



SKILLS TRANSFER IN MUNICIPALITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Final Report-Skills Transfer in Municipalities in South Africa
(LGSETA funded project)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

APP	Annual Performance Plan
AusAid	Australian Aid
BBA	Back to Basics Approach
CoGTA	Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
CMTF	Consolidated Municipal Transformation Programme
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
DFID	Department for International Development
FFC	Financial and Fiscal Commission
HR	Human Resources
HRDS	Human Resources Development Strategy
IDP	Integrated Development Planning
KMPA	Key Municipal Performance Areas
LGSETA	Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDB	Municipal Demarcation Board
MFMP	Municipal Finance Management Programme
NSDS III	National Skills Development Strategy
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PDP	Personal Development Plan
PIMS	Planning and Implementation Management Support
PMG	Parliamentary Monitoring Group
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SDA	Skills Development Act
SSP	Sectoral Skills Plan

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SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Sectoral Education and Training Authorities
VoIP	Voice over Internet Protocol
WSP	Workplace Skills Plan

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Background to the project

The national, provincial and global phenomena of economic, social, technological and demographic changes confronting the Republic of South Africa's municipalities are slowing the growth of the workforce and dramatically changing the way work is performed. These national, provincial and global trends are also contributing to the skills shortage threatening South African municipalities.

Local government is an employment and economic driver that delivers key social, environmental and economic services to communities across the country. To be effective and efficient, municipalities require a skilled workforce, but they compete with other spheres of government and the private sector to attract and retain skilled personnel. Skilled human resources contribute to effective service delivery.

There have been a number of government initiatives and programmes to advance service delivery and institutional support. These include the former Planning and Implementation Management Support (PIMS) Centres, the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) analysis and training weeks, the Bucket Eradication programme, Siyenza Manje, the Ilima project (Old Mutual), and the donor supported Consolidated Municipal Transformation Programme (CMTP). A policy review on provincial and local government was also undertaken by the Department of Provincial and Local Government (now known as the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs). Numerous other smaller programmes and projects have also taken place, largely in the local sphere of government.

While all of the support programmes have assisted in specific ways, it is still clear that a number of stubborn service delivery and governance problems have been identified in municipalities over a number of years. These remain consistently at the forefront of government's developmental challenges. These priority areas include:

- Huge service delivery and backlog challenges, e.g. housing, water and sanitation;
- Poor communication and accountability relationships with communities;
- Challenges with the political-administrative interface;
- Corruption, mismanagement and fraud;
- Poor municipal financial management, e.g. negative audit opinions;
- Number of (violent) service delivery protests;

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- Weak civil society formations;
- Intra- and inter-political party issues negatively affecting governance and delivery; and
- Insufficient municipal capacity due to lack of scarce skills.

From evidence to date, it is clear that much of local government is indeed in distress, and that this state of affairs has become deeply-rooted within our system of governance. Therefore, underpinning the analysis are some key questions, such as, how deep-rooted is the state of distress in our local municipalities, what are the causes, and through what measures do we address these fault-lines in our governance arrangements?

Research shows that institutions should not consider the completion of formal training the end of the learning process. Training should be followed up with after action reviews, discussions, practice and feedback in order to promote skills transfer. Job aids are also a relatively simple way to increase the probability that trained skills will be applied to the job. The global economy and current technological advances require both private and public institutions to make constant adjustments in order to maintain a competitive advantage. One such change is the set of knowledge, skills and abilities that are now critical for success.

However, most employees do not inherently possess the qualities needed to meet these changing work demands. As a result, institutions invest millions of rand in training interventions every year. Despite these efforts, many of them reportedly fail to develop the skills and abilities they target. Although employees might learn from their training experiences, trained competencies are generally not applied or transferred to the workplace. Training transfer refers to the application, generalisation and maintenance of trained skills on the job. The apparent transfer problem has long been a paramount concern of institutions (both private and public) and researchers alike.

In response to the National Skills Development Strategy III that calls for the establishment of a credible institutional regime for skills planning, the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) conducts sectoral larger scale research projects. The research projects are instrumental at informing the Sectoral Skills Plan that enables the SETA to produce a credible performance information document, namely, the Annual Performance Plan and Strategic Plan.

