old *South African Police Force* into the *SAPS*. Included in this process was the amalgamation of the eleven police agencies into one organisation.

The transformation process had a major impact on productivity in the different components of the SAPS, as evidence suggests that change is difficult and that resistance may be expected whenever change involves a significant impact on the traditional behaviour, power, authority, culture and structure within an organisation. The objective of training is to achieve a change in the behaviour of those employees who are undergoing training. The SAPS therefore had to start using training programmes to ensure that all employees accept the change process easier.

The researcher attended the Station Management Programme (SMP) at Stellenbosch University in 1999. The first module presented at the SMP comprised the concept of a *learning organisation*. After successfully completing the SMP, this management mechanism was implemented at Athlone Detective Service. This detective service is one of the components at the Athlone police station, which in turn forms part of 1096 police stations in South Africa. The high volume of cases on hand was one of the main reasons why it was decided to experiment there with the five disciplines of the learning organisation, as proposed by Peter Senge, at the beginning of July 1999.

In Chapter one the research problem is identified, namely whether a learning organisation can be used to improve productivity at detective services. The objectives of this study are firstly to prove how the five disciplines of a learning organisation were implemented at Athlone detective service in order to increase productivity. Secondly, this study will give guidance to the other detective services in the SAPS on how to improve their own productivity.

Related literature is reviewed in Chapter two, and these references are made applicable on the SAPS, and more specifically on the Athlone detective service in Chapter three. The

gathering, analysis and interpretation of data are discussed in Chapter four. The data for this research has been gathered by means of computerised data, which has been collected from the Criminal Administration System (CAS) of the SAPS, and by means of a questionnaire, which was distributed among the personnel at Athlone detective service. The collected data is analysed statistically and interpreted in this chapter to establish whether the disciplines of a learning organisation had an impact on productivity.

The main focus points of each chapter are firstly summarised, while recommendations are made on the effective management thereof in Chapter five. A conclusion is also given in this last chapter.

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OPSOMMING

Die transformasie van die Suid-Afrikaanse Polisiediens (SAPD) het nie slegs 'n verandering in naam beteken nie, maar 'n totale verskillende manier van polisiëring. 'n Algehele nuwe konsep van hoe 'n polisiediens binne 'n demokratiese samelewing behoort te funksioneer, moes ontwikkel en aangeleer word. Een van die vernaamste veranderings was die omskakeling van die *Suid-Afrikaanse Polisiemag* na die *SAPD*. Ingesluit in hierdie proses was die samesmelting van die elf verskillende polisieagentskappe in een organisasie.

Hierdie proses het 'n negatiewe invloed op produktiwiteit in die verskillende afdelings van die SAPD gehad, aangesien daar al bewys is dat verandering moeilik is en dat weerstand verwag kan word wanneer hierdie verandering met tradisies, mag, gesag, kultuur en struktuur binne 'n organisasie te make het. Die doel van opleiding is om 'n verandering in die gedrag van werknemers te bereik; gevolglik het die SAPD met opleidingsprogramme begin om te verseker dat alle werknemers die veranderingsproses makliker aanvaar.

Gedurende 1999 het die navorser die Stasiebestuursprogram (SBP) aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch deurloop. Die eerste module wat gedurende die SBP aangebied is, was die konsep van *lerende organisasie*. Nà die suksesvolle voltooiing van die SBP, is hierdie bestuursinstrument te Athlone speurdiens in gebruik geneem. Hierdie speurdiens is een van die afdelings van die Athlone polisiestasie, wat op sy beurt deel uitmaak van 'n totaal van 1096 ander polisiestasies in Suid-Afrika. Die vernaamste rede waarom besluit was om die vyf dissiplines van die lerende organisasie, soos deur Peter Senge voorgestel op die proef te stel was die groot aantal sake wat ondersoekbeamtes voorhande gehad het gedurende 1999.

In hoofstuk een word die navorsingsprobleem geformuleer as: kan die lerende organisasie gebruik word om produktiwiteit in die speurdiens te verbeter? Die doel van hierdie navorsingsprojek is eerstens om te bewys hoe die lerende organisasie gebruik is om produktiwiteit te Athlone speurdiens te verbeter. Ten tweede is die doel van die navorsing om ander speurdienste, binne die SAPD, van riglyne te voorsien oor hoe om hulle eie produktiwiteit te verbeter.

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Hoofstuk twee bestaan uit 'n oorsig oor die toepaslike literatuur, terwyl die literatuur in hoofstuk drie op die SAPD van toepassing gemaak word. Die insameling, ontleding en vertolking van data word in hoofstuk vier bespreek. Vir die doeleindes van hierdie navorsing is van gerekenariseerde data gebruik gemaak wat vanaf die Misdaad-Administrasiestelsel (MAS) van die SAPD verkry is en uit vraelyste wat onder die Athlone speurdiens versprei is. Die data wat ingesamel is, word in hierdie hoofstuk statisties ontleed en vertolk, ten einde vas te stel of die dissiplines van die lerende organisasie wel 'n invloed op produktiwiteit gehad het.

In hoofstuk vyf word die vernaamste bevindings eerstens opgesom en daarna word aanbevelings oor die doeltreffende bestuur daarvan gemaak. Laastens word 'n gevolgtrekking gegee.

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- And last, but never least, to my wife for her patience, love and support over the last three years, and especially during the past year.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

On 2 February 1990 State President FW de Klerk put forty-two years of apartheid ideology to rest and gave all South Africans a glimmer of hope for the dawning of a "new South Africa".

Despite the uncertainty and nervousness in the hearts and minds of many South Africans, the road to transformation was opened with the first democratic elections taking place in 1994, followed by the inauguration of Mr Nelson Mandela as the new State President of South Africa. Since then, South Africa went through numerous changes, ranging from the national anthem to the flag being adapted to reflect the birth of the so called "rainbow nation". Today the country has already experienced its second democratic elections and the inauguration of Mr Thabo Mbeki as the successor to the State Presidency.

This transformation of South Africa into a fully democratic country, required many and bold changes in many areas. Public sector organisations had to improve their levels of service to their customers, the community, in order to adapt to the changes facing the country. The South African Police Service (SAPS), as a public sector organisation, was also not excluded from this transformation process. One of the major changes was the transformation of the old *South African Police Force* into the *SAPS*.

The transformation did not simply mean a change in name; it meant a whole new style of policing. It also meant changing communities' perceptions of a police official, from that of an oppressor to that of a protector. A whole new concept of how a police service should function within a democratic society, had to be developed and learnt. The SAPS therefore had to become a learning organisation, with all the concomitant implications of the term. Finally the old autocratic, militaristic management style had

to be replaced by a participative management style – once again with all the resultant implications.

The transformation of the SAPS had a major impact on productivity in the different components of the SAPS. One of these components is the detective service.

Productivity at a detective service is monthly measured according to the solving rate, conviction rate, cases on hand, and cases to court. If one of these aspects decreases, it becomes clear that justice does not prevail, which has enormous effects on the economy of South Africa. At Athlone detective service a problem was experienced with the number of cases that were on hand in 1999. The reasons for this low productivity are mainly low morale of investigators, the subculture of the SAPS and the resistance by many employees, (senior managers and investigators) to change.

In 1999 the researcher attended the Station Management Course (SMC) at Stellenbosch University. One of the modules that were presented at this course was the *learning organisation*. After successfully completing the SMC this management tool was implemented, which led to a vast improvement in the productivity of investigators at Athlone Detective Service.

1.2   Rationale for Study

The proposed study will focus on improving productivity at detective services in the SAPS, by making use of a learning organisation, as identified by Senge (1990:5-11). When defining a learning organisation, various definitions are formulated, for instance:

- "A learning organisation is one in which people at all levels, individuals and collectively, are continually increasing their capacity to produce results they really care about." (Karash [1994]);
- "A learning organisation is an organisation skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge and modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights." - David Garvin, Harvard Business School (Management today, 1999:27).

A learning organisation, as described by Peter Senge (1990; 1994), comprises five disciplines. Senge (1990:10) defines a discipline as a developmental path for acquiring certain skills or competencies. This implies that each discipline is an area of learning in itself. Each is also intrinsically linked to each of the other disciplines. The five disciplines of a learning organisation, as identified by Senge (1990:5-11), are:

- Systems thinking
- Personal mastery
- Mental models
- Team learning
- Building shared vision

The five disciplines together form a complete system of learning in any organisational environment. When combining the two disciplines applicable on individuals, namely *personal mastery* and *mental models*, with the other three collective disciplines, an organisation can improve its performance or productivity.

Van Wyk (1998: 63-65) identifies certain learning disabilities within organisations, namely:

1. I am my position;
2. The enemy is out there;
3. The illusion of taking charge;
4. The delusion of learning from experience;
5. The myth of the management team;
6. The parable of the boiled frog;
7. The fixation on events;
8. The waiting game and
9. The SAPS subculture.

Combinations of the first seven disabilities lead to high absenteeism, which results in low productivity.

At the beginning of 1999 problems with low employee morale, high absenteeism, and low productivity were experienced at Athlone detective service. After the researcher had completed the SMC, the five disciplines of the learning organisation were implemented at Athlone detective service. After two years employee morale and productivity increased, and absenteeism decreased.

As the five disciplines of a learning organisation can be used to promote a better working environment, increase employee morale, and decrease absenteeism, it will obviously lead to higher productivity in any organisation

1.3   Research Problem and Objectives

The research problem can be defined as whether a learning organisation can be used to improve productivity at detective services.

The objectives of this study will therefore firstly be to prove how the five disciplines of a learning organisation – namely Shared Vision, Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Systems Thinking, and Team Learning – were implemented at Athlone detective service to increase productivity. Secondly, this study will give guidance to the other detective services in the West Metropole on how to improve their own productivity.

1.4   Research Design

If an analogy were to be drawn between researches and travel, then the research design of a project can be thought of as the itinerary of a holiday or journey. The main function of research design is to ensure that the researcher plans the route of his research so as to maximise the validity of the end results and by doing so minimising error. Because of the nature of the research topic, the research design of this study (empirical study on the impact of the learning organisation on productivity at Athlone detective service) will at this stage be presented in fairly broad terms. An evaluation study (implementation evaluation) will however be used for this purpose.

Implementation evaluation research aims to answer the question of whether an intervention has been properly implemented, whether the target group has been

adequately covered and whether the intervention was implemented as designed (Mouton 2001:158). Firstly a literature review on the phenomenon of a learning organisation is required. Secondary data is needed from the Crime Administration System (CAS) at Athlone detective services to illustrate the level of productivity at the unit. Following this, observation "... keeping on target, while hanging loose..." is necessary to familiarise oneself with the topic and to generate ideas and themes that can be explored later in the research process.

Rubin and Rubin (1995:42-43) explain this as follows: "You cannot plan the entire design for a qualitative project in advance because the design changes as you learn from the interviewing. But you can begin to work with a rough and tentative design, talk with potential interviewees, sort out initial ideas, refocus the research, and decide with whom else to talk and about what."

1.5   Research Methodology

According to Mouton (2001: 35), the dimension of methodology refers to the "knowledge of how" or the total set of means employed to reach one's goal of valid knowledge. The methodological paradigms available within which research can be conducted are the *quantitative, qualitative* and the *participatory action* paradigms. Therefore, as a result of the nature of the present research topic, it is proposed that research be conducted within the qualitative paradigm. With regards to qualitative research, the student will work through a wealth of rich descriptive data, which will be collected through document analysis.

The research that will be conducted for this study will include the following methods.

1.5.1   Literature study

An in-depth literature study will be done on the concepts *public administration, organisational culture, resistance to change, training and development* and a *learning organisation,* as they are the main subjects of this study. Information sources that will be used, are library books, journals, newspaper articles and the Internet. Fortunately, a variety of databases are available in the local library at the Bellville Park Campus, which can be helpful to gain access to the right sources. According to Mouton

(2001:88), the library catalogue (originally card catalogues, but nowadays usually computerised) remain an important and essential first step for most research students.

1.5.2   Data collection

Secondary data will be collected from the CAS proving how productivity increased at Athlone detective service since 1999. Productivity in the detective service is measured according to the following criteria:

- Cases received versus cases on hand;
- Number of cases that was sent to court;
- Conviction rate of cases sent to court; and
- Solving rate.

For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on cases on hand versus those received, as the biggest problems were experienced in that area.

1.5.3   Interviews

It is anticipated that use will be made of face-to-face and individual topical interviews, (which are narrowly focussed on a particular event or process, and are concerned with what happened, when and why) will be used to gain information from the members involved at Athlone Detective Service, about their experience of the concept of the learning organisation.   Rubin and Rubin (1995:195) define *topical interviews* as focussed on subjects that the interviewer has chosen, and that are more concerned with matters of fact and less concerned with eliciting shades of meaning. Extensive notes will be taken of all interviews, which will be text analysed.

1.5.4   The use of documentation

Documentation, such as magazine articles, newspaper and media reports, and information available on the Internet will be collected and integrated with the data obtained, in an attempt to add any other nuance that might reside in these sources. The documentary sources will be compared to data already gathered, and then added as new information to the present study where they can be of use.

1.5.5 Data Analysis

The data will be analysed using the approach of Rubin and Rubin (1995:226-227). They describe this procedure as follows:

"Data analysis begins while the interviews are still underway. The preliminary analysis tells you how to redesign your questions to focus in on central themes as you continue interviewing. After the interviewing is complete, you begin a more detailed and fine-grained analysis of what your conversational partners told you. In this formal analysis, you discover additional themes and concepts and build towards an overall explanation. To begin the final data analysis, put into one category all the material from all your interviews that speak to one theme or concept. Compare material within the categories to look for variations and nuances in meaning. Compare across the categories to discover connections between themes. The goal is to integrate the themes and concepts into a theory that offers an accurate, detailed, yet subtle interpretation of your research arena. The analysis is complete when you feel that you can share with others what your interpretation means for policymaking, for theory and for understanding the social and political world."

The above process will be assisted by making use of available information that is available on the CAS system, which will be used as a "tool" to aid in the management of textual data.

1.6 Conceptualisation

In this study the following concepts and definitions apply:

♣ Schwella (1991:2) defines *public administration* as:

- that system of structures and processes,
- operating within a particular society as environment,
- with the objective of facilitating the formulation of appropriate governmental policy, and
- the efficient execution of the formulated policy.

♣ *Organisational Culture* refers to a system of shared meaning (Robbins 1990:438).

♣ *Resistance To Change* is usually a reaction to methods used in implementing a change rather than any inherent human characteristic (Harvey & Brown 1992: 175).

♣ *Training* is defined as the organised procedure by which people gain knowledge and/or skills for a definite purpose (Beach 1985:244).

♣ *Learning Organisation* are organisations "... where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together..." (Senge 1990:5).

♣ *Discipline*, which Senge (1990:10) defines as a developmental path for acquiring certain skills or competencies.

♣ *Personal Mastery*: Senge (1994:195) define the discipline of personal mastery as the practice of learning to keep both a personal vision and a clear picture of current reality before us.

♣ *Mental Models*: Senge (1994:235) define mental models as the assumptions, images, and stories which persons carry in their minds of themselves, other people, institutions, and every aspect of the world.

♣ *Team learning* is the process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members truly desire (Senge 1990:236).

♣ *A shared Vision* is a vision to which many people are truly committed, because it reflects their own personal vision (Senge 1990:206).

♣ *Systems' thinking encompasses* a large and fairly amorphous body of methods, tools, and principles, all orientated to looking at the interrelatedness of forces, and seeing them as a part of common process. (Senge 1994:89).

1.7 Plan of Study

This study project deals with the various issues relating to a learning organisation and productivity. The outline of the rest of the chapters in this study will be as follows:

The central theme of Chapter two will be focussed on the concept *public administration*. Included in this explanation will be discussions on the distinctiveness of public management. The focus is then turned to leadership as a public management function, where the social learning approach to leadership is adopted for the purpose of this study.

An explanation of changing the organisational culture will be given. As resistance to change can be expected when attempts are made to change the culture of organisations, overcoming resistance to change will be discussed. Training and development is one way of addressing resistance to change and it will therefore also be discussed. Lastly, the concept of a learning organisation is discussed, including an explanation and definition of this concept, and a discussion of the five disciplines as provided by Peter Senge, namely systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, team learning, and building a shared vision.

Chapter Three will start off with a summary of the historical perspective of the SAPS. An explanation of the current structure of the SAPS will then be discussed. The third section comprises the SAPS as a learning organisation. The fourth section of discussion will refer to the Athlone detective service as a learning organisation, as the focus of this study is concentrated on that department.

Chapter four sets out by focussing on the collection of data, and also reports on the distribution of a questionnaire and gathering information available on the CAS system. Secondly, the results of the data that was gathered will be given. These results will focus on statistics, percentages and facts. Lastly, the results that were gathered will be interpreted and analysed according to the problem statement of the research project.

The focus of Chapter five will be on recommendations that can be applied to improve the situation. Secondly, this last chapter will provide conclusions regarding the different aspects that were researched, and comparing it with the statements that were made in the introduction.

1.8   Conclusion

After reading this study project the reader would have gained insight into the learning organisation and how to use this very powerful managerial tool effectively to the proper advantage of all parties involved. It is therefore the author's sincere wish that this study project would lead to a better understanding of the implementation of the learning organisation in the SAPS, as well as the impact of this concept on productivity in the detective service.

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CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   Introduction

The only real source of competitive advantage in the long term is an organisation's ability to learn faster than its competition (Aubrey & Cohen 1995:ix). Organisations, in essence, are microcosms of the larger society. Any attempt to change the way that an organisation operates, therefore requires an acknowledgement of the need to take the basic culture of that larger society into account. The following focus points are highlighted in this chapter.