One of the critical outputs of the research projects is the development of the sectoral qualifications and implementation of the skills development interventions as proposed in the research findings. It is significant to note that the local government research projects are underpinned by the national priorities of Government, Local Government SETA's strategic

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focus areas, Back to Basics Approach (BBA), as well as the Key Municipal Performance Areas (KMPA).

The findings of the Local Government SETA's research projects are communicated to the sectoral stakeholders in order to keep them abreast of developments in the skills development fraternity. The transfer of skills in the local government sector, particularly in the municipalities, has proven to be a challenge and this contributes to barriers to effective service delivery. Understandably, the problem of transferring skills cannot be seen as the only impediment frustrating service delivery in the municipalities; however, there is a need to conduct research that will inform the Local Government SETA on skills planning. The study on the transfer of skills in the municipalities should be helpful in charting a way forward in tackling challenges to skills transfer.

1.2 Terms of reference for the project

This study focused on skills transfer in local government with specific reference to South Africa. The terms of reference for the study are:

- To develop a concept document on skills transfer in the workplace focusing on capacity-building programmes, commissioned work and monitoring of on-going transfer of skills;
- To understand the link between lack of skills transfer and service delivery;
- To understand the nature of the learning environment in the municipalities;
- To come up with an informed analysis of the factors that debilitate transfer of skills in the workplace; and
- To develop a strategy that will inform the Local Government SETA on skills transfer.

1.3 Project methodology

The project also involved, in addition to desk research, travelling to the points of interest for data collection. The study was conducted in selected local municipalities in various provinces with a view to identifying challenges in skills transfer, best practices and also approaches being used in capacity building. This was done using a qualitative research approach. Data was collected using questionnaires and interviews. Twenty-eight municipal officials and two academics, who are experts in local government capacity building constitute the focus group for this study. This research project covered the inland provinces. Initially the plan was for the project to cover both the inland and coastal provinces.

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The inland provinces identified and visited are Limpopo and Mpumalanga whereas the coastal province identified was KwaZulu-Natal. In Limpopo, the Thulamela Municipality (Thohoyandou) was visited and in Mpumalanga the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality (Middleburg) was visited. The Free State municipalities identified and contacted were Maloti-A-Phofung and Tshwelopele municipalities. The two municipalities had not approved our request for interviews by the time this report had to be finalised. Polokwane Local Municipality in Limpopo province and Mbombela Municipality in Mpumalanga province also failed to approve our request for conducting research at their workplace by the time report was to be finalised. The eDumbe Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) was identified and contacted but they failed to approve our request for interviews by the time the report was to be finalised.

The sampling method applied is non-random, and so the findings cannot be generalised statistically beyond the sample. Owing to cost and time considerations, the study was limited to selected municipalities taken from selected provinces.

Qualitative researchers generally rely on four basic types of data sources: interviews, observations, documents and audio-visual materials (Creswell, 1998). Eager to capture, describe and appreciate the characteristics of leaders responsible for service delivery, and to find out how they address challenges and manage difficulties they experience in transferring skills, we have employed some of these methods as well as theoretical concepts derived from the literature and municipal documents.

The intention of the study was to provide guidance and evidence to promote an informed discussion on future capacity and competency requirements in local government and how these might be addressed. These efforts were made with a view to enhancing service delivery in municipalities in South Africa.

Connecting with the employee about the training experience after training is as important as connecting with employees before they attend training. This is because the learning experience is fresh in the employee's mind and the motivation and inspiration acquired during training still exist immediately after the employee returns. To ensure that the employee applies what was learned, it is important to invite the employee to talk about and share the learning experience with the manager and even the larger team.

In similar fashion as in the pre-course meeting, the manager should review with the employee the content of the training and the overall learning experience. The post-course debriefing is an ideal juncture at which to identify, plan and agree on the next steps, including how the learning experience will be implemented. Suggestions of sample items to discuss with the employee returning from training include are:

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- What was the employee's impression of the course? Did this training intervention meet the needs identified during the pre-course discussion?
- Does the employee believe he/she has met his/her objectives by taking the course?
- How is the employee going to apply what he/she learned?
- What barriers to implementing learning exist? How can the supervisor or manager help the employee remove these barriers?
- On what date will the employee and manager meet again to review whether training is being implemented as planned?

Supervisors or managers are in a key position to set the stage for training success. Their involvement or lack thereof before, during and after training sends a strong message about the municipality's commitment to employee development and its expectations about seeing the results of training. It is therefore important that managers remain visible in their support for employee training through ongoing communication and connection with the employee.

This report focused on aspects such as skills shortage challenges facing local government in South Africa, how the workplace supports learning transfers, factors influencing the selection of trainees, training techniques to assist transfer of skills, characteristics that influence skills transfer, types of skills transfer, training transfer and behaviour change strategies, international best practice in skills transfer, the problem of training transfer, and the benefits and disadvantages of skills transfer.

Types of skills transfer identified and discussed include positive transfer, negative transfer, zero transfer, proactive transfer, retroactive transfer and bilateral transfer. Characteristics that influence skills transfer to the workplace are identified and explained as self-efficacy, belief in usefulness, openness to experience, career link, commitment to the institution, knowing how to learn, attitude, motivation, computer confidence, cognitive ability and age. It was argued that initial learning is necessary for transfer, and a considerable amount is known about the kinds of learning experiences that support transfer. Knowledge that is overly contextualised can reduce transfer; abstract representations of knowledge can help promote transfer.

Transfer is best viewed as an active, dynamic process rather than a passive end-product of a particular set of learning experiences. All new learning involves transfer based on previous learning, and this fact has important implications for the design of instruction that helps students and trainees learn.

1.4 Recommendations

In closing, following are some final recommendations for supervisors or managers in communicating the value and importance of training in all employee discussions.

1. When choosing training courses, ensure the training is specific to the skills the employee needs to develop. For example, it is a waste of time for the manager to send an employee to a general communications course, when in fact the employee needs training on dealing with customer complaints. Make sure training is customised to meet the immediate learning need.
2. Provide information about why the new skills or information the employee will acquire in the training are essential. This ensures that the employee understands the link between the training and his/her job. Take this one step further by describing how the learned skills contribute to the municipality's larger objectives.
3. Provide training opportunities that are immediately applicable on the job. Identify or set up work situations that provide time to practise the learned skill. Make sure these situations immediately follow the training and are frequent to help the employee retain the newly acquired skills.
4. Employees should be recognised for successfully completing and subsequently applying learning on the job. Informal recognition such as mentioning the accomplishment in a team meeting, or more formal recognition such as making mention of the completed training session in the municipal newsletter all create an attitude of motivation.
5. In general, trainees who perceive training as useful and valuable are far more likely to apply new competencies to the workplace than those who do not. Trainees who are not assured of the importance of training will lack the motivation to learn and apply targeted skills. Municipalities would be well advised to devote a portion of their training programmes to communicating the necessity and utility of their training efforts.
6. The better trainees understand the underlying principles, concepts, and assumptions of the skills and behaviours they are learning, the more successful the transfer. It is the duty of the supervisors and trainers to ensure that learners understand the underlying principles and assumptions of the skills and behaviours they are learning.
7. The more trainees practice in different contexts and use novelty in their practice exercises, the more successful the transfer. It is therefore essential to ensure that learners practise what they learned in different contexts to ensure effective skills transfer.

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8. The more encouragement trainees receive during training to discuss and apply the training in situations of their own choosing, the more successful the transfer. The facilitator should encourage learners to participate in the learning process and thereafter apply what they learnt in the job setting.
9. The more encouragement trainees receive after training to apply the training to situations other than those for which they were trained, the more successful the transfer. Supervisors must create an environment conducive for skills transfer for their junior officials.
10. Financial constraints were raised by several respondents as one of the barriers affecting the learning process in the workplace. It must therefore be argued that municipalities must set aside enough budget to cover the training costs for, at least, scarce and critical skills to ensure effective service delivery.
11. Job description must also be drafted for all employees. Relevant municipal employees must be involved in the drafting of the job descriptions as they are involved with the activities that are to be put into the job descriptions. These job descriptions must be adapted periodically for them to meet the demands of the ever-changing positions.
12. It was established that there is no planned or systematic way for municipalities to conduct continuous review of quality learning to keep it aligned with agreed objectives and required output. It can therefore be recommended that there must be continuous review of learning quality within municipalities, as haphazard review of training quality cannot instil a culture of learning in municipalities.
13. It was established that management skills are the skills that are critical in municipalities. It can therefore be argued that it is necessary for senior municipal officials to be capacitated on management principles for them to can manage their juniors and resources effectively, economically and efficiently. Other resources to be managed by municipal officials include financial resources, time and information.