- Firstly, a background to public administration and public management is sketched. This includes an explanation of the concept *public administration.* Included in this explanation will be discussions on the distinctiveness of public management, as well as a public management model, that was developed to conceptualise, simplify and explain public management as a complex matter. The focus is then, lastly, turned to leadership as a public management function, where the social learning approach to leadership is adopted for the purpose of this study.

- The creation of learning opportunities does not take place easily; it requires a definite shift from the present culture of an organisation. Therefore, an explanation will, secondly be given of changing the organisational culture.

- As resistance to change can be expected when attempts are made to change the culture of organisations, the third section that will be discussed will be that of overcoming resistance to change.

- Training and development is one way of addressing resistance to change and this will be the fourth section of discussion.

- The concept of a learning organisation is discussed, in the fifth place, including an explanation and definition of the concept, and a discussion of the five disciplines as provided by Peter Senge, namely systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, team learning, and building a shared vision.

    o Lastly the impact of the learning organisation on productivity will be discussed.

    o In conclusion a summary of the most important findings will be given.

2.2   The Concept: Public Administration

Although public administration exerts a constant influence on people, it is difficult to define and describe. A wide meaning is ascribed to public administration based on an *open systems approach*. According to Harvey and Brown (1996:37) an open system influences and is influenced by the environment through the processes of interdependency, which result in dynamic (changing) equilibrium. The system cannot continue to survive without the continuous influence of transformational outflow. As the open system interacts with its environment, it continually receives information termed *feedback*, from its environment, which helps it adjust. The flow of inputs and outputs is a basic starting point in the description of the system (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Organisations as an Open System
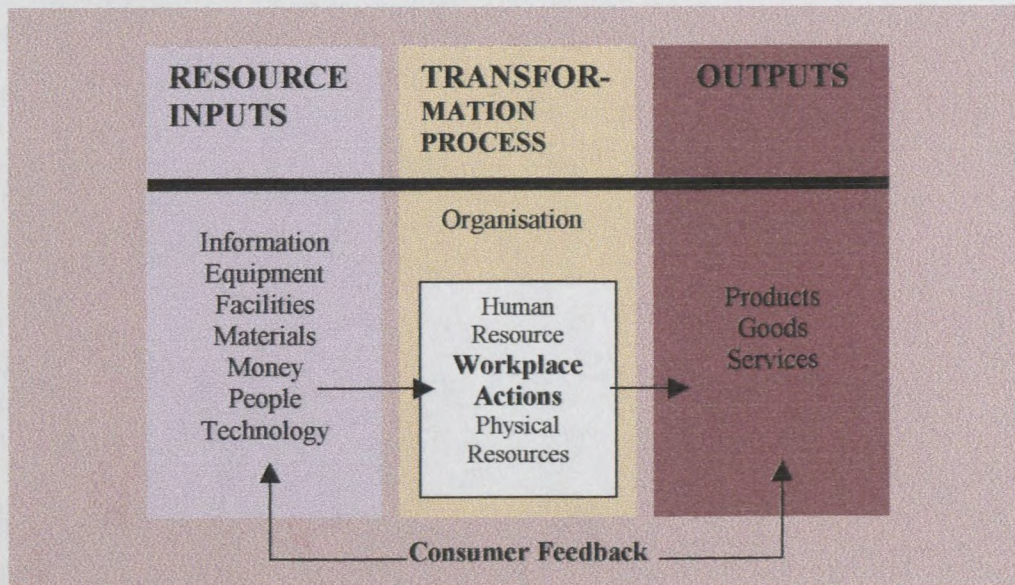
Source: Adapted from Harvey and Brown (1996:36)

There are three basic elements that make up such a system:

- Inputs are the resources that are applied to the processing function;
- Processes are the activities and functions that are performed to produce goods and services;

- Outputs are the products and services produced by the organisation.

Schwella (1991:2) defines *public administration* as:

- that system of structures and processes,
- operating within a particular society as environment,
- with the objective of facilitating the formulation of appropriate governmental policy, and
- the efficient execution of the formulated policy.

This definition emphasises the importance of the environmental context, politics and policy, policy execution and management. From the definition the assumption can be made that public-administration, as defined in this way, is much wider in scope and nature than *public management*. *Public management* is only a part of public administration and care should be taken not to reduce public administration to public management.

A central question involves the relevance and necessity of a specific public management approach as opposed to a generic approach to management, which claims to be applicable in both public and private management contexts (Schwella: 1991:3). The following section summarises the argument for a distinctive approach to public management.

2.2.1   The Distinctiveness of Public Management

IASIA (1978:17) presents the following argument for the distinctiveness of public management:

"Although the administration of public functions and private business enterprises has some common elements, the environment, objectives and processes of administration are sufficiently different to call for curricula (and practices), which focus on the public aspects of management. For example, training in quantitative analysis may be common for both public and private managers, but training in the political environment and values is more essential for the public manager".

According to Schwella (1991:3), it can be argued that the approaches to the management of public and private organisations will have more in common at the

level of techniques and less in common at the level of political and managerial judgement and decision-making.

2.2.3   A Public Management Model

In an attempt to conceptualise, explain and simplify the complexities of public management, a model – provided by Schwella (1991:4) – may prove a useful tool. The model used here, presented in figure 2.2, accepts the fundamental premises of the contingency approach to management. This emphasis is a constant and continuous theme in the public management model presented here.

According to Schwella (1991:3) public management functions and public managerial skills should be constantly assessed in terms of the public management environment. The *contingency approach* as point of departure is complemented by a view of relevant selected public management functions and skills. In this way the *functional approach* to management is integrated with the contingency approach. Functions and skills are distinguished on the following basis (Schwella 1991:3).

The public management functions constitute ongoing concerns for public managers and are used to delineate and conceptualise the management task in line with a functional approach to management. These public management functions are supported and underpinned by management skills. The skills are distinguished from the management functions as they are more practical and can be taught and learnt practically (Schwella 1991:3).

These public management functions include policy-making, planning, organising, leadership and motivation, and control and evaluation. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on leadership as a management function.

2.2.4   Leadership as A Management Function

Different approaches to leadership were followed over the past number of years. The *social learning approach* came into existence in the beginning of the 1990s, and can be seen as the rising paradigm to leadership. This approach suggests that leaders are not responsible for giving direction, but only need to facilitate or support team

members, in order to find solutions for problems. In other words, leaders do no have all the answers. Leaders therefore have to be helpful when it comes to visioning, support, and engagement of employees. For the purpose of this study, the focus will therefore be on the social learning approach.

Figure 2.2   The Public Management Model

GENERAL ENVIRONMENT

Functions   Skills

Applications   Supportive technology and techniques

SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENT

GENERAL ENVIRONMENT
• Political • Social • Economic • Technological • Cultural

SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENT
Suppliers • Competitors • Regulators • Consumers

FUNCTIONS	**SKILLS**	**APPLICATIONS**
Policy-Making	Decision-Making	Policy analysis
Planning	Communication	Strategic management
Organising	Management of change	Organisation development
Leading	Management of conflict	
Control and	Negotiation	**SUPPORTIVE TECHNOLO-**
evaluation		**GY AND TECHNIQUES**
		Computer technology and information management.
		Techniques for public management

Source: Adapted from Schwella et al (1991:4)

Leadership is a razor's edge, because one has to oversee a sustained period of social

Leadership is a razor's edge, because one has to oversee a sustained period of social disequilibrium during which people confront the contradictions in their lives and communities and adjust their values and behaviour to accommodate new realities (Heifetz 1999:127-128). According to this author, we have begun to explore the resources that authority brings to directing this process. Heifetz (1999:128), states that these tools can be organised according to five strategic principles of leadership:

- Identify the adaptive challenge. Diagnose the situation in light of the values at stake, and unbundle the issues that come with it.
- Keep the level of distress within a tolerable range for doing adaptive work. To use the pressure cooker analogy, keep the heat up without blowing up the vessel.
- Focus attention on ripening issues and not on stress-reducing distractions. Identify which issues can urgently engage attention; and while directing attention to them, counteract work-avoidance mechanisms like denial, scape-coating, externalising the enemy, pretending the problem is technical, or attacking individuals rather than issues.
- Give the work back to the people, but at a rate they can stand. Place and develop responsibility by putting the pressure on the people with the problem.
- Protect voices of leadership without authority. Give cover to those who raise hard questions and generate distress. People will often have latitude to provoke rethinking that authorities do not have.

The social learning approach in leadership requires a definite and purposeful shift from the present culture of the organisation. The next section will therefore be a brief discussion of changes in the organisational culture.

2.3   Changing the Organisational Culture

No organisation operates within a closed system or vacuum. All organisations, including public sector organisations, operate both within a general and a specific environment.

Service or product demands, corporate image and competition for market share and resources often create the driving force behind an organisation. In order to create and

sustain a successful advantage in its chosen environment, an organisation needs to create space for its people to learn (Van Wyk 1998:5).

By allowing individuals to learn, groups and teams will learn and, by allowing groups and teams to learn, a sustained competitive advantage will be created for the organisation, according to Van Wyk (1998:5).

The creation of learning opportunities does not take place easily or quickly – the change to a learning culture requires a definite and purposeful shift from the present culture of the organisation (Van Wyk 1998:5). The culture of an organisation has a market influence on its employees. A strong culture is characterised by the organisation's core norms and values being intensely held, clearly ordered, and widely shared (Robbins 1990:441). The more members who accept the core norms and values, agree on their order of importance, and are highly committed to them, the stronger the culture. Although it has been emphasised that strong cultures are efficient, it cannot be presumed that organisational cultures can be managed.

The question posed by Robbins (1990:452) is whether a culture should be treated as a given and therefore cannot be changed. According to Robbins (1990:457), the argumentation whether organisational cultures can be managed or not, suggests that the real question to be answered is not whether culture can be managed, but rather whether there are certain conditions under which cultures can be managed. The first step in changing the organisational culture so that human resources may perform optimally, is to unfreeze the present culture (Robbins 1990:459-461). When changing the culture of organisations, a strong resistance to change can be expected. The next section will give a short discussion of ways to overcome resistance to change.

2.4   Overcoming Resistance to Change

Change always meets with some degree of resistance. This will be evident in individuals or groups, in such forms as controversy, hostility and conflict either covertly or openly (Fox 1998:111). According to Harvey & Brown (1992: 199-201), change itself tends to move through a number of phases.

- In the first phase, there are only a few people who realise the need for change and who take reform seriously. They represent a fringe element of the organisation and are often openly criticised, ridiculed and persecuted in an attempt to deal with the dissidents and to force them to conform to established organisational norms.

- As the movement for change begins to grow, the forces for and against the change become identifiable. The change is considered and discussed and is more thoroughly understood by more members.

- In the third phase there is direct conflict and a showdown between the forces for and against the change. The success or failure of the change is dependent on the outcome of this phase.

- If, after decisive confrontation, the supporters of the change have triumphed, the remaining resistance is seen as a nuisance and stubborn. There remains a possibility that the resisters of the change will be able to mobilise enough support to shift the balance of power. Wisdom is necessary in dealing with this option.

- In the last phase the resisters are as few and as alienated as where the advocates of change in the first phase.

Evidence suggests that change is difficult and that resistance may be expected whenever change involves a significant impact on the traditional behaviour, power, authority, culture and structure within an organisation (Fox 1998:112). The change model in Figure 2.3 illustrates four possible change situations.

Figure 2.3   The Change Model
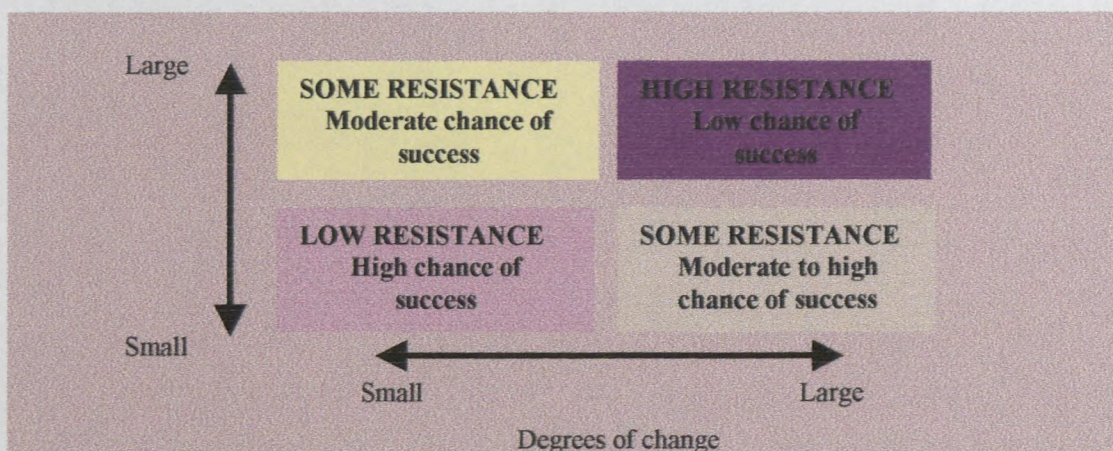
Source: Adapted From Harvey and Brown (1992:203)

- *Small change, small impact* will predictably cause the lowest level of resistance and the highest probability of a successful change.
- *Small change, large impact* will cause some resistance, depending on the size of the threat and the speed of change.
- *Large change, small impact* will predictably cause resistance, but good management can probably overcome it.
- *Large change, large impact* will cause the greatest resistance. In this situation, the probability of success is low.

Robbins (1990:460-461) suggests that communication of change should contain three basic elements:

- the present state of the institution and its problems, the outlook for the future, and other information that anyone with a keen interest in the future of the organisation would want to have;
- the vision of what the organisation is to become and how it will achieve this;
- the progress of the organisation in the areas that are identified as keys to the realisation of the vision.

The purpose of change is to increase organisational effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness and performance, or even to ensure survival (Fox 1998:113). It is universally accepted that if an organisation is to become excellent and wants to remain so, it must continually respond to significant environmental developments. One way of addressing resistance to change is through training and development. This concept therefore will be the subject of discussion in the next section.

2.5   Training and Development

Training is defined as the organised procedure by which people gain knowledge and/or skills for a definite purpose (Beach 1985:244). According to Fox (1998:106) the *objective of training* is to achieve a change in the behaviour of those employees who are being trained. Training plays a large part in determining the effectiveness, efficiency, performance and responsiveness of the institution. Fox (1998:106) summarised the benefits of training as follows:

- It reduces the learning time to reach acceptable performance and leads to improved performance on an employee's current job.

- A common objective of organisational training is to mould employee attitudes and to ensure improved delivery of goods and services

- Training of managers, supervisors and other employees can assist management in problem-solving and help to reduce turnover, absenteeism, accident rates and industrial action.

- It can fulfil human resource needs. Many public organisations find it impossible to recruit fully trained personnel. The only alternative, then, is to train employees once they have been recruited, and to continue training as they progress in the organisation.

- It has benefits for employees themselves. As employees improve their knowledge and skills, they also increase their confidence, market value and earning power.

Aubrey and Cohen (1995: 39-93) describe the timeless skills needed by any manager to create learning and wisdom among his or her employees. These authors say the following:

Given: The new economy depends on the construction of value-based knowledge.

Given: We therefore need to turn all organisations into learning organisations.

Given: We therefore need to turn all workers into lifelong learners. Aubrey and Cohen (1995: ix)

Through this possibly different view on the process of learning, the learner creates wisdom not through action only, but rather through reflection on action (Van Wyk 1998:11). According to Van Wyk, (1998:11) it is this reflection process that allows space for further learning and in doing so, creates a culture of learning in which a learning organisation will flourish. This leads to a discussion of the learning organisation.

2.6   The Concept of the Learning Organisation

2.6.1   What is a *Learning Organisation?*

According to Senge (1994:3), the most common greeting, equivalent to *hallo* in English, is the expression *Sawu bona*, among the tribes of northern Natal in South Africa. It literally means *I see you.* If you are a member of the tribe, you might reply by saying *Sikhona I am here* (Senge 1994:3). According to Senge (1994:3), the order of the exchange is important: until you see me, I do not exist. "It's as if, when you see me, you bring me into existence." The meanings implicated in this type of greeting are part of the spirit of what is known today as *ubuntu* (Van Wyk:1998:9). *Ubuntu* is a way of thinking that is prevalent among native people in Africa and especially in South Africa (Van Wyk 1998:9). According to Senge (1998:9), the concept of ubuntu stems from the folk saying "*Umuntu naumuntu ngabantu*" which, literally means when translated from Zulu, *A person is a person because of other people.*

The spirit of ubuntu prevails in the culture of a learning organisation. Others can only exist if you acknowledge them and their attempts at learning and improving (Van Wyk 1998:10). The next section summarises several definitions that are given to a learning organisation.

2.6.2   Defining the Concept Learning Organisation

There are various possibilities when formulating a learning definition, for instance:

- "[o]rganisations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (Senge 1990:14);
- "A learning organisation is one in which people at all levels, individuals and collectively, are continually increasing their capacity to produce results they really care about" (Karash 1994);
- "A learning organisation is an organisation skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge and modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights" (David Garvin 1999:27).

For the purpose of this study the concept of the learning organisation will be focussed on the definition formulated by Peter Senge. According to Peter Senge (1990;1994) the learning organisation comprises five disciplines, which will be discussed in the next section.