The management training provided to senior municipal officials should include planning, organising, leading and controlling. Leadership training should include the attributes of a leader, leadership styles and theories of motivation. It is the duty of the municipality to also ensure that the planning, organisational, communication and coordination skills learned by the senior municipal officials in the learning or training environment are also transferred and applied in the learning environment.

2. BACKGROUND

It is believed that today's competitive success is achieved through people. It follows, then, that the skills and performance of people are critical for the success of any municipality. Many organisations spend a great deal of money in training, believing that training will improve their employees' performance, and hence the organisation's productivity.

According to Mclean (2001: 195), there is strong consensus that acquisition of skills, knowledge, abilities, behaviour and attitudes through training is of little value if the new characteristics are not generalised to the job setting and are not maintained. In other words, training is useless if it cannot be translated into performance. Training transfer enables municipalities to respond better to the social, economic and demographic challenges facing them.

The national, provincial and global phenomena of economic, social, technological and demographic changes confronting the Republic of South Africa's municipalities are slowing the growth of the workforce and dramatically changing the way work is performed. These national, provincial and global trends are also contributing to the skills shortages threatening South African municipalities.

Local government is an employment and economic driver that delivers key social, environmental and economic services to communities across the country. To be effective and efficient, municipalities require a skilled workforce, but they compete with other spheres of government and the private sector to attract and retain skilled personnel. Skilled human resources contribute to effective service delivery.

There have been a number of government initiatives and programmes to advance service delivery and institutional support. These include the former Planning and Implementation Management Support (PIMS) Centres, the IDP analysis and training weeks, the Bucket Eradication programme, Siyenza Manje, the Ilima project (Old Mutual), and the donor supported Consolidated Municipal Transformation Programme (CMTP). A policy review on provincial and local government was also undertaken by the Department of Provincial and Local Government (now known as the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs). Numerous other smaller programmes and projects have also taken place, largely in the local sphere of government.

While all of the support programmes have assisted in specific ways, it is still clear that a number of stubborn service delivery and governance problems have been identified in municipalities over a number of years. These remain consistently at the forefront of

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government's developmental challenges. These priority areas include:

- Huge service delivery and backlog challenges, e.g. housing, water and sanitation;
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- Poor municipal financial management, e.g. negative audit opinions;
- Number of (violent) service delivery protests;
- Weak civil society formations;
- Intra- and inter-political party issues negatively affecting governance and delivery; and
- Insufficient municipal capacity due to lack of scarce skills.

From evidence to date, it is clear that much of local government is indeed in distress, and that this state of affairs has become deeply rooted within our system of governance. Therefore, underpinning the analysis are some key questions, such as, how deep-rooted is the state of distress in our local municipalities, what are the causes, and through what measures do we address these fault-lines in our governance arrangements?

Research shows that institutions should not consider the completion of formal training the end of the learning process. Training should be followed up with after action reviews, discussions, practice and feedback in order to promote skills transfer. Job aids are also a relatively simple way to increase the probability that trained skills will be applied to the job. The global economy and current technological advances require both private and public institutions to make constant adjustments in order to maintain a competitive advantage. One such change is the set of knowledge, skills and abilities that are now critical for success.

However, most employees do not inherently possess the qualities needed to meet these changing work demands. As a result, institutions invest millions of rand in training interventions every year. Despite these efforts, many of them reportedly fail to develop the skills and abilities they target. Although employees might learn from their training experiences, trained competencies are generally not applied or transferred to the workplace. Training transfer refers to the application, generalisation and maintenance of trained skills on the job. The apparent transfer problem has long been of paramount concern to institutions (both private and public) and researchers alike.

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In response to the National Skills Development Strategy III, which aimed at establishing a credible institutional regime for skills planning, the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority conducts sectoral larger scale research projects. The research projects are instrumental in informing the Sectoral Skills Plan that enables the SETA to produce credible performance information documents, namely the Annual Performance Plan and Strategic Plan.

One of the critical outputs of the research projects is the development of the sectoral qualifications and implementation of the skills development interventions as proposed in the research findings. It is significant to note that the local government research projects are underpinned by the national priorities of Government, Local Government SETA's strategic focus areas, the Back to Basics Approach (BBA), as well as the Key Municipal Performance Areas (KMPAs). The findings of the research projects of Local Government SETAs are communicated to the sectoral stakeholders in order to keep them abreast of developments in the skills development fraternity. The transfer of the skills in the local government sector, particularly in the municipalities, has proven to be a challenge and this contributes to barriers to effective service delivery.

Understandably, the problem of transferring skills cannot be seen as the only impediment frustrating service delivery in the municipalities. However, there is a need to conduct research that will inform the Local Government SETA on skills planning. The study on the transfer of skills in the municipalities should be helpful in charting a way forward in tackling the challenges of skills transfer.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE STUDY

This study focuses on skills transfer in local government with specific reference to South Africa. The terms of reference for the study are:

- To develop a concept document on skills transfer in the workplace focusing on capacity-building programmes, commissioned work and monitoring of on-going transfer of skills;
- To understand a link between lack of skills transfer and service delivery;
- To understand the nature of the learning environment in the municipalities;
- To come up with an informed analysis of the factors that debilitate transfer of skills in the workplace; and

- To develop a strategy that will inform the Local Government SETA on skills transfer.

4. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The approach and methodology of this project are provided in the paragraphs that follow.

4.1 Desk research

The research started with a review of relevant literature on the transfer of skills in the workplace, with specific reference to municipalities in South Africa. We conducted an extensive search for primary empirical studies reporting on a correlation between training transfer and the workplace. We excluded studies that looked only at learning outcomes (e.g. declarative or procedural knowledge). We limited the search results to articles that were published in English.

Studies included in our literature review were identified by a variety of methods. First, we conducted a search of the databases using the key words training transfer, learning transfer, transfer of training. In addition to these key words, we conducted an expanded search using additional key words such as theories of training transfer, barriers to effective skills transfer and benefits and disadvantages of skills transfer from several key academic journals to obtain as many relevant academic articles as possible. Second, we searched for Masters and PhD dissertations on skills transfer. Third, we contacted prominent scholars and practitioners in the field to request their insight.

The review of the above-mentioned documents assisted in determining how far we have come in terms of addressing the shortage of skills in municipalities and in terms of skills transfer to the workplace in South African municipalities. The literature review also assisted in providing the baseline information for skills transfer in the workplace with specific reference to South African municipalities.

4.2 Data collection through consultative meetings

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 provides for three categories of municipalities. There are 278 municipalities in South Africa, comprising eight metropolitan, 44 district and 226 local municipalities. They are focused on growing local economies and providing infrastructure and service. As provided for by the Constitution, 1996 the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) contains criteria for determining when an area must have a category A municipality (metropolitan municipalities) and when municipalities fall into category B (local municipalities) or C (district municipalities).

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The Act also determines that category A municipalities can only be established in metropolitan areas. Metropolitan councils have single metropolitan budgets, common property ratings and service-tariff systems, and single employer bodies. Metropolitan municipalities are: Buffalo City (East London), City of Cape Town, Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality (East Rand), City of eThekweni (Durban), City of Johannesburg, Mangaung Municipality (Bloemfontein), Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality (Port Elizabeth) and City of Tshwane (Pretoria).

The project also involved, in addition to desk research, travelling to the points of interest for data collection. The study was conducted in selected local municipalities in various provinces with a view to identifying challenges in skills transfer, best practices and approaches being used in capacity building. This was done using a qualitative research approach. Data was collected using questionnaires and interviews. Twenty-eight municipal officials and two academics, who are experts in local government capacity building constitute focus groups for this study. This research project covered the inland provinces. Initially the plan was for the project to cover both the inland and coastal provinces.

The inland provinces identified and visited were Limpopo and Mpumalanga and the coastal province identified was KwaZulu-Natal. In Limpopo, the Thulamela Municipality (Thohoyandou) and in Mpumalanga the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality (Middleburg) were visited. The Free State municipalities identified and contacted were Maluti-A-Phofung and Tshwelopele municipalities. These two municipalities had not approved our request for interviews in time for finalising this report. Polokwane Local Municipality in Limpopo province and Mbombela Municipality in Mpumalanga province also failed to approve our request for conducting research at their workplace in time for finalising this report.