2.6.3 The Five Disciplines of the Learning Organisation

Senge (1990:10) defines a *discipline* as a developmental path for acquiring certain skills or competencies. According to him, it is a body of theory and technique that must be studied and mastered to be put into practice. This implies that each discipline is an area of learning in itself. Each is also intrinsically linked to each of the other disciplines (Van Wyk 1998:11). The five disciplines together form a complete system of learning in any organisational environment. To practice any one of the disciplines, requires a person to be a lifelong learner.

The more you learn, the more you will become aware of your ignorance, and the more you will want to learn (Van Wyk 1998:11). The five disciplines of the learning organisation, as identified by Senge (1990: 5-11), are the following:

- **Systems thinking**. This concerns the ability to place all parts of an organisation and its events into a system.

- **Personal mastery.** Senge (1990:7) explains this discipline as the process of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focussing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively.

- **Mental Models.** These models are deeply engraved assumptions, generalisations or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action (Senge, 1990:9).

- **Team Learning.** According to Fox (1998:13), team learning is the process that evolves a in-group of people trying to complete a task together and in which learning occurs through past errors and collective experience.

- **Building shared vision.** This discipline involves the skills of unearthing shared "pictures of the future" that fosters genuine commitment and involvement rather than compliance (Senge, 1990:9).

These five disciplines together form a complete system of learning in any organisational environment. When combining the two disciplines applicable on individuals, namely *personal mastery* and *mental models*, with the other three collective disciplines, an organisation can improve its performance or productivity.

Learning organisations are possible because deep down we are all learners. (Van Wyk 1998:13). No one has to teach an infant to learn. In fact, no one has to teach infants anything. They are intrinsically inquisitive, masterful learners who learn to walk, eat and speak and they pretty much run their households all on their own (Senge 1990:4). Learning organisations are therefore not only possible because it is in our nature to learn, but simply because we have to learn (Van Wyk 1998:14).

According to Senge (1990:4), most of us at one time or another have been part of a great "team", a group of people who functioned together in an extra-ordinary way – who trusted one another, who complemented each other's strengths and compensated for each other's limitations, who had common goals that were larger than individual goals, and who produced extra-ordinary results.

Senge (1990:4) states that he has met many people who have experienced this sort of profound teamwork – in sports, or in business, or in the performing arts. Many say that they have spent much of their life looking for that experience again. What they experienced, was a learning organisation. (Senge 1990:4). The team that became great did not start off great – it learned how to produce extra-ordinary results.

The disciplines of the learning organisation will now be discussed individually, starting with the discipline systems thinking.

2.6.3.1 Systems Thinking

At its broadest level, systems thinking encompasses a large and fairly amorphous body of methods, tools, and principles, all orientated to looking at the interrelatedness of forces, and seeing them as a part of a common process. (Senge 1994:89). Systems thinking can therefore be seen as the cornerstone of any learning organisation.

This is the ability to see the bigger picture, to look at the interrelationships of a system as opposed to simple cause-effect chains, allowing for continuous processes to be

studied rather than single snapshots.

2.6.3.1.1 What can be expected from systems thinking?

Senge (1994: 91-94) identifies the following expectations when systems thinking is practiced.

- *There are no right answers.* There is never a single right answer to any question, because system dynamics illustrates the interrelationships and interdependencies within the current system.

- *You won't be able to "divide your elephant in half"* You can't redesign your system (the "elephant") by dividing it into parts; everyone must look at the whole together.

- *Cause and effect will not be closely related in time and space.* It is usually futile to look for the causes of a problem near the system (Van Wyk 1998:56). Usually the real causes of a problem are somewhere in the past, further back in time.

- *You will have your cake and eat it too – but not all at once.* When systems solutions are proposed, the necessary time delays must be taken into account. Time delays and other subtle aspects of the system only become apparent with time and experimentation (Senge 1994:93).

- *The easiest way out will lead back in.* Senge (1994:93) warns that one must be aware of the easiest, fastest solutions. This means that when working in a large system, it is often comfortable to follow the easier and more immediate solutions.

- *Behaviour will grow worse before it grows better.* In any situation of change, behaviour and actions seem to get worse before they get better (Van Wyk 1998:56). In a system, behaviour needs time to adjust and will stabilise after this period of adjustment (Van Wyk 1998:56).

Without systems thinking each of the disciplines would be isolated and would therefore not achieve their objective. This discipline therefore integrates them to form the whole system.

The first discipline, that is dependent on the actions of an individual, is personal mastery.

2.6.3.2 Personal Mastery

What is Meant by *Personal Mastery*

The second discipline, personal mastery, as described by Senge (1990: 139-173; 1994: 193-232) involves the individual. Personal mastery goes beyond competence and skills, though it is grounded in competence and skills (Senge 1990:141). Senge argues that it means approaching one's life as a creative work, living life from a creative as opposed to reactive viewpoint. Senge (1994:195) defines the discipline of personal mastery as the practice of learning to keep both a personal vision and a clear picture of current reality before us. By enabling oneself to keep a clear picture of where someone is and where he/she would like to be, a tension between the two is created. This tension is neither negative nor positive - it is creative (Van Wyk 1998:18). By using the diagram in figure2.4, it is clear how present reality can hold one back while an attempt is made to leap at a desired future state (Van Wyk 1998:18).

According to Van Wyk (1998:18) the current reality also keeps one's feet on the ground and it makes you think about the real implications of the decisions that must be made to move towards the desired state. The desired future state that helps someone become aware of the creative tension, is called a vision (Van Wyk 1998:18).

A personal vision statement is one of the most powerful forces in a person's life, and it can enable that person to move towards those things that are important to him or her (Van Wyk 1998:18). If somebody therefore is not aware of what he or she wants to be or do, he/she cannot move towards achieving the goals.

Figure 2.4: The Influence of Creative Tension
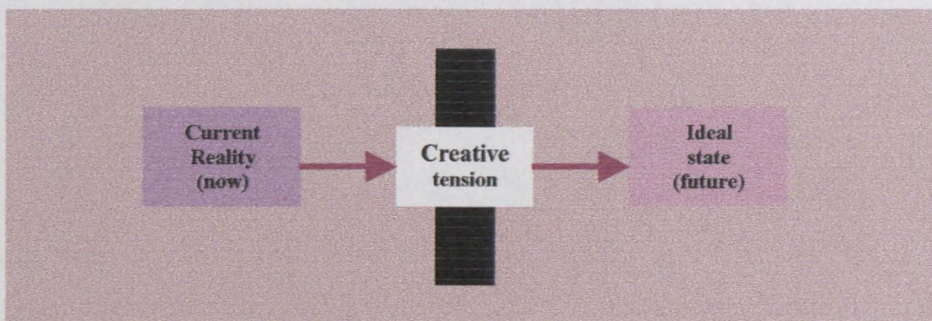
Source: Adapted from Van Wyk (1998:15)

Senge (1990:150) states that people often have great difficulty talking about their visions, even when the visions are clear. Senge argues that the reason for this is because people are actually aware of the gaps between their vision and reality (1990:150).

These gaps can make a vision seems unrealistic or fanciful. It can lead to discouragement or hopelessness. But, according to Senge (1990:150), the gap between vision and reality is also a source of energy. The principle of creative tension is the central principle of personal mastery, integrating all elements of the discipline (Senge 1990:151).

According to Senge (1994:195), we may not be able to command ourselves to snap instantly into this frame of mind, but the discipline of personal mastery suggests that one can cultivate a way of thinking. Personal mastery teaches a person not to lower his or her vision, even if the vision seems impossible. Senge (1994:195) states that it also teaches us that the content of the vision in itself is not important. Personal mastery also teaches one not to shrink back from seeing the world as it is, even if it makes you uncomfortable. Finally, personal mastery teaches one to choose. Senge (1995:196) argues that this choice entails a courageous act: picking the results and actions which people desire.

The other discipline that can be regarded as dependent on an individual's actions, is mental models. This discipline will therefore be the subject of discussion in the next section.

2.6.3.2   Mental Models

New insights fail to get put into practice because they are in conflict with deeply held internal images of how the world works, images that limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting (Senge 1990:174). Senge (1990:174) argues that this is why the discipline of managing mental models promises to be a major breakthrough for building learning organisations.

2.6.3.2.1 What are Mental Models?

Senge (1994:235) defines *mental models* as the assumptions, images, and stories which a person carries in his mind of himself, other people, institutions, and every aspect of the world.

Differences in mental models explain why people observe the same event and then describe it differently. According to Van Wyk (1998:28) this is because people pay attention to different details. People observe information or data from their own environment, but choose to ignore incoming data that does not agree with their mental maps (Van Wyk 1998:28).

In a video by Joel Barker entitled *The Business of Paradigms,* the role of paradigms is explained through various examples. Paradigms are created by a person's experience and background. Similar to mental models, paradigms act as filters through which people can observe the world (Van Wyk 1998:28).

Mental models are often also associated with stereotypes. *Stereotypes* are standardised mental maps of people (Van Wyk 1998:28). Figure 2.5 clarifies the subtle differences between paradigms, mental models and stereotypes.

Mental models can be simple generalisations, such as stating that a particular person is untrustworthy, or they can be complex theories, such as assumptions about why certain groups of people interact as they do (Van Wyk 1998:29).

2.6.3.2.2 Why are Mental Models so Powerful?

According to Van Wyk (1998:29-30), mental models are powerful because of the following reasons:

- They shape what a person chooses to observe;
- They shape a person's perceptions;
- They also influence actions.

Figure 2.5: The Difference between Paradigms, Mental Models and Stereotypes
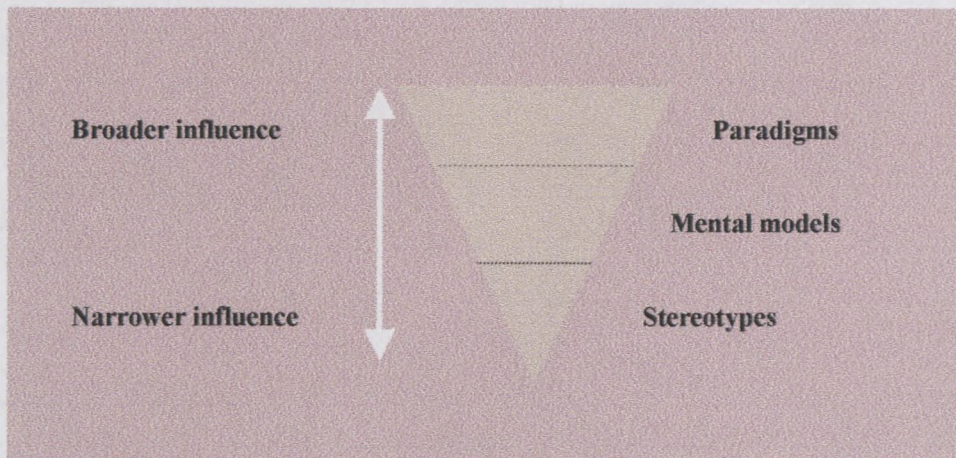
Source: Adapted from van Wyk (1998: 29)

Groups or teams will now shift the focus to collective disciplines, which must be practiced. The fourth discipline, which will be discussed in the next section, is team learning.

2.6.3.3   Team Learning

Team learning is the process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members truly desire (Senge 1990:236). Senge (1990:236) argues that team learning has the following three dimensions in organisations.

• The need to insightful about complex issues;

• The need for innovative, coordinated action;

• The role of team members on other team members.

2.6.3.3.1   What can be Expected from Team Learning?

The concept of *team building* or *spanbou* is often associated with the discipline of team learning. According to Senge (1994:355) this discipline goes well beyond conventional team-building skills, such as creating courteous behaviour, improving communication, becoming better able to perform everyday tasks together, or even building strong relationships. Senge (1994:355) argues that this discipline inspire more fundamental change with enduring application that will ripple out through the organisation.

Team learning requires serious thought and much practice (Van Wyk 1998:39). According to Van Wyk (1998:39), it firstly involves understanding a person's role in a

team or group and the effect of that person's behaviour on that group. Secondly, it also requires understanding of the processes of learning that can take place in a team. It, thirdly, also requires a person to learn the skills related to team learning so that learning teams can be created in organisation.

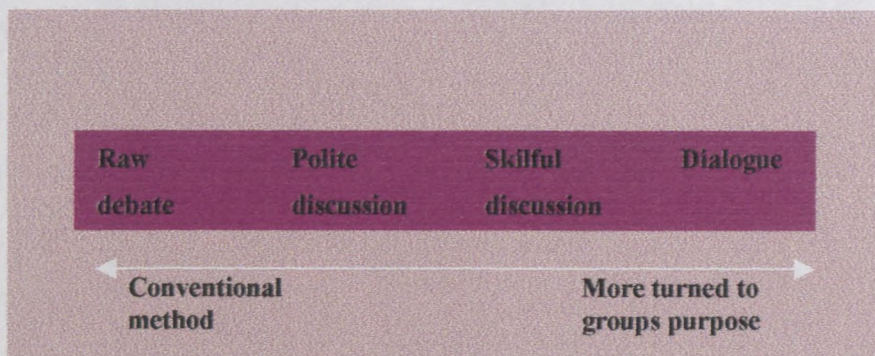### 2.6.3.3.2 Characteristics of a Learning Team

In order to practice team learning, a need must exist amongst a team or group of people to have reason to want to talk and learn (Senge 1994:356). If people therefore have no need to learn together or no challenging task to fulfil on their own, there will be no need for team learning.

According to Van Wyk (1998:39), people must have a collective desire to create something new or the drive to foster new relationships with other parts of the organisation. Senge (1994:356-357) and Van Wyk (1998:40) argue that the following two prerequisites must exist for team learning:

* a good facilitator;
* ground rules for learning.

Team learning takes place through dialogue (Van Wyk 1998:40). Dialogue is not merely a set of techniques for improving organisations, enhancing communications, building consensus, or solving problems (Senge 1994:358). Dialogue is the most advanced stage of discussion (Van Wyk 1998:40). The diagram in figure 2.6 can help to illustrate the above statements.

Figure 2.6: What is dialogue?

Raw debate	Polite discussion	Skilful discussion	Dialogue

Conventional method ←——————————————————→ More turned to groups purpose

Source: Adapted from Van Wyk (1998: 40)

In most organisations raw debate is the norm. Most managers have to use raw debate as a conventional method of discussion to share information and to make the necessary

decisions quickly (Van Wyk 1998:41). If managers can learn how to change this *raw discussion*, into *skilful discussion* and eventually into *dialogue*, communication will improve dramatically (Van Wyk 1998:41). According to Van Wyk (1998:40) the intention in dialogue is exploration, discovery and insight.

Team learning is absolutely indispensable for the formation of a learning environment in any organisation. Team learning implies change – change in the abilities of individuals and changes in the abilities of teams (Van Wyk 1998:47). To encourage the formation of learning teams is not easy. Not only does it require time and effort, but it also requires managers to allow teams the space to learn and adapt themselves as they learn to improve their own functioning in terms of service delivery (Van Wyk 1999:47). This is perhaps the greatest challenge facing managers.

The last discipline that is treated here is shared vision.

2.6.3.4 Shared Vision

A shared vision is not an idea. It is especially not an important idea, such as freedom. It is, rather a force in people's hearts, a force of impressive power (Senge 1990:206).
A shared vision is a vision that many people are truly committed to, because it reflects their own personal vision (Senge 1990:206). The discipline of shared vision is almost self-explanatory; it literally means *the vision of the organisation*.
According to Van Wyk (1998:48), shared vision may be inspired by an idea, but it goes further – it is powerful enough to require the support of more than one person, it is no longer an abstraction. Few forces are as powerful in human life as vision (Van Wyk 1998:48).

A shared vision is important to a learning environment, because it provides the focus and energy for the learning that is to take place. Van Wyk (1998:49) states that real learning only takes place when people are working towards something to which they are really committed. Commitment requires courage. Senge (1990:208) discusses the role of courage in creating shared visions. Courage gives us the strength to take risks. Courage, according to Senge, is simply doing whatever is necessary in pursuit of the vision.

2.6.3.4.1   Dealing with Different Reactions to the Vision.

Managers must be able to identify different attitudes in people. By being able to judge subordinates' attitudes, mangers will be in a better position to deal with them and their behaviour towards the managers' actions (van Wyk 1998:50). Visions spread because of a reinforcing process of increasing clarity, enthusiasm, communication and excitement (Senge 1990:227).

As people talk and share ideas, the vision grows clearer. As it gets clearer, enthusiasm for its benefits builds, according to Senge. The diagram in figure 2.7 illustrates how the vision starts to spread in a reinforcing spiral of communication and excitement.

Figure 2.7: The Vision as a Reinforcing Spiral
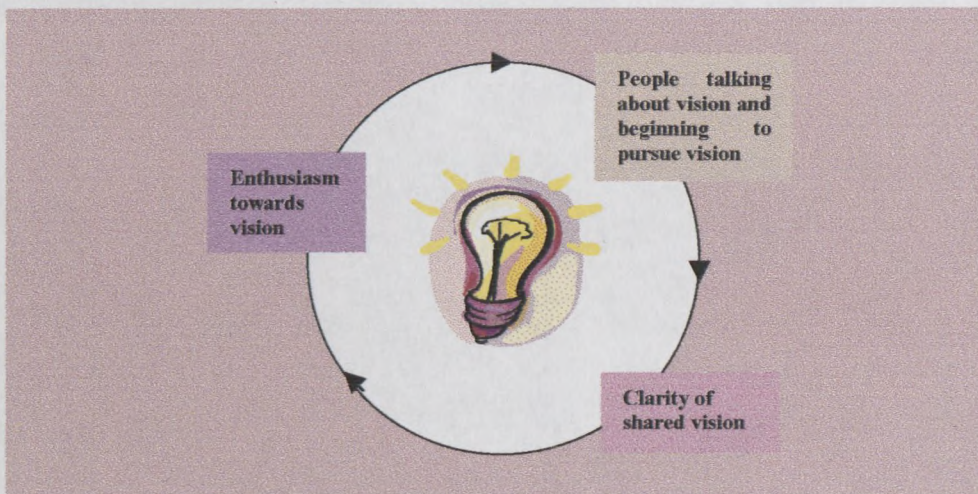
Source: Adapted from Senge (1990:227)

In an ideal situation, the cycle of events will reinforce itself. The vision will become stronger and more and more people will take part in spreading it. If, however, there are people who do not join in reinforcing the vision, it could die prematurely.