The eDumbe Municipality in KZN was identified and contacted but they failed to approve our request for interviews by the time the report was being finalised. The sampling method applied is non-random, and so the findings cannot be generalised statistically beyond the sample. Owing to cost and time considerations, the study was limited to selected municipalities taken from selected provinces.

Qualitative researchers generally rely on four basic types of data sources: interviews, observations, documents and audio-visual materials (see Creswell, 1998). Eager to capture, describe and appreciate the characteristics of leaders responsible for service delivery, and to find out how they address challenges and manage difficulties they experience in transferring skills, we have employed some of these methods as well as theoretical concepts derived from the literature and municipal documents.

The intention of the study was to provide guidance and evidence to promote an informed discussion on future capacity and competency requirements in local government and how these might be addressed. These efforts were done with a view to enhancing service delivery in municipalities in South Africa.

5. DEFINING SKILLS TRANSFER

According to Green (2-11: 4), “skill” is widely regarded as a focus for analytical research and as a core objective for policy interventions in the modern global high-technology era. A substantive body of evidence shows that different skill levels have large economic effects for individuals, employers, regions and whole national economies. Yet there is no consensus among social scientists about the meaning of the concept skill. When social scientists such as economists, sociologists and psychologists discuss skill they often appear to be talking about different things. When the concept is translated, scholars in different languages have still other takes on the matter.

Dialogue and discussion between disciplines and cultures is rare, so similarities and differences are not made transparent or resolved. Disciplinary segmentation permits conceptual and semantic differences to persist; and outsiders to academic discourse hear different approaches, depending on who they are listening to. Unlike constructs in the natural sciences, skill is one of those social science words in common parlance with many meanings, numerous synonyms such as “ability”, “competence”, “aptitude” and “talent”, and varied imprecise translations in other languages.

Mafunisa (1998:176) defines competence partly as the capacity for hard work (diligence) and perseverance but partly as talent, skill or ability. Diligence and perseverance are general value orientations that structure behaviour in a variety of social roles and environments. The ways to build competence include training and skills development.

The concept of skill that is proposed by Green (2011) is intended to be at once scientific, oriented towards human, social and economic progress, and relevant for a discussion of social and economic action in 21st century settings. In other words, the author aims to situate skill within the tradition of political economy. Thus, skill is a personal quality with three key features:

- Productive: using skill is productive of value;
- Expandable: skills are enhanced by training and development; and
- Social: skills are socially determined.

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Green (2011) further argues that other definitions of the concept skill could be applied, but the above delineation has boundaries that make the concept functional for locating skill's role in economic and social systems, and that afford it an encompassing role across the social sciences. Although broad and covering most common usages of the term, not all qualities are included in the concept.

The focus on productive activity implies attention to qualities relevant for economic progress, but excludes other qualities such as might be involved in leisure pursuits. Another advantage is that the concept is action-centred, premised on how individuals and social agents can change these qualities. Attributes that cannot by their nature be enhanced are not considered as skills.

According to Green (2011:34), transfer has typically been defined as the extent to which knowledge and skills acquired in a training setting are generalised and maintained over a period of time in the job setting. Generalisations require trainees to exhibit trained behaviours in response to different settings, people and situations from those used in training.

Maintenance issues focus on the changes that occur in the form or level of knowledge, skills or behaviour exhibited in the transfer setting as a function of time elapsed from the completion of the training programme. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that skills transfer refers to the generalisations and maintenance of knowledge, skills, and behaviours obtained and sometimes enhanced by training and development over a period of time in the job setting.

Skills transfer enables employees to apply the skills learned in training on the job. Skills transfer is performing particular activities before, during, and after a training session that enable employees to more effectively and quickly apply the skills learned in training back on the job. Skills transfer is the goal when employees are involved in any internal or external training activity, session, seminar, or on-the-job training. The goal of training is to enhance the skills, knowledge, and the thinking and learning ability of employees. But, even more important is the capability to apply the new information, skills, or knowledge in the employee's job.

The employee learns the new information, applies the information on the job, and then shares the new information by transferring the knowledge (training) to other employees. Innovative solutions need to be found to address the significant infrastructure backlogs facing municipalities, as well as their capacity and skills deficits. Innovation is defined as the development and implementation of new processes or procedures that are subsequently different from existing ones; and implies change through activity.