The diagram in figure 2.8 explains this process. By examining the diagram, one can see that a balancing circle needs to be included in the visioning process in order to avoid the situation of premature death (Van Wyk 1998:51). According to Van Wyk (1998:52) the vision runs the risk of dying if there is diversity of views on the vision or if there is a perceived gap between the vision and reality. Managers must therefore build a balancing loop into the process to prevent efforts of building a shared vision from failing.

Figure 2.8: An ideal vision
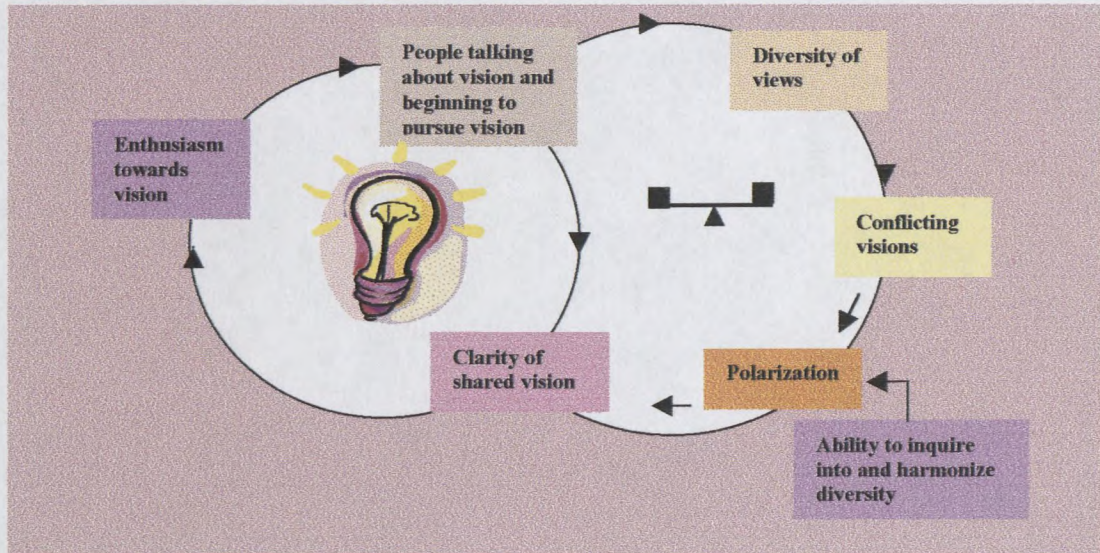
Source: Adapted from Senge (1990:228)

To build a shared vision and to create a sense of belonging to something important, people need to get in touch with their emotions and their souls (Van Wyk 1998:54). Van Wyk argues that this aspect of learning teams will form the basis of a learning organisation.

This concludes the discussion on the different disciplines of the learning organisations. In the next section a short overview of the impact of a learning organisation on productivity will be given.

2.7   Productivity and the Learning Organisation

According to Dean Carrel, the managing director of *Structured Towards A Right Tomorrow* (START), a leading corporate willingness programme, most companies suffer from increased absenteeism, poor productivity, higher staff turnover and general low morale. (The Star, 2000a: 11). The National Productivity Institute (NPI) is a non-profit organisation that strives to develop and enhance South Africa's productive capacity. It represents the interest of labour, business and the government.

Ketan Lakhani, NPI chairman, said the public and private sectors need to implement bold and innovative measures to improve productivity. (The Star, 9 2000b: 7). Productivity is promoted by a variety of factors, namely good leadership and management, training and development, remuneration packages and a working

environment. It is, according to Willie Esterhuyse, (2000: 2), interesting to note that in advanced countries, like the Netherlands, the idea of a pleasant working environment is the biggest consideration for productivity.

Research from the University of Manchester shows between a third a and half of all stress-related illnesses is directly attributable to bullying in the workplace (Sunday Times, 2000: 1). According to this article, apart from the untold damage it does to people and careers, bullying also drains organisations of productive, committed people. Most bullies, more than 75% according to some surveys, are higher up the hierarchy than their victims, who in turn are frequently more competent than their tormentors. The National Productivity Institute (NPI) found the following:

- If 1% of an organisation's employees are absent, productivity drops with 2,5%;
- When 10% of 100 employees are late for work every day and 2% are absent, 600 working days are lost per year;
- A small group of 5% – 20% of employees in any organisation are responsible for 80% of all absenteeism. (Finansies en Tegniek, 2000: 30).

As the five disciplines of a learning organisation can be used to promote a pleasant working environment, increase employee morale and decrease absenteeism, it will obviously lead to higher productivity in any organisation.

2.8   Conclusion

Organisations have been conceptualised in many ways. One way of analysing an organisation is to regard it as an open system with its various subsystems. An organisation's environment has two components, namely the general and specific components, each with its various elements. Managers are linked to the environment within which they are operating. Therefore it is necessary that knowledge, skills and functions must be used optimally.

Changing the organisational culture means that there has to be a comprehensive and co-ordinated strategy for managing change. Changing a culture involves the utilisation of various steps. Overcoming resistance to change is of the utmost

importance.

The five disciplines, as proposed by Peter Senge, namely mental models, team learning, personal mastery, systems thinking and building a shared vision can be used to build a learning organisation. A learning organisation can lastly be used to improve the productivity of organisations.

Like Joal Arther Barker said, "You can choose to make a difference. Always remember: a vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. But vision with action can take you to your ideal future."

There is a Chinese proverb that says, "Tell me and I'll forget, show me and I may remember, involve me and I'll understand." This is exactly what a learning organisation is about.

In the next chapter the implementation of a learning organisation in the South African Police Service, and more specific at the Athlone detective service, will be examined.

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CHAPTER 3

THE LEARNING ORGANISATION IN PRACTICE

3.1 Introduction

Over the past decade South Africa was characterised by a society that was dominated by a few elites. The people of South Africa went through the system of apartheid and are still trying to move towards a democracy. Throughout the world there are examples of countries that have suffered under the domination of a small body of political elites, like Bosnia, Burundi and Rwanda. In systems of domination like these, real learning cannot take place. According to Van Wyk (1998:67), such systems do not allow for skilful discussion or dialogue, there is no time for reflection and even less time for a learning experience.

In the previous chapter an explanation was given of the concepts *public management, public administration, organisational culture, resistance to change* and *a learning organisation.* In this chapter the focus will be on the South African Police Service (SAPS) as a public service organisation. With the transformation of South Africa into a fully democratic country, in 1994, many changes were experienced. One of the major changes was the transformation of the old South African Police Force into the South African Police Service. The SAPS was caught squarely in a paradigm shift of mammoth proportions, where everyone had to start from scratch.

With this in mind, this chapter will focus on the following:

- The historical perspective of the SAPS is firstly given. The history of the SAPS is divided into two sections, namely the period before 1994, and the period after 1994.
- The transformation of the SAPS led to the amalgamation of the eleven police agencies into one police service. An explanation of the current structure of the SAPS will therefore, secondly, be discussed.
- When converting a large organisation, such as the SAPS, into a continuously learning, community directed organisation, following a participatory management style, it called for training and retraining on a grand scale. The third section, therefore, that will be discussed, is the South African Police Service as a learning organisation.

- As the focus of this study is on the Athlone detective Service as a learning organisation, this will be the fourth section of discussion.

- Lastly a conclusion of the most important findings will be given.

3.2 Historical Perspective of the South African Police Service

The history of the SAPS can be divided into two main categories, namely the period before 1994 and the period after 1994. A perspective will first be given of the period before 1994.

3.2.1 The historical perspective before 1994

Although influenced by the British system, the South African Police Force has developed a distinctive character of its own over the years due to historical influences. Van Heerden (1994) briefly describes the history of the South African Police force in its early years in his well-known book Introduction to Police Science. According to Van Heerden (1994:28), the first police official (the "geweldige skout") was appointed in December 1652 to deal with the growing crime rate and to curb contraband trading with the Native population. The growth of the gold fields led to the establishment of the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek Politie (ZARP) during the 1880s, which attained legal status in 1895. The other provinces saw the rise of various police agencies, all organised along military lines (Van Heerden 1994: 31-32).

It was only after unification in 1910 that the idea to unite the differentiated provincial police service came into effect. The task was entrusted to Colonel JG Truter and the amalgamation was finalised on 1 April 1913 when the South African Police came into existence. The responsibilities with which this force was charged in terms of section 7 of the Police Act of the Republic of South Africa, 1958 (Act 6 of 1958) included the following:

- The prevention of crime;
- The preservation of internal security; and
- The maintenance of law and order.

Other police agencies in existence in the 1900s were the South African Railway Police, established in 1934 to keep order on the railways and harbours (they amalgamated with the SAP in the 1980s); traffic police under the control of local authorities; municipal police (for example Durban City Police, military police [1938/9] and the police agencies of the various homelands, for example the Transkei Police Force. This fragmentation eventually led to eleven police agencies inside the borders of South Africa.

For eighty years (from its formation in 1913 up to 1993/4) the SAP played a central role in the upholding of apartheid. The police became a symbol of oppression for the greater part of the community. Police strategy was characterised by a strong emphasis on a military style of policing. The main reason for this tendency is the fact that most of the forces that preceded the SAP were actual military units. The SAP also became highly politicised as the armed struggle, spearheaded by African nationalists, intensified during the apartheid years.

From its early days the SAP were political instruments in the hands of the different governments it had to serve. The police were repeatedly used to suppress rebellion and civil strife. In the 1920s and 1930s the police were hampered by organisational deficiencies that led to the appointment of the Lansdown Commissions of inquiry in 1936 (Cawthra 1994: 10-11). Cawthra (1994:11) quotes the Commission's views on the fundamental problem facing policing in South Africa:

> "We are of the opinion, after a careful survey of the evidence, that the relation between the natives and police are marked by a suppressed hostility which excludes wholehearted co-operation. This is due partly to the odium incurred by the police in enforcing unpopular legislation, but is contributed to the manner in which such enforcement is carried out and in the general attitude of some individual policemen to the native population."

Starting with the heading *Police Apartheid* Cawthra (1994: 12-41), gives a broad overview of policing during the heydays of the apartheid period (1948-1993). The defiance campaign in the 1950s and political activities in the 1960s – as illustrated by the Sharpeville incident on 21 March 1960 when sixty-nine people were killed – all

contributed to a situation where the police formed the vanguard against the fight for political freedom.

The 1970s saw the Soweto uprising in 1976; again police officials killed protesters. Mass arrests, detention and the banning of certain organisations backed this up. Many activists died in detention or "disappeared", while the torturing of suspects was a common occurrence.

The 1980s introduced a new wave of uprising by African nationalists, termed the *Total Onslaught* by the government. This led to a state of emergency from 1985 to 1991. During this state of emergency the police had almost unlimited powers regarding the detention and interrogating of suspects – mostly political opponents of the government. The 1980s can also be described as the era of the security branches. In this period the security branch of the South African Police, national intelligence and military intelligence played a major role in dictating the activities of other government organisations. To a certain degree one could concur with the following statement quoted by Fourie (1998:168): "It (the SAP) grew up with the mentality of state security policing. Officers saw their main role as fighting the Moscow-backed ANC. Policing by white Afrikaners, who composed nine tenths of the white half of the South African Police, has been a sacred mission to defend the nation against the forces of savagery."

Under State President De Klerk's leadership new reforms that had a big impact on the police were introduced in the early 1990s. Political organisations were unbanned and the influence of the securocrats waned systematically, which set the scene for a new dispensation. There was strong pressure (which was largely welcomed by the police) to withdraw from the political arena. Initiatives were launched to upgrade the police force and to improve professional standards. The reforms did not have the desired effects at grass-roots level. The traditionalists in the organisation were still very much in favour of a very tough law-and-order approach to policing, while unrest in townships supported their claims.

Policing experts like Cawthra (1994:41) recognise the fact that police reform will take a long time. In Cawthra's words:

"It would have been unrealistic to expect the SAP to break overnight with a political pattern that, since the early days, had three motifs, paramilitary action, political repression, which involved extensive intelligence work, and bureaucratic enforcement of discriminatory measures." (Cawthra 1994:41)

3.2.2 The second historical perspective of the SAPS after 1994.

The democratic elections of 27 April 1994 demanded a fundamental reassessment of the nature of policing in South Africa. The amalgamation of the eleven police agencies into one police service as opposed to a "force" was the first reform introduced by the new government. The new South African Police Act, 1995 (Act 68 of 1995) and the introduction of new rules and standards are all factors that have had a major effect on the transformation of the Police.

Fourie (1998:168) identifies the following obstacles at the initial stage of the transformation process:

- disparities that exist between the structures, procedures and resources of the eleven police agencies and efforts to address them;
- an authoritarian management style which tends to inhibit decision-making and causes distrust between top management and those at grass-roots level;
- a hierarchy which is too top-heavy;
- the "cop culture" which prevails and which isolates the police from the community;
- an organisation that is rule- and regulation-driven instead of value-driven;
- resistance to change factors; and
- fear of the rationalisation and amalgamation process.

A Change Management Team (CMT) was introduced at headquarters to monitor and evaluate the change process. A transformation document issued in February 1996 (SAPS 1996) sees community policing as central to the transformation process:

"There is a general consensus among most people, institutions, and organisations in South Africa that Community Policing should be adopted as the style of policing. True institutionalisation of community entails, in addition to community involvement

and participation, the total alignment of the police organisation to support the philosophy and principles of community policing."

The vision of the SAPS was formulated to create a safe and secure environment for all people in South Africa (SAPS 1998:6).

The mission of the SAPS is described as:

- preventing anything that may threaten the safety or security of any community;
- investigating any crimes that threaten the safety or security of any community;
- ensuring criminals are brought to justice; and
- participating in efforts to address the root causes of crime.

(SAPS 1998:6)

The responsibilities of the SAPS are laid down by section 205(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996). Subsection 3 of Section 205 states that the South African Police Service has a responsibility to:

- *prevent, combat and investigate crime;*
- *maintain public order;*
- *protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic and their property; and*
- *uphold and enforce the law.*

The transformation of the SAPS called for bold and innovative measures to comply with the requirements of the inhabitants of South Africa. One measure was to change the structure of the South African Police Force. The current structure of the SAPS will be discussed in the next section.

3.3   The Structure of the South African Police Service

The transformation of the old South African Police Force into the new South African Police Service did not simply mean a change in name. It meant a whole new style of policing. It also meant that a whole new concept of how a police service should function within a democratic society, had to be developed and learnt.

After the amalgamation of the eleven police agencies the SAPS were structured as

illustrated in figure 3.1. As indicated, the SAPS consist of National, Provincial, and Area and Station levels. A Provincial Commissioner is appointed for each of the nine provinces in South Africa, namely Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape, Northern Province, Northern Cape, Free State, Mpumalanga and North West. The provinces are further divided into 43 areas, with an Area Commissioner appointed for each area (Bellingham, 2001).