Innovation is the process of developing and executing new ideas (Mafunisa, 1998:165). Outsourcing may, in appropriate circumstances, offer such solutions by the introduction of

external expertise, financial resources and skills. The external expertise must in the long run be transferred to municipal employees to ensure that the shortage of skills is reduced.

Skills transfer is the dependency of human conduct, learning, or performance on prior experience. The notion was originally introduced as transfer of practice by Edward Thorndike and Robert S. Woodworth. They explored how individuals would transfer learning in one context to another, similar context – or how "improvement in one mental function" could influence a related one. Their theory implied that transfer of learning depends on how similar the learning task and transfer tasks are, or where "identical elements are concerned in the influencing and influenced function", now known as the identical element theory.

Transfer of learning is usually described as the process and the effective extent to which past experiences (also referred to as the transfer source) affect learning and performance in a new situation (the transfer target). However, there remains controversy as to how transfer of learning should be conceptualised and explained, what its prevalence is, what its relation is to learning in general, and whether it exists at all.

Skills transfer can also be defined as the ability of a learner to successfully apply the behaviour, knowledge, and skills acquired in a learning event to the job, with a resulting improvement in job performance. The purpose of the skills plan is ensuring that positive skills and influence can be transferred from one position to another and a plan needs to be put in place in order to track the layout of how this would be done. That is why municipalities support training, so that employees will be capacitated and be able to apply the theoretical knowledge obtained from the training to their daily duties.

For the purpose of this research the three terms skills transfer, learning transfer and training transfer will be used interchangeably.

6. SKILLS SHORTAGE CHALLENGES FACING MUNICIPALITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the process of skills development and transfer, it is important to note that the challenge of skills shortage will always be intrinsically linked with the development and transfer of skills process and thus it should be simultaneously addressed. "Skills shortages" is an amorphous concept that encapsulates many specific components, but at the heart of the matter is the idea that the demand for specific skills exceeds supply.

In the discourse of labour economics, labour supply refers to the individuals who partake in the labour market with given endowments of human capital, whereas labour demand refers to the private and public entities that employ individuals. Intermediating between these is the set

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of institutional arrangements that helps form and shape the nexus between labour demand and supply, including educational institutions in civil society, and training providers in both the private and the public sector.

The commencement of South Africa's skills policy regime is intricately linked to our history as an apartheid state, the legacy this presented in the labour market, and the efforts post-1994 to ameliorate the iniquities of "Bantu" education. At the same time, South Africa's highly isolationist geo-political and economic policies were substantively transformed in the democratic era, forcing companies to become more competitive and export oriented. This often had the effect of augmenting capital-intensive technological change, and otherwise inducing a thorough reorganisation of the forms and methods of production, with its resultant skills implications.

Inevitably, this process was not without its losers, but several years into the new dispensation, the economy has witnessed the longest sustained upswing in the business cycle for many decades. The ability to continue this upswing is dependent on many things, an important component of which is the increasing efficacy of the skills development regime. With this as our context, it is important to define skills shortages and the components thereof.

It can be noted that there is traditionally a difference in the way that economists think of skills shortages and the manner in which the state has come to define it. For economists, the most important aspect of any discussion of skills is its relationship to productivity in the company. However, Government has defined skills shortages without taking this relationship into account. Shortages are defined in both absolute and relative terms, but neither of these concepts is related to productivity.

This results in disputes between government departments (e.g. Department of Labour and Department of Home Affairs) over the precise numbers of occupational skills shortages. Having noted this, in this document we proceed to discuss the occupational skills concept of skills shortages predominantly, since the domestic literature is almost exclusively focused (implicitly) on this interpretation of the concept.

Given this definition of skills shortages, it is important to clarify the components of the problem as presented in the literature. Firstly, skills are understood to refer to both qualifications and experience. Scarce skills, in the parlance of the Department of Labour and the Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), is defined to refer to occupations in which there is "a scarcity of qualified and experienced people, currently or anticipated in the future, either because such skilled people are not available, or because they are available but do not meet employment criteria" (FoodBeve SETA, 2005: 42).

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This scarcity can arise either due to an absolute scarcity of these skills or a relative scarcity. Absolute scarcity refers to suitably skilled people that are not available, for example, in a new or emerging occupation (e.g. biotechnology, information technology), a lack of sufficient numbers of workers with specific skills, or insufficient numbers to satisfy replacement demand (FoodBev SETA, 2005:42). Relative scarcity, on the other hand, refers to a situation where suitably skilled people exist, but do not meet other employment criteria, for example, they live in different geographical areas, or do not satisfy Broad Black Economic Empowerment criteria.