Figure 3.1: The current structure of the South African Police Service
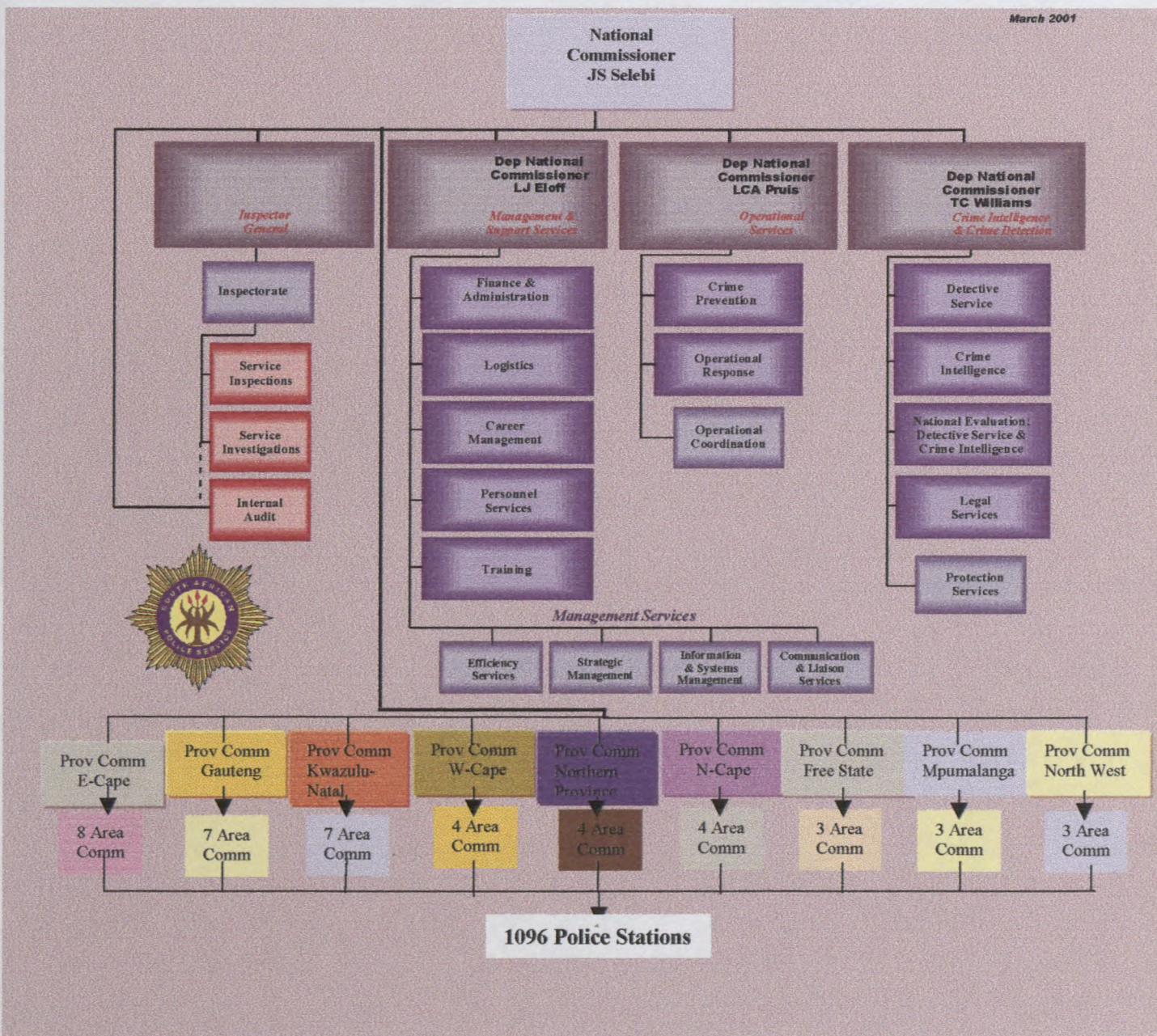
Source: Bellingham, R: 2001

The structure of the different provinces is as follows:

- Eastern Cape – 8 areas, namely Port Elizabeth, East London, Drakensberg, Grahamstown, Karoo, Queenstown, Umtata and Uitenhage;
- Gauteng – 7 areas, namely Johannesburg Central, West Rand, East Rand, Pretoria, Soweto, North Rand and Vaalrand;
- KwaZulu-Natal – 7 areas, namely Durban, Midlands, Umzimkulu, Tugela, Umfolozi, Ulundi and Durban South;
- Western Cape – 4 areas, namely Western Metropole, Eastern Metropole, Boland and Southern Cape;
- Northern Province – 4 areas, namely Central, far North Lowveld and Bushveld;
- Northern Cape – 4 areas, namely Diamond Field (Kimberley), Gordonia (Upington), Upper Karoo (De Aar) and Namakwaland (Springbok);
- Free State – 3 areas, namely Southern Free State, Northern Free State and Eastern Free State;
- Mpumalanga – 3 areas, namely Lowveld, Highveld and Eastern Highveld; and
- North West - 3 Areas, namely: Marico, Molopo and Mooirivier.

(Bellingham, 2001).

The focus of this study will be on the Western Cape province, and more specifically on the area Western Metropole. The area Western Metropole consists of 32 police stations, out of a total of 1096 police stations in South Africa (Louw, 2001).

Athlone police station is one of the stations in the Western Metropole and the structure of this police station will be discussed in the following section.

3.3.1   The Structure at Athlone Police Station.

Athlone policing area consists of a combination of various sub-cultures that can mainly be divided into two main sub-categories, namely gang cultures and religious cultures. (SAPS: 2001). The allocation of personnel at Athlone police station is illustrated in figure 3.2.

The management and personnel of Athlone police station are dedicated to delivering an impeccable service to those who visit, work and reside in this precinct.

One of the components at Athlone police station is the detective service. As illustrated in figure 3.2, the detective service consists of 17% of the total available human resources at Athlone police station. (SAPS: 2001). In the beginning of 1999 the detective service at Athlone operated against a backdrop of 51% shortage in personnel; at the end of June 2001 it was 60% (Botha, 2001).

Figure 3.2: The Allocation of Personnel at Athlone Police Station

LEGEND

SC - STATION COMMISSIONER
CSC - COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTRE
CP - CRIME PREVENTION
DS - DETECTIVE SERVICE
CI - CRIME INTELLIGENCE
CD - COURT DUTIES
SF - SUPPORT FUNCTIONS
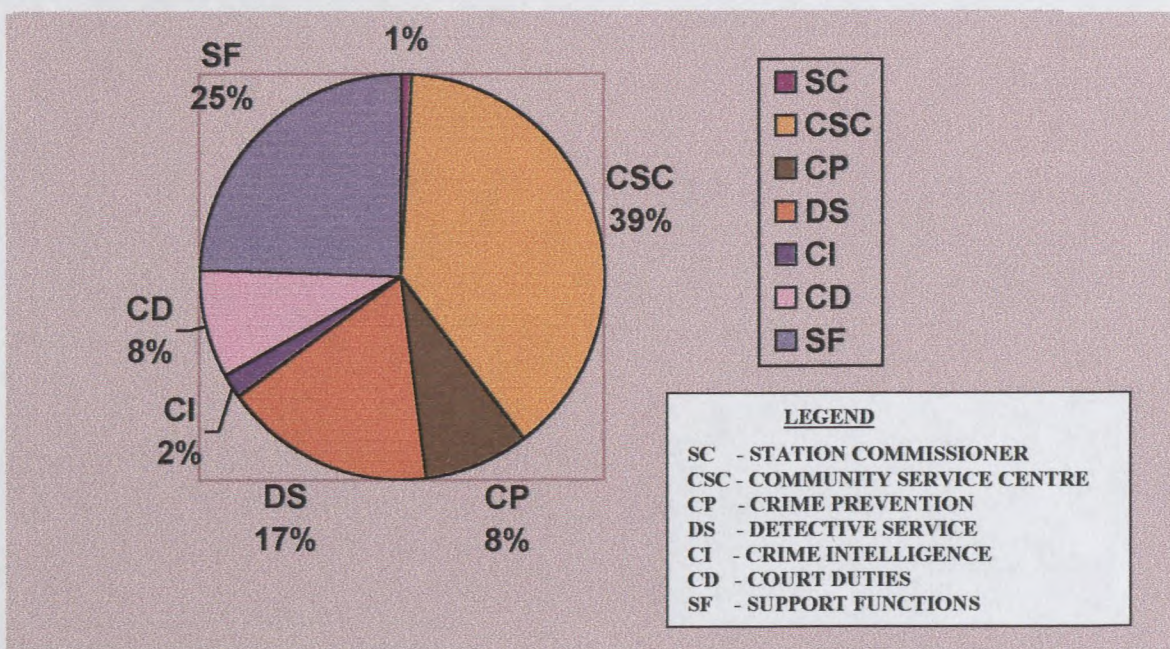
Source: SAPS: 2001

The structure at Athlone detective service is illustrated in figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: An Organisational Chart for Athlone Detective Service
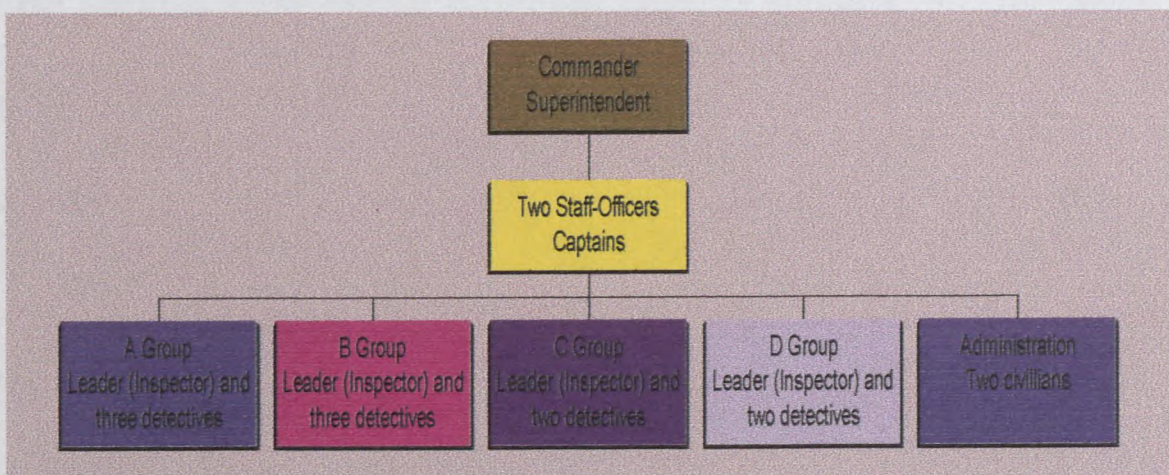
Source: SAPS: 2001

The personnel shortage at Athlone detective service called for new initiatives and strategies in an attempt to improve the levels of service delivery to the community of Athlone. The approach that is followed is the situational approach to leadership, and more specific the concept of a learning organisation as proposed by Peter Senge. The implementation of this concept in the SAPS, and eventually at Athlone detective service, will be discussed in the following section.

3.4   The South African Police Service as a Learning Organisation

Any learning organisation must rely on the individual's willingness to take charge of the process of learning. Van Wyk (1998:14-15) states that to be an effective, self-managed learner one should possess the following:

- *aspirations and goals:* You must be self-motivated;
- *self-awareness:* You must know yourself well enough to manage and improve your personal learning process;
- *reflection:* You must examine and question your abilities and competencies, even your beliefs and values;
- *trust:* You must be able to accept feedback and build on it, which demands openness to criticism

One can make oneself a lifelong learner by mastering the above. According to Van Wyk (1998:15), this is the greatest challenge for any learning organisation. The ultimate aim of creating an organisation of lifelong learners is the key to the competitive advantage of that organisation (van Wyk 1998:15).

Aubrey and Cohen use the diagram, illustrated in figure 3.4, to show the process of creating lifelong learners as the challenge facing any learning organisation. In this diagram, the process moving from information (present) to acquiring real wisdom (ideal) is shown.

The SAPS has followed the idea of the learning organisation in a superficial way for the past six years. Since the inception of the Leadership Development Programme (LDP) (the first full management training programme for the SAPS related to the learning organisation) at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1996, an

understanding of and familiarity with the notion of creating a learning organisation within the SAPS has slowly developed among the top ranks (Van Wyk 1998:6). According to Van Wyk (1998:6), the ideas surrounding a learning organisation and its culture have been further squandered, through the second round of the LDP at the University of Stellenbosch in 1996 and 1997.

Figure 3.4: The Process of Creating Lifelong Learners
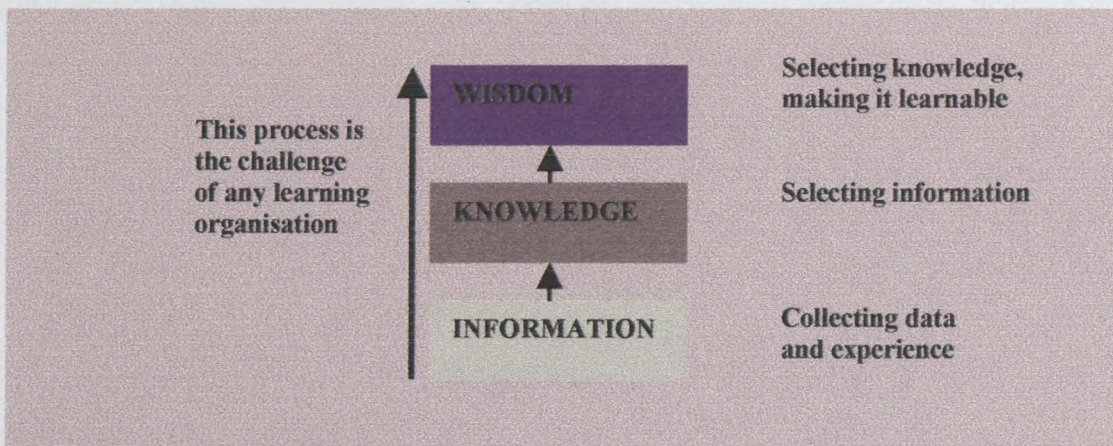
Source: Adapted from Aubrey and Cohen (1995:14)

The Station Management Programme (SMP), a joint venture involving six universities in South Africa – the University of Durban Westville, Fort Hare University, Pretoria University, Stellenbosch University, University of the Western Cape and the University of the Witwatersrand – and the SAPS itself, was started in 1996. This middle management training programme targeted station commissioners and managers as pivotal learning points within the SAPS (Van Wyk 1998:6).

At the time of the present research, 5 groups, consisting of 775 managers, have successfully completed this training programme (De Andrade, 2001). The first module presented at the SMP, and therefore the point of departure, is the concept of the learning organisation. Van Wyk (1998:6) sees the concept of a learning organisation as the foundation of the SMP.

The researcher attended the SMP at Stellenbosch University in 1999. One of the modules that were presented at this course was the learning organisation. After successfully completing the SMP this management tool was implemented, which led to a vast improvement in productivity of investigators at Athlone Detective Service.

As the five disciplines of a learning organisation can be used to promote a pleasant working environment, increase employee morale, and decrease absenteeism, it will obviously lead to higher productivity in any organisation. Senge (1994: 512-517) provides us with six C words that can help to guide our attempts to create a learning environment. According to him they should form the core of any process that is implemented.

Step 1: Capability:	Use the skills and knowledge that already exist to begin the learning process.
Step 2: Commitment:	If people can become active participants in the learning experience, they will be committed to the process.
Step 3: Contribution:	Utilise the contributions of each member. By involving them they will begin to contribute all that they have to the process.
Step 4: Continuity:	Efforts in creating a learning environment should be sustainable over the long term. A degree of continuity is needed if anyone is to be committed and involved in the process.
Step 5: Collaboration:	Developing reliable interdependencies is the essence of effective collaboration in a group. By creating a web of linkages and workable relationships, the learning process can be continuous.
Step 6: Conscience:	Any group of people committed to an ongoing process, needs to have a sense of direction that guides them in terms of principles, ethics and values. These will help them to translate their daily actions in terms of their conscience.

These six steps form the basis on which a learning environment was created at Athlone detective service. With the creation of this learning environment Athlone detective service is firstly able to share the vision of the SAPS. Secondly, Athlone detective service is also able to meet the requirements of the mission of the SAPS, particularly the second and third part of the mission, as everyday learning occurs and detectives are committed to the successful investigation of crime in the Athlone station area.

While Athlone detective service is delivering a proper service to the community of Athlone, their behaviour is also in line with section 205(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996).

3.5 Conclusion

The transformation of South Africa into a fully democratic country in 1994 called for major changes. One change was the transformation of the old South African Police Force into the SAPS. This was made difficult by the history of the South African Police Force, before 1994, when the police became a symbol of oppression for the greater part of South Africa.

The democratic elections of 24 April 1994 demanded a fundamental reassessment of the nature of policing in South Africa. After the amalgamation of the eleven police agencies, the SAPS was structured in such a manner that a Provincial Commissioner was appointed for each of the nine Provinces in South Africa. An Area Commissioner was also appointed for each one of the 43 Areas, while a Station Commissioner was appointed for the 1096 different police stations in South Africa.

One of the areas functioning in South Africa is the Area Western Metropole. This area consists of 32 police stations, one of which is Athlone police station. One of the components at this police station is the detective service, which consists of 17 members out of a total personnel structure of 100 members.

The implementation of the principles of a learning organisation at Athlone detective service led firstly to the creation of a learning environment, and secondly to a productive workplace.

In the following chapter data will firstly be gathered regarding the productivity at Athlone detective service since 1999. Secondly the data will be analysed to establish whether productivity has indeed increased/decreased.

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CHAPTER 4

DATA GATHERING AND FINDINGS

4.1   Introduction

This chapter focuses firstly on the gathering of data in an attempt to establish whether productivity has increased or decreased at Athlone detective service, since July 1999. The data gathering method is discussed, together with computerised data (which reflects the productivity of Athlone detective service since July 1999) which is the main method for gathering data. This data will be collected from the Criminal Administration System (CAS) of the South African Police Service (SAPS).   The computerised data is complemented by questionnaires, which reflect the impact of the disciplines of a learning organisation on the respondent's productivity.

The second focus of this chapter will be a reflection on the results of the data that were gathered.   These results will focus on percentages and facts.   The problem statement given in Chapter 1 is whether or not the five disciplines of the learning organisation can be used to improve productivity in detective services.   This chapter will therefore focus further on the way the disciplines were implemented at the Athlone detective service, and whether or not it resulted in an increase in productivity.

An analysis will thirdly be done by comparing the five disciplines of a learning organisation with the questions applicable to these disciplines.   This will be done to establish whether these disciplines had an impact on productivity.   The responses that were received on the questionnaire will be used to confirm the information that was gathered from the CAS.

The chapter concludes with a summary of the most important findings.

4.2   The Method of Data Gathering

The data for this research has been gathered by means of computerized data, that had been collected from the CAS of the SAPS, and by means of a questionnaire.   This

section will start with the computerised data, as this is the primary data-gathering method.

4.2.1 Computerised Data

In September 1992 the manner in which the SAPS measures crime became far more advanced and easier with the implementation of the CAS.

As soon as a crime is reported, a case docket is registered on the CAS. The case docket is then transferred to an investigation unit and eventually to an investigator, who acknowledges receipt for this particular case docket, on the CAS. As soon as the investigation is finalised, the case docket is either sent to court (when a suspect is arrested), closed as undetected (when no suspects can be connected to the said crime), or closed as false (when no evidence of a crime being committed can be found).

In all cases where suspects are arrested, the different suspects are charged on the CAS. As soon as the case docket is finalised in court, the result of the suspect's trial and sentence are also entered on the CAS.

At the end of each month crime statistics – in the SAPS known as the SAP 6 – are available to measure performance of a detective service. These statistics can therefore be compared to and measured against the same periods in previous years or months. The data that will be gathered, for the purpose of this study, will be comparison data for each month between January 1999 and June 2001.

As was mentioned in Chapter 1, the productivity at Athlone detective service will be measured according to the number of cases on hand versus cases reported. The method of data gathering regarding this concept will now be discussed.

4.2.1.1 Cases on hand versus reported

According to Smuts (2001) the national formula for establishing the percentage of cases on hand versus reported is as follows:

$$\frac{Not\ completed\ (column\ C)}{Reported\ (column\ A)} \quad \times \quad \frac{100}{1}$$

This is the same formula that is used throughout detective services in South Africa. For the purpose of this study the same formula will be used to establish the percentages of cases on hand versus cases reported.

The focus will now be on the questionnaire as a data gathering method.

4.2.2   Questionnaire

The questionnaire is attached as Appendix A. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that the impact of the five disciplines, as suggested by Peter Senge, on the respondent's productivity is tested. The questions were designed to give the respondent the opportunity to respond by indicating the degree of a agreement with a statement related to a relevant matter, where the outer extremes are defined and the response falls either at one of the limits or at some point in between.

The questions in this particular study were designed in such a way that the value and points allocated for each question are as follows:

- Not at all   -   0
- Once in a while   -   1
- Sometimes   -   2
- Fairly often   -   3
- Frequently, if not always-   4

The questions have been focussed on the intended audience who are all employees at Athlone detective service. The two captains were excluded from completing the questionnaire because both of them have only been stationed at Athlone detective service since the first of May 2001. This may result in responses that do not reflect the correct information. The questionnaire was compiled in English and was intended to be understandable to all respondents to the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of twelve questions, which are all based on the five disciplines of the learning organisations as proposed by Peter Senge. The outline of the questions is as follows:

- Questions one and two measure the impact of aspects of mental models on productivity;
- Questions three and four focus on the impact of personal mastery on productivity;
- Questions five, six and seven measure the impact of team learning on productivity;
- Questions eight, eleven and twelve focus on the impact of systems thinking on productivity; and
- Questions nine and ten focus on the impact of shared vision on productivity.

In the following section the information that were obtained from the CAS, will be reflected.

4.3   Information from the CAS

The more cases detectives have on hand, the less time they have to spend on the investigation of serious cases, resulting in an unsatisfied community, a negative and demoralised employee and the escalation of crime. In other words, the number of cases on hand can have an influence on the productivity of the detectives at a unit.

Table 4.1 reflects the percentages of cases on hand versus cases reported for each month since January 1999. The high volume of cases on hand was one of the biggest reasons why it was decided to experiment with the five disciplines of a learning organisation in the beginning of July 1999. A very significant decrease in the cases on hand versus cases reported is visible in table 4.1. In January 1999, 346% cases were on hand, compared to cases reported. In June 2001 this percentage has dropped to 133% – a decrease of 213%, more than half of the total case loads on hand at the Athlone detective service. An average of 323 cases were on hand versus cases reported during the period January to March 1999, compared to 275 cases during 2000, and 155 cases in 2001 respectively. These figures are illustrated in graph 4.1.
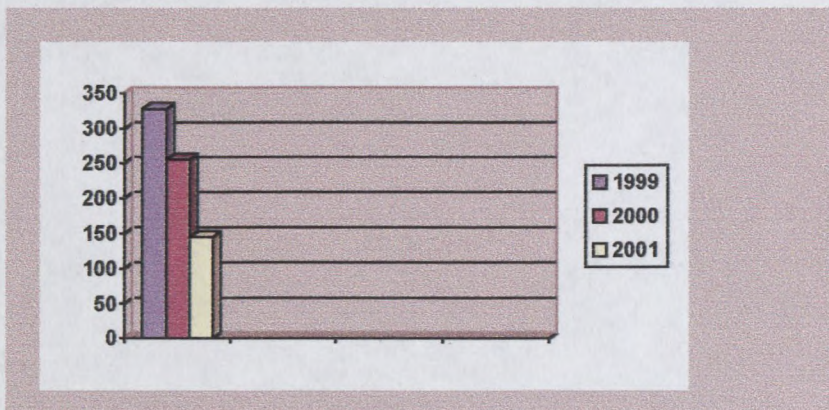
Table 4.1: Cases on Hand vs. Cases Reported

Month	Year		
	1999	2000	2001
JANUARY	346%	294%	166%
FEBRUARY	297%	282%	157%
MARCH	318%	248%	142%
APRIL	360%	269%	162%
MAY	304%	238%	141%
JUNE	321%	259%	133%
JULY	300%	254%	
AUGUST	274%	218%	
SEPTEMBER	304%	233%	
OCTOBER	311%	214%	
NOVEMBER	326%	179%	
DECEMBER	300%	211%	

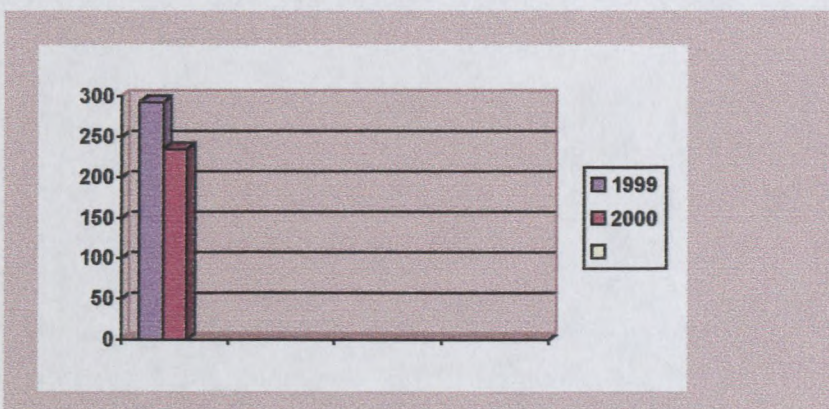**Graph 4.1: Average Percentage of Cases on Hand January to March**

During the period April to June, an average of 328% cases were on hand versus cases reported in 1999, 255% cases in 2000, and 145% cases in 2001. These figures are illustrated more clearly in graph 4.2.

**Graph 4.2: Average Percentage of Cases on Hand April to June**

For the period July to September 1999, an average of 293% cases were on hand versus cases reported, compared to 235% cases during the same period in 2000. Graph 4.3 illustrates these figures.

Graph 4.3: Average Percentage of Cases on Hand July to September

An average of 312% cases were on hand versus cases reported during the period October 1999 to December 1999, and 201% cases in 2000. These percentages are illustrated in graph 4.4.

Graph 4.4: Average Percentage of Cases on Hand October to December
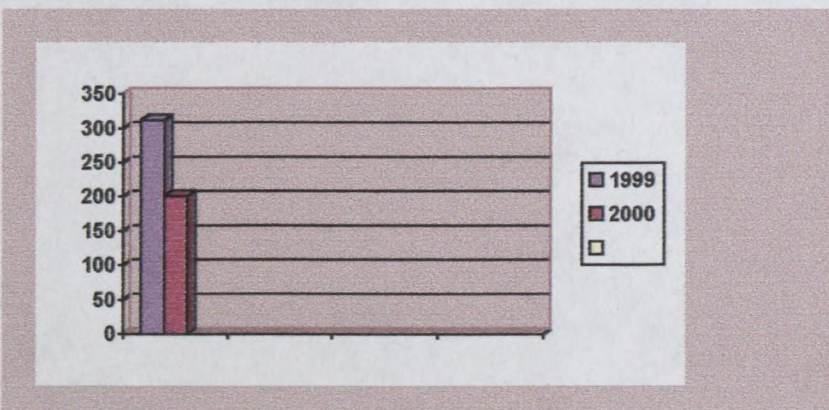
Unfortunately, the statistics for July to December 2001 were not available at the time of writing.

It is therefore clear that the number of cases on hand versus cases reported, decreased significantly when a comparison is made between 1999, 2000 and 2001. This comparison is illustrated in graph 4.5.

Graph 4.5: A Comparison between Cases on Hand versus Cases Reported for 1999, 2000 and 2001
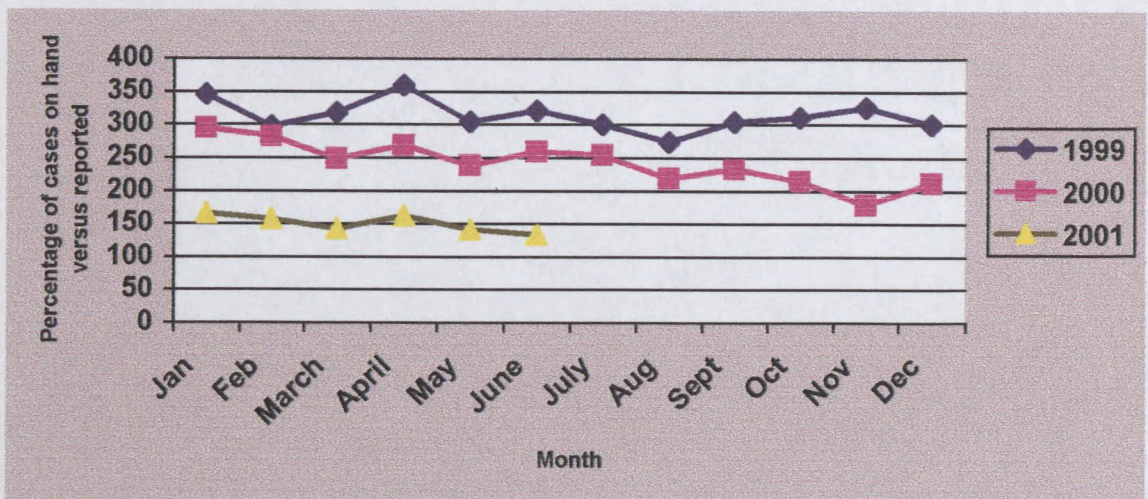
By reducing the number of cases on hand versus cases reported, the personnel at the Athlone detective service were better able to handle the total number of cases on hand versus cases reported, even if the decrease in the establishment is considered. In the beginning of January 1999 Athlone detective service had 22 detectives who were investigating cases. At the end of June 2001 this figure had dropped to 14. In other words 22 detectives had to investigate 346% of the cases on hand versus cases reported in the beginning of January 1999, or 15,7% per detective. At the end of June 2001, 14 detectives had to investigate 133% of cases on hand versus cases reported, or 9,5% per detective. Detectives are therefore each handling 6,2% cases less than in 1999, in spite of the 8 detectives who were lost due to various reasons. This is very significant, as it resulted in detectives who could spend more time on the investigation of serious cases, resulting in an improvement in the quality of investigations, and eventually in community that is more satisfied.

It can therefore be assumed that productivity had indeed increased at Athlone detective service, according to the information that was collected from the CAS.

In the following section the interventions that could have contributed to this achievement will be discussed.

4.4   Interventions that were used at the Athlone Detective Service

In this section the interventions that were used will be discussed. This can also possibly explain the decrease in the number of cases on hand versus cases reported, according to the information that was obtained from the CAS. The different interventions were all implemented in July 1999, and were the following:

4.4.1   Competition for the Best Detective of the Month

A competition was introduced for the detective of the month. The winner is awarded a certificate, which can be submitted with an application for promotion or for another position. The detective who wins this award the most throughout the year, is awarded a certificate as detective of the year. Apart from the certificate the detective of the year also gets a midweek holiday (4 days) at Goudini holiday resort for them and their family. One of the rules of this competition is that one point is awarded for every two dockets that are less on hand than at the beginning of the month. It therefore motivates detectives to decrease the cases on hand versus cases reported, as performance is rewarded. This intervention proves that the discipline of systems thinking is practiced.

4.4.2   Expert Detectives are assigned to the Investigation of Serious Crimes

With the heavy caseload on hand, it was decided to assign experienced detectives to more serious crimes. Less serious crimes are allocated to detectives with less experience. Motor vehicles theft is assigned to two detectives who are trained in the circulation system and who are computer literate, in an attempt to finalise these cases quicker. This resulted in detectives that were utilised according to their expertise, which also could have contributed to the decrease in cases on hand versus cases reported. The other detectives then receive in-service training while they accompany

these expert detectives in the investigation of serious crimes. The discipline of team learning is therefore practised through this intervention.

4.4.3   Detectives have to set targets for themselves

In Chapter 3 the vision of the SAPS was described as *to create a safe and secure environment for all people in South Africa.* In the past, the Nationalist structures decided on the vision, mission and national objectives and then it was always communicated to subordinates. At the Athlone detective service it was decided to involve detectives to a large extent by allowing them to set their own targets or visions, but which are still in line with the national vision. Detectives will therefore decide for themselves how many cases they want to finalise within a particular month. This created a sense of belonging to the national vision, and not to something that is once again enforced on them. It is also an indication that the discipline of shared vision is applied at the Athlone detective service.

4.4.4   Daily, Weekly and Monthly Monitoring of CAS

Worksheets are compiled and completed daily as soon as a case docket is allocated to a detective. At the end of a week the worksheets are compared to establish whether a fair distribution of case dockets took place, and to make the necessary adjustments for the following week. The performance of each detective and of the unit is then evaluated, and feedback is given to each individual on a weekly basis. At the end of a month the process is repeated and the members who performed above average, are complimented, while problems are identified and addressed. This could have contributed to the decrease in cases on hand versus cases reported, and again shows that team learning is practised.

4.4.5   Weekly Participatory Meetings

Participatory meetings for the four group leaders who were involved in the management of Athlone detective service were arranged for every Friday. During these meetings the overall performance of the unit is evaluated, and decisions are made to address shortcomings. With the implementation of these weekly participatory meetings, the responsibility was shifted fully to the group leader to manage their own

group, and to address the under-performance of members in their group. Again this could have played a role in the decrease of cases on hand versus cases reported. This intervention again proves that team learning is applied as feedback is given to members.

4.4.6 Working Agreement with Other Units within the SAPS, the Community and the Department of Justice

An agreement was established with other units within the SAPS, like the Local Fingerprint Office (LFPO) in Mitchells Plain, the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) in Faure and the Government Mortuary in Salt River, to finalise the investigation of fingerprint investigation, the analysis of exhibits, and post mortem reports quicker. The community was requested to improve their own crime prevention and to be alert of criminal activities in their neighbourhoods. This assisted detectives in apprehending suspects easier. An agreement was entered with the Department of Justice to try and finalise court cases quicker, especially cases of a less serious nature. Once again this could have contributed to the decrease in cases on hand versus cases reported, and results in systems thinking being applied.

These interventions all possibly show why a vast increase in the productivity of detectives at the Athlone detective service is visible according to the CAS. In the following section the responses that were received on the questionnaire that was distributed among the personnel at Athlone detective service, will be evaluated to confirm this possibility.

4.5 Response to the Questionnaire

In the previous section the assumption was made that all the interventions that were used contributed to the decrease in cases on hand versus cases reported. In this section the different responses to the questionnaire will be analysed to establish if this assumption can be confirmed.

16 Questionnaires were distributed among the personnel at the Athlone detective service, of which 15 were returned. This represents a return of 93,8%, which is considered more than adequate for the purposes of this research.

Except for one questionnaire, which was received back with the answer left open at question number nine, the respondents answered all questions.

Each of the five disciplines of a learning organisation is tested separately and conclusions are drawn from the findings. The answers to the different questions are indicated under each discussion and analysis of the five disciplines. The first discipline that will be analysed, is Mental Models.

4.5.1 Mental Models

Questions one and two in the questionnaire were formulated in such a way that the impact of mental models are tested on productivity at the Athlone detective service. The responses to these questions are reflected in graphs 4.6 and 4.7.

Graph 4.6: Assumptions/stereotypes of the Community, Superiors and Colleagues
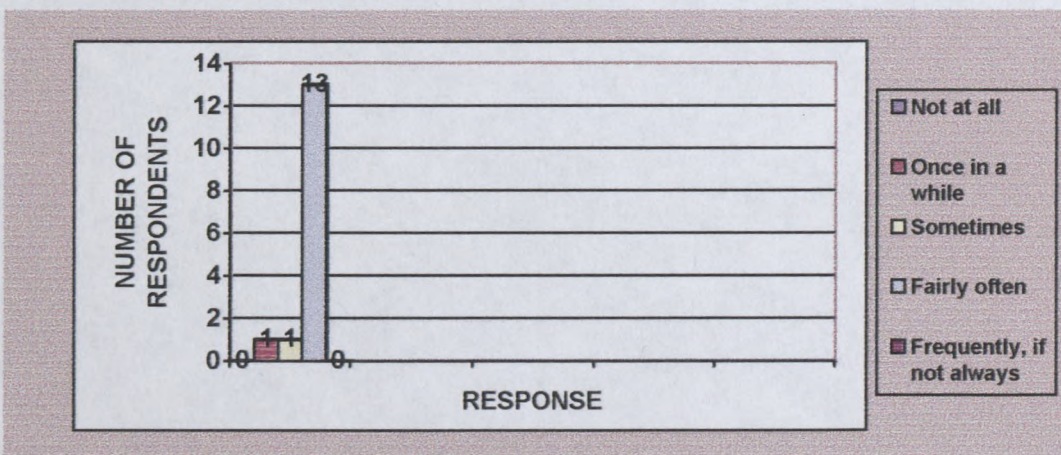

Graph 4.6 shows a significant indication that the mental models of personnel at Athlone detective service have changed since the implementation of the learning organisation two years back. Thirteen (13) respondents indicated that their mental models changed fairly often, 1 sometimes, and 1 once in a while. The

assumption/stereotypes could have changed because of better and improved interactions between the community, superiors and colleagues.

Graph 4.7 shows that mental models influence most of the respondents to be productive to a great extent. Three (3) respondents indicated that it influences them frequently, if not always, 7 fairly often and 5 sometimes.

Graph 4.7: These Assumptions/stereotypes and Productivity
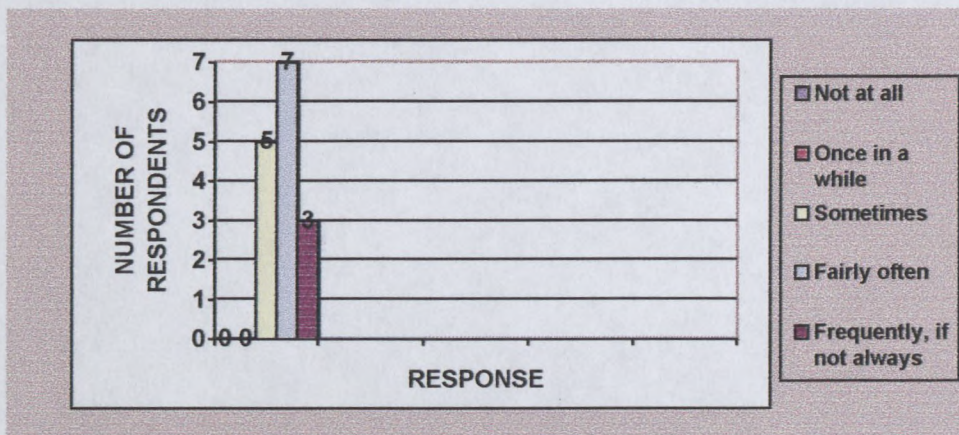
From the above findings it can be concluded that mental models influenced the detectives at Athlone detective service to be productive.

One can also agree with the following reasons provided by Van Wyk (1998:29) as to why mental models are so powerful.

- These models shape what you choose to observe. They help you to filter incoming information to suit your views on the world.

- They also shape your perceptions. By selecting the information that suits your views, you allow that information to influence your ideas and assumptions about the person or situation. These ideas form your perceptions.

- Mental models influence your actions. By basing your assumptions on selective information, you act according to your perceptions about the situation or person.

4.5.2   Personal Mastery

Questions three and four were formulated in such a way that the impact of personal mastery on productivity at the Athlone detective service is tested. The responses to these two questions are reflected in graphs 4.8 and 4.9.

Graph 4.8: The influence of Space on the Current Situation and Desired Achievements
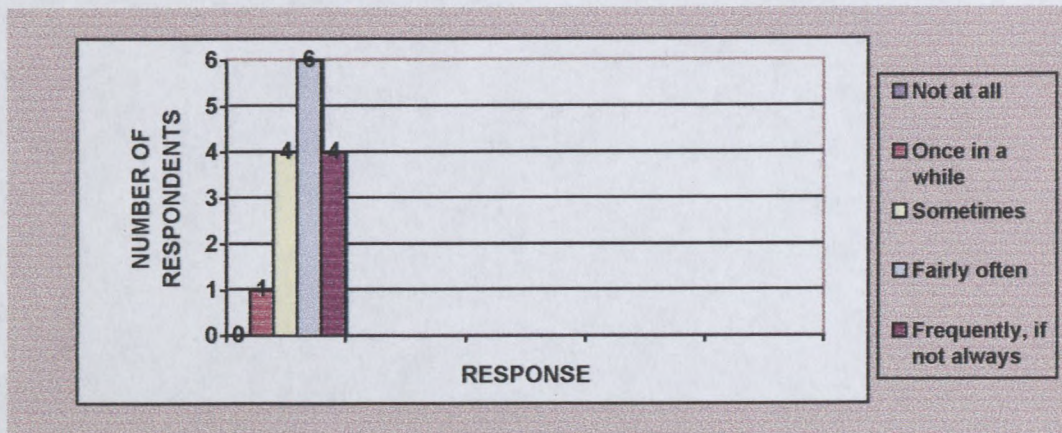
Graph 4.8 shows that enough space is made available, at the Athlone detective service, for personnel to reflect on this discipline as part of personal mastery. Four (4) respondents indicated that space is made available frequently, if not always; 6 indicated fairly often; 4 sometimes, and 1 once in a while.

Graph 4.9: The Influence of Personal Vision and Values on Productivity.
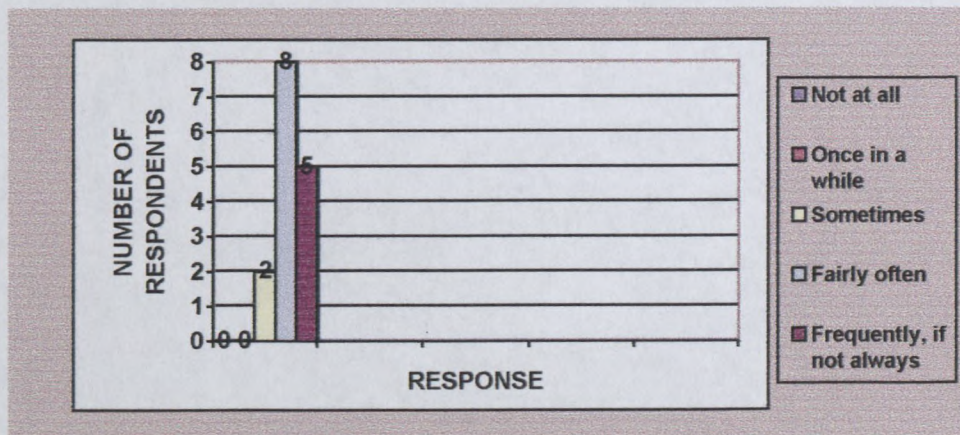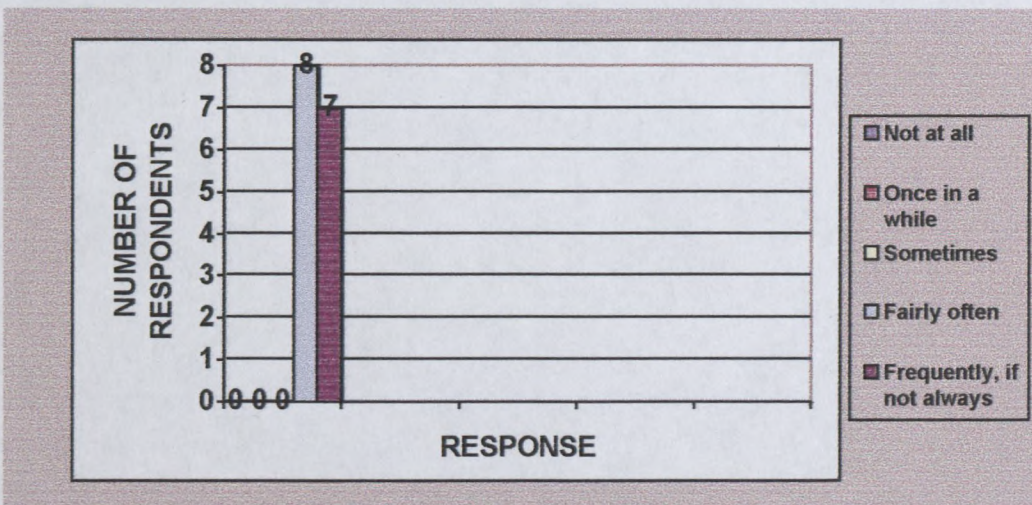
Graph 4.9 shows significantly that the fact that the personal vision and values of the personnel at the Athlone detective service were considered, increased their own productivity. Five (5) respondents indicated that it contributed frequently, if not always; 8 respondents indicated fairly often; and 2 indicated sometimes.

Van Wyk (1998:18) argues that, by enabling ourselves to keep a clear picture of where we are and where we would like to be, we create a tension between the two. This tension is neither negative nor positive – it is creative. Depending on the force of the creative tension between the two (how far they are apart), the magnitude of the decisions will differ. These statements are therefore confirmed by the responses to the two questions concerning personal mastery.

4.5.3   Team Learning

Questions five and six were formulated in such a way that the impact of team learning is tested on productivity at the Athlone detective service. The responses on these two questions are reflected in graphs 4.10 and 4.11.

Graph 4.10: The Opportunity to Learn from Mistakes

Graph 4.10 shows very significantly that the personnel at the Athlone detective service had the opportunity to learn from their mistakes by sharing ideas and experiences with colleagues. Seven (7) respondents indicated that they learned frequently, if not always; while 8 indicated fairly often.

Graph 4.11 shows a very significant indication that regular feedback regarding the behaviour and performance of personnel at the Athlone detective service to a great extent influences them to be productive. Five (5) respondents indicated that it influences them frequently, if not always; 5 fairly often; and 5 sometimes. The feedback from graph 11 therefore confirms that dialogue exists at the Athlone detective service. According to Van Wyk (1998:41), the intentions in dialogue are exploration, discovery and insight.

Graph 4.11: The Influence of Feedback on Productivity
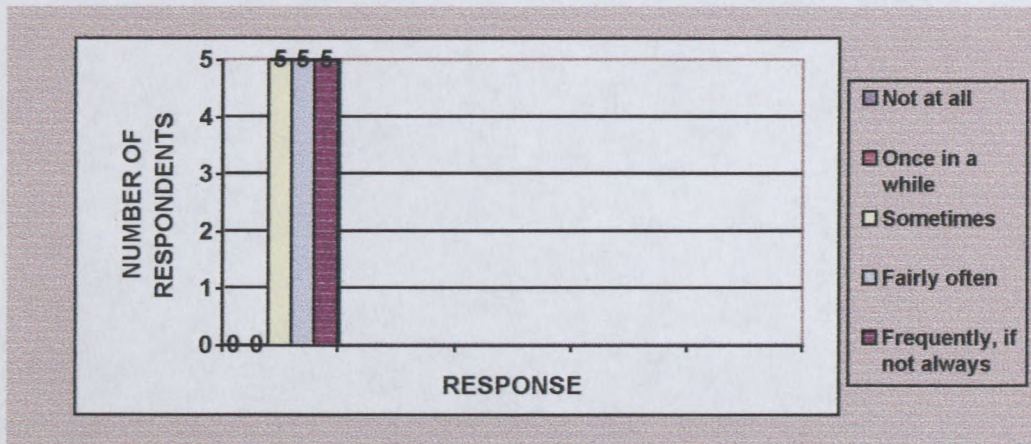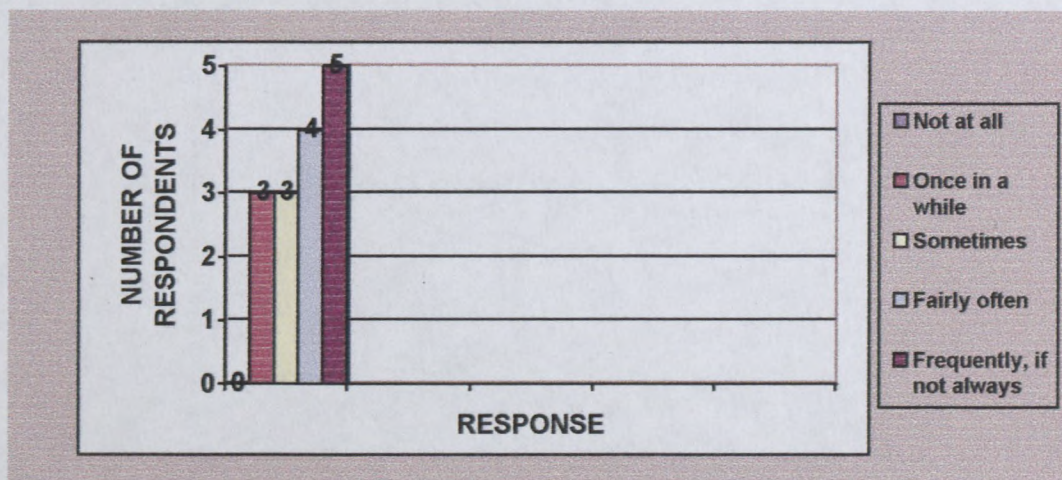

4.5.4 Systems Thinking

Questions seven, eight, eleven and twelve were formulated in such a way that the impact of systems thinking was tested on productivity at Athlone detective service. The responses to these questions are reflected in graphs 4.12, 4.13, 4.14 and 4.15.

Graph 4.12: The Influence of Measurement, Compensation, and Reward Systems on Change

Graph 4.12 significantly shows that the measurement, compensation, and reward systems (at the Athlone detective service) encourage members to deal positively with change efforts. Five (5) respondents indicated that it frequently, if not always encourages them, 4 indicated it fairly often encourages them, 3 indicated it sometimes encourages them, and 3 indicated it encourages them once in a while.

Graph 4.13: Resistance to Change and Change Initiatives.
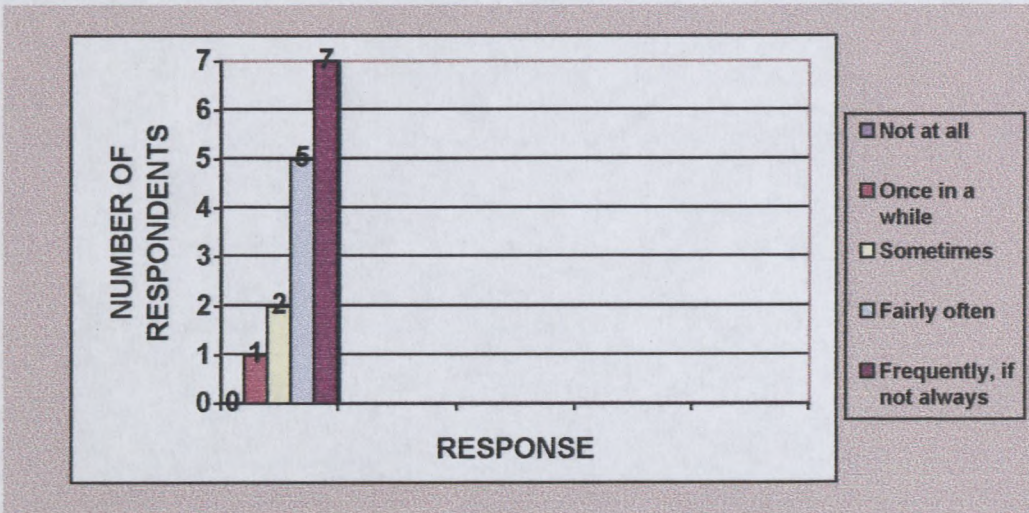
Graph 4.13 shows very significantly that any resistance to change can be discussed openly in order to improve the change initiative at the Athlone detective service. Seven (7) respondents indicated that resistance to change can be discussed frequently, if not always, 5 respondents indicated that it can fairly often be discussed, 2 indicated that it could sometimes be discussed, while 1 respondent indicated that it could be discussed once in a while.

The response to question 8 is in line with the argument of Van Wyk (1998:55). Van Wyk states that organisational change is one of the fields which have acknowledged the value of systems thinking – which is why it forms such an integral part of the learning organisation.

Graph 4.14 shows a very significant indication that the positive pressure that is sometimes created at the Athlone detective service encourages personnel to be more productive. Seven (7) respondents indicated that the positive pressure influences them frequently, if not always, 5 indicated fairly often, and 3 indicated sometimes.

This response indicates that changes are moderated and people are assisted through the change process. This also led to the creation of an environment in which learning can take place, instead of one in which the learning process is blocked (Van Wyk 1998:64).

Graph 4.14: Positive Pressure and Productivity
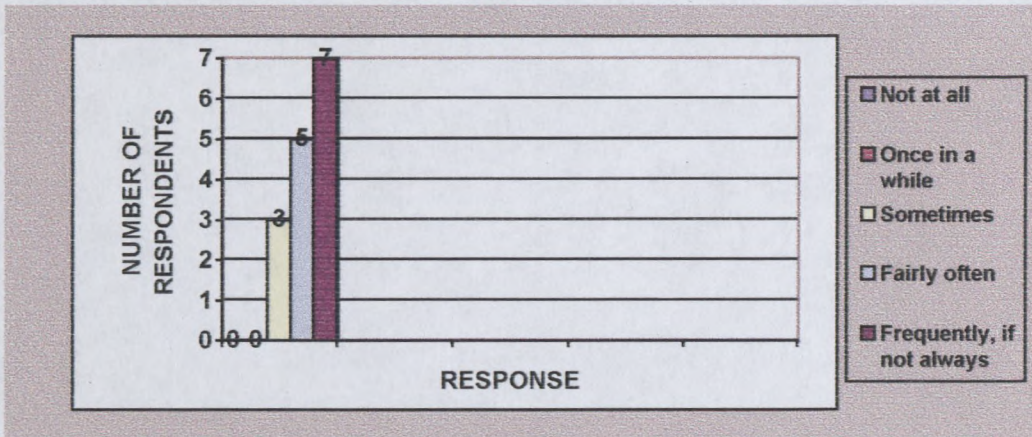
Graph 4.15: The place of the Athlone Detective Service in the community as well as in the SAPS
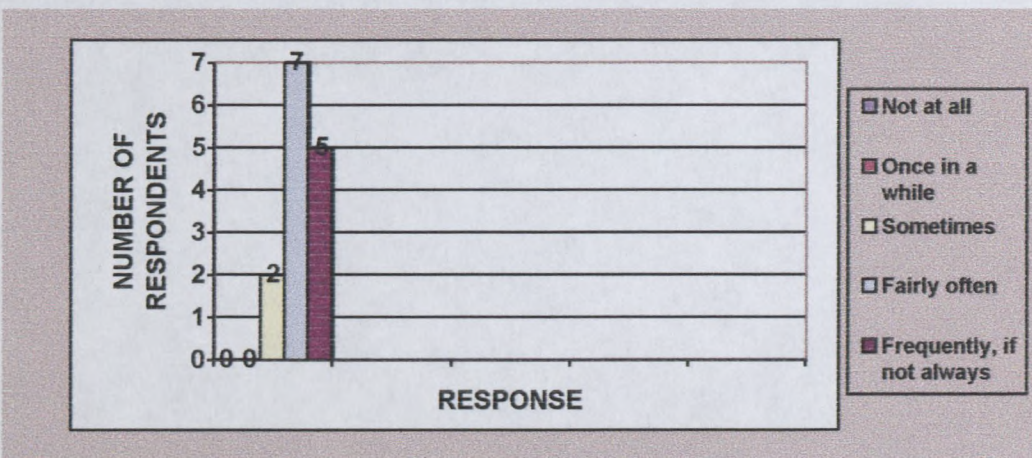
Graph 4.15 significantly indicates that the personnel at the Athlone detective service understand where their unit fits into the community, as well as into the SAPS as an organisation. Five (5) respondents indicated that they understand it frequently, if not always; 7 respondents indicated they understand it fairly often; 2 respondents indicated they understand it sometimes.

4.5.5   Shared Vision

Questions nine and ten were formulated in such a way that the impact of the discipline of shared vision was tested on productivity at the Athlone detective service. The responses to these two questions are reflected in graphs 4.16 and 4.17.

Graph 4.16 shows very significantly that the vision of Athlone detective service is in line with the national vision of the SAPS. Nine (9) respondents indicated that the vision is frequently, if not always in line; 5 respondents indicated that the vision is fairly often in line, while 1 respondent indicated that the vision is sometimes in line.

The response to this question proves that the personnel at the Athlone detective service share the same vision, and are committed to this vision. Van Wyk (1998:49) states that when people truly share a vision, they are connected by a common aspiration. Shared visions derive their power from a common caring. It is for this very reason that shared visions are absolutely vital for a learning organisation (Van Wyk 1998:49).

Graph 4.16: The Vision of the Athlone Detective Service compared to the National Vision
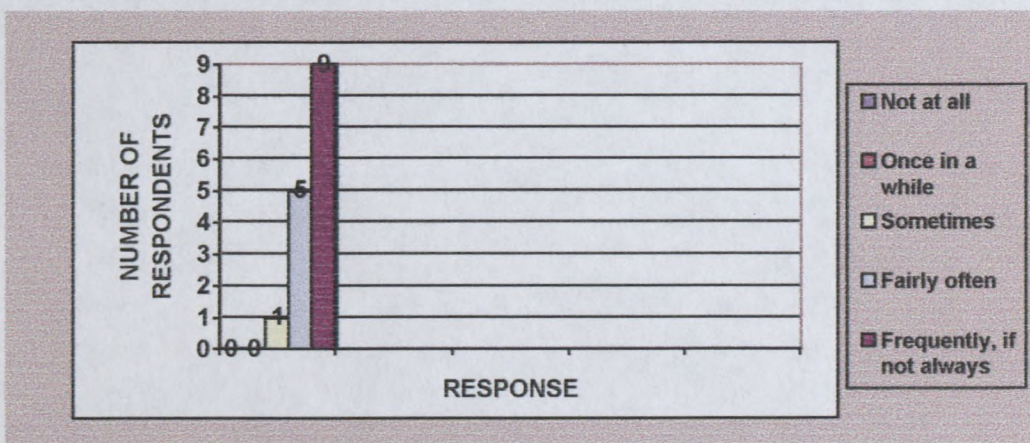
Graph 4.17 very significantly indicates that, because the same vision is shared at the Athlone detective service, they usually take the initiative, and encourage other detective services in the Western Metropole to follow. Twelve (12) respondents indicated frequently, if not always, while 3 respondents indicated sometimes.

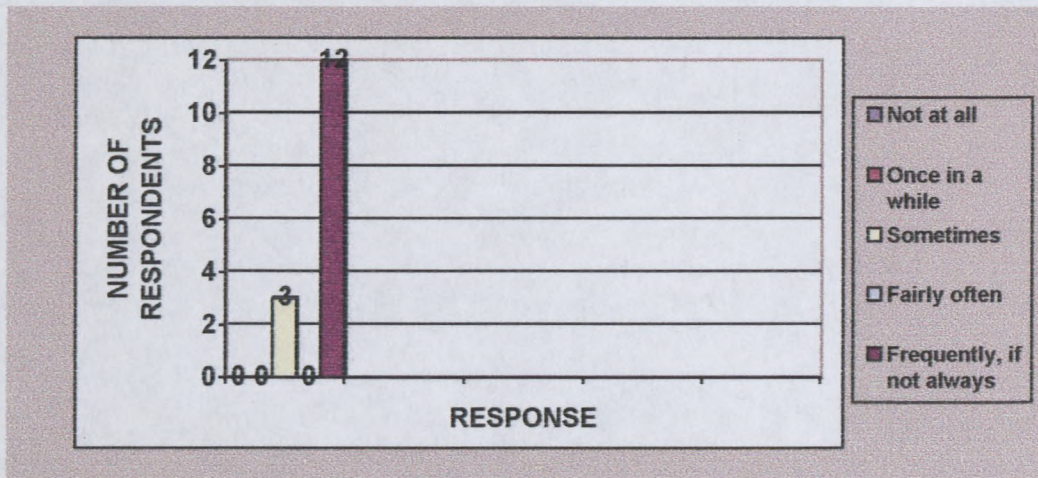The findings in graph 4.17 confirm the statement by van Wyk (1998:49). She states that a shared vision is important to a learning environment, because it provides the focus and energy for the learning that is to take place.

Graph 4.17: The Initiative taken at the Athlone Detective Service

From the above findings it can be concluded that the five disciplines of the learning organisation have positively influenced the productivity of personnel at the Athlone detective service. The data obtained from the CAS, as well as the interventions that were implemented, are therefore confirmed by the responses to the questionnaire.

4.6   Conclusion

The data gathering methods that were used in this chapter, were computerised data and data that has been gathered from the completed questionnaires, with the computerised data being the primary data. The criteria that were used to gather information from the CAS was then explained. Included in this explanation is the formula for establishing the percentage of cases on hand versus cases reported. The results gathered from the SAP 6, on the CAS, is then reflected, followed by an explanation of the different interventions that could possibly have contributed to the decrease in dockets on hand versus cases reported.

An explanation of the different questions in the questionnaire is also given, as well as the application of the questions on the different disciplines of the learning organisation. The responses to the questionnaire are then reflected in graph format,

and are analysed to establish whether the disciplines of the learning organisation have an impact on the productivity at the Athlone detective service.

It can be concluded that the application of all five disciplines of the learning organisation firstly resulted in a significant increase in the productivity of personnel at the Athlone detective service when the analysis of the completed questionnaires was done. Secondly, the data that was collected from the CAS, confirm the findings of the analysis of the questionnaire. This data also shows a significant decrease in cases on hand versus cases reported.

In the following chapter a summary of the main focus points in this research product will be done. Secondly, certain recommendations will be made regarding these focus points, especially regarding the findings that were evaluated in this chapter. Lastly a final conclusion will be drawn of the most important findings in this research product.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   Introduction

Change is an ongoing process and must be managed to be successful. It is only in a learning organisation where change becomes a practice.

As it is evident from this study, the transformation of the South African Police (SAP) into the South African Police Service (SAPS) also led to many changes. The Station Management Programme (SMP) was introduced in 1996 to station commissioners and commanders at Detective Services.

The aim of this course is to assist managers to adapt to significant changes in the SAPS strategy, resulting in modification of the culture, structure and processes to support the new direction in which the organisation is heading.

The following can be expected in this chapter:
- A summary of the most important focus points in each chapter;
- Certain recommendations regarding the findings;
- A final conclusion regarding the aspects that were researched.

5.2   Summary

This study project comprised a case study of the Athlone detective service. The first objective of this study was to prove how the five disciplines of the learning organisation, improved productivity at the Athlone detective service. Secondly, it was to give guidance to other detective services on ways to improve their own productivity.

In Chapter one the rationale for the study is firstly reflected. The research problem was secondly identified as whether the principle of the learning organisation can be used to improve productivity at detective services. Thirdly, the research design was set out.

The research methodology was explained in the fourth place, followed by the clarification of certain concepts. Lastly, the plan of study was explained.

In Chapter two a background to public administration and public management was sketched. The focus was then turned to leadership as a public management function where the social learning approach to leadership is adopted for the purpose of this study. Specifically the model provided by Peter Senge, for the establishment of a learning organisation, was discussed. Lastly, the impact of the learning organisation on productivity was given.

According to the theory that was consulted in chapter two, it was firstly found that the creation of learning opportunities requires a definite shift from the present culture of an organisation. Secondly, it was found that resistance to change could be expected when attempts are made to change the culture of organisations. In the third place it was found that training and development is one way of overcoming resistance to change. The concept of the learning organisation, as a way of implementing training and development, was found to be very useful. In the last instance it was found that the concept of the learning organisation also influences people to be productive.

Chapter three focussed on the SAPS, as a public service organisation. Historical perspectives of the SAPS before 1994 and after 1994 were given. After the amalgamation of the seven police agencies into one police service, the structure of the SAPS was also changed. The current structure was therefore discussed. The focus is then turned to the SAPS as a learning organisation, where the attempts to convert the SAPS into a learning organisation, were discussed. The focus of this study is on the Athlone detective service; therefore a discussion on Athlone detective service as a learning organisation followed.

In this chapter it was found that the transformation in 1994 of South Africa into a fully democratic country called for major changes. One change was the transformation of the old South African Police Force into the SAPS. This was made difficult by the history of the South African Police Force, before 1994, where the police became a symbol of oppression for the greater part of South Africa. Secondly, it was found that after the amalgamation of the eleven police agencies, the SAPS were structured in

such a manner that a Provincial Commissioner was appointed for each of the nine Provinces in South Africa. An Area Commissioner was also appointed for each one of the 43 Areas, while Station Commissioners were appointed for the 1096 police stations in South Africa. An explanation was lastly given of the Athlone detective service, and their place in the structure of the SAPS.

Chapter four was divided into two main sections: the collection of data, as well as the results and analyses of the data collected. The way in which data was gathered, was primarily through data that was collected from the Crime Administration System (CAS) of the SAPS.

The results of this data indicated that productivity concerning the conviction rate and cases on hand versus cases reported indeed improved. The results of the data were given in graph and table format. The interventions that could possibly explain this improvement, were then discussed. Thereafter the responses to the questionnaire were given in an attempt to confirm the assumption that the interventions led to the improvement of productivity at the Athlone detective service. An analysis was done of the responses to the different questions in the questionnaire. The questions were formulated in such a way that the impact of the disciplines of a learning organisation could be measured. The results of this data as well as the analyses were given in graph format. From the responses that were received on the completed questionnaires, it was concluded that the disciplines of the learning organisation had contributed to the productivity of personnel at the Athlone detective service.

The question now is what should be done with the findings that were drawn from out of the data that was collected and analysed. In the next section certain recommendations will be made regarding these findings.

5.3   Recommendations

The analysis that was done in Chapter 4, from the data that was gathered from the CAS, proved that productivity did increase at Athlone detective service, concerning cases on hand versus cases reported. The interventions that could possibly have been

responsible for the increase in productivity were confirmed by the responses that were received from the questionnaire that was distributed. The conclusion can therefore be made that the five disciplines of a learning organisation positively influenced personnel at the Athlone detective service to be productive. With this in mind the following recommendations can be made:

- In Chapter 4 it was found that the interventions in paragraph 4.4, combined with the five disciplines of the learning organisation, namely *shared vision, personal mastery, systems thinking, team learning* and *mental models*, influenced the personnel at the Athlone detective service to be more productive. The Athlone detective service must therefore continue to apply the concept of the learning organisation, as well as the interventions, in an attempt to improve their productivity further. Especially on the other three criteria mentioned in paragraph 1.5.2, which are the number of cases that was sent to court, the conviction rate of cases sent to court, and the solving rate. Data must again be gathered from the CAS to establish the current status of these criteria. The excisting interventions, as well as new ones, must then also be implemented to improve productivity regarding these concepts. Evaluations, similar to the one in Chapter 4, must then be done to establish whether productivity has indeed increased or decreased.

- Every detective unit in the Western Metropole, and eventually in South Africa, must do an assessment of their own productivity, by gathering information from the CAS. This can be done in the same way as described in paragraph 4.3. It is also recommended that the units start off with cases on hand versus cases reported. They then have to implement the concept of the learning organisation, combined with the interventions mentioned in paragraph 4.4, in their different units. Evaluations must then be done regularly to establish whether their productivity concerning cases on hand versus cases reported has increased. As soon as the units experience an increase in productivity, they can extend their focus to the number of cases that was sent to court, the conviction rate of cases sent to court, and the solving rate.

- In figure 3.1 the current structure of the SAPS was illustrated, and it was further discussed in paragraph 3.3. It is therefore, thirdly, recommended that

the learning organisation concept must be practised in every component, as reflected in figure 3.1, of the SAPS. If these components can achieve the same increase in productivity as was described in Chapter 4, regarding the Athlone detective service's productivity, productivity in the whole SAPS will improve dramatically. The SAPS as an organisation will then be in a better position to deliver a service to the communities, which is in line with their vision and mission statements, discussed in Chapter 3.

5.4   Conclusion

This study project has been compiled and written in such a way as to provide managers in the SAPS with a practical guideline on how to apply the theory and literature in their respective components. The concept of the learning organisation is only one managerial tool, but a very effective one, as was evident from the study.

It is the researcher's contention that the material contained in this study will form the basis for an ongoing research effort. He is of the opinion that managing in the modern era is not an easy task and that continuous study of the environment and associated trends are necessary in order to enable managers to cope more effectively with the demanding and ever changing situation. Managers in the SAPS need to be even better equipped, as their primary responsibilities are the prevention and investigation of crime. Crime has an enormous impact on the lives of all South Africans and on the economy of South Africa. Effective management of personnel in the SAPS, the most important human resource, can therefore have a major impact on the responsibilities of the SAPS.

This study, while extensive in its own right, has merely touched on some of the very contentious issues and aspects of effective management. It is therefore suggested that further research be done in the application of management techniques in the SAPS, as well as customising the existing the theory to the requirements of the country's own unique situations and the demands posed by the communities.

Many academic literatures of purely American and European origin are currently presented to future generations of managers without acknowledging the fundamental

cultural and ethical differences that may exist in their approaches to people. The structure of the diverse workforce in the SAPS, therefore also requires diversity management.

We cannot hope to create an effective management approach for our organisations without a profound understanding and sensitivity to the cultural archetypes within the organisations. Commitment and loyalty to a communal cause will not become a reality unless the ideas, attitudes, values, beliefs, habits, customs, language, rituals, ceremonies and practices, which provide people with patterns for interpreting reality, are synthesised or accommodated into our every day business practices.

It is within the shared spirituality of *Ubuntu* that one can create a meaningful and enterprising workplace with a level of motivation and commitment undocumented (as yet) in our Euro-centric management textbooks.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

THE INFLUENCE OF THE FIVE DISCIPLINES OF THE LEARNING ORGANISATION, AS SUGGESTED BY PETER SENGE (1990), ON PRODUCTIVITY AT ATHLONE DETECTIVE SERVICE.

Your assistance is requested in completing this questionnaire and returning it as soon as possible to:

Superintendent J.J. Brand	Tel.:	696-9735
Commander, Detective Service, Athlone	Fax:	697-1996
P.O. Box 7	E-mail:	Athlone
ATHLONE		CID
7764		

To be returned by 24 August 2001 or as soon as possible thereafter.

****

Please take note of the following important issues:

- The identity of respondent will be handled confidentially, and will not be revealed to any person or body.

- No victimisation of any nature will take place against any of the respondents.

- The information that will be gathered from the completed questionnaire will be used for academic purposes only.

- Be completely honest in the completion of the questionnaire.

- Please answer each question, if possible.

****

RANK:_____   **NAME:**_____

QUESTIONS

Directions: If an item is irrelevant, or if you are unsure, or do not know the answer, leave the answer block blank.

Use the following rating scale for the five possible responses:

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always

Put a cross (**X**) in the block next to the statement that indicates how you feel.

****

No.	QUESTION	0	1	2	3	4
1.	The assumptions/stereotypes that I have of the community, my superiors and colleagues have changed over the past two years.					
2.	These assumptions/stereotypes influenced me to a great extent to be productive.					
3.	Enough time is made available in my busy schedule to reflect on my current situation and my desired achievements.					
4.	Over the past two years my personal vision and values were considered in such a way that it increased my own productivity.					
5.	Over the past two years I had the opportunity to learn from my mistakes by sharing ideas and experiences with my colleagues.					
6.	Regular feedback regarding my own behaviour and performance influenced me to a great extent to be productive.					
7.	Our measurement, compensation, and reward systems would encourage members to deal positively with change efforts.					
8.	At the Athlone Detective Service any resistance to change can be discussed openly in order to improve the change initiatives.					
9.	The vision of the Athlone Detective Service is in line with the national vision of the SAPS.					
10.	As the same vision is shared at the Athlone Detective Service, we usually take the initiative in our field, encouraging detective services in the Western Metropole to follow.					
11.	The positive pressure that is sometimes created in our working environment encourages me to be more productive.					
12.	I understand where the Athlone Detective Service fits in to the community of Athlone as well as in the SAPS as an organisation.					

Thank you for your time and honesty. Have a pleasant day!