Critical skills refer to specific skills within an occupation. In the South African context, there are two groups of critical skills: (1) generic skills, including problem solving and learning to learn; language, literacy or numeracy skills; and working in teams, for example; (2) particular occupational skills required for performance within that occupation (FoodBev SETA, 2005: 43). It is the latter form that accounts for the problems that emerge when a company experiences technological change or reorganises production methods (FoodBev SETA, 2005:43). A problem is defined as a barrier to the attainment of municipal objectives and is therefore an obstacle that needs to be overcome by decision makers (Mafunisa, 1998:167).

These definitions underpin the understanding of skills shortages and must be kept in mind when diagnosing the nature of skills shortages. However, skills shortages are not only about scarce and critical skills, which imply some form of advanced qualification in a “high skills” environment. Indeed, one of the central tenets of Andre Kraak’s work (2004, 2005), has been that the emphasis on “high skills” is not sufficient in a developing economy such as South Africa.

The author notes that emphasising low skilled strategies should be viewed in a positive light, particularly with respect to addressing unemployment and stimulating labour-intensive forms of production (Kraak, 2004:212). Furthermore, exclusive emphasis on the “high skills” strategy ignores the tough conditions and constraints that developing economies face in their attempts to move up the value chain. Consequently, we should think of “skills shortages” as comprising everything from the most advanced qualifications to the most elementary, and “skills development” as something in Africa.

Skills development was facilitated by at least four important policy documents: the Skills Development Act, 1998, the Skills Development Levies Act, 1999, the National Skills Development Strategy, 2001 and the Human Resources Development Strategy, 2001. The analysis then turns to the question of labour demand, specifically to the issue of identifying the nature of skills shortages, including scarce and critical skills, but also to some of the other initiatives such as learnerships that have become crucial to the effectiveness of the skills development regime.

The South African government has budgeted significant amounts of money for capacity building in South Africa. Yet very little research exists on whether such budgets and expenditure have translated into increased capacity and performance, specifically at the local government level. The lack of a formal evaluation component in governmental capacity-building initiatives makes assessing their level of success difficult. Government departments have different and ad hoc approaches to capacity building, which exacerbates the local government capacity challenge. The lack of a common definition of capacity building, its outcomes and its impact has led to an uncoordinated, directionless approach to capacity building in local government.

This is illustrated by some departments focusing almost exclusively on the formal approach to capacity building, emphasising accredited training aligned to unit standards, which has had an impact on the type of capacity building favoured by local government. In this context, as earlier stated, accredited training refers to a learning programme that has been certified by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) against the National Qualification Framework (NQF) registered unit standards or qualifications (SAQA, 2001).

6.1 Support offered to municipalities

Other initiatives have focused on providing technical advisory support in local government over a specific period of time. This has involved the deployment of technical advisors with particular technical skills sets in municipalities, as mentors or as facilitators of internship programmes. The apparent lack of capacity within local government has led to a number of interventions by a range of stakeholders. However, these interventions have treated only the symptoms and not the real cause of this shortcoming (FFC, 2009), while all manner of performance failures are often disguised under the label “lack of capacity”.

Therefore, researching and evaluating the ability of capacity-building initiatives to achieve results is essential to provide input into governmental policy and decision-making processes and to ensure that interventions are relevant and efficient. For this research, an evaluation is a process of focusing on the relevant questions, collecting the appropriate data and information, and then analysing and interpreting the information. This study will not only assist the LGSETA to fulfil its constitutional mandate, but also provide other capacity-building stakeholders with invaluable insight into how to address the skills and capacity gaps in local government.

Furthermore, with the sustained emphasis on enhancing local government’s capacity, it is important to determine the amount of funds that has been dedicated to local government and its capacity-building efforts and whether it has contributed to municipal performance. Section

154(1) of the Constitution, 1996 clearly requires both national and provincial government to support efforts that strengthen municipal performance (South Africa, 1996). The State of Local Government Report (CoGTA, 2009) demonstrates the failure of national and provincial government in this regard. The report finds that in municipalities where provincial government had to formally intervene in terms of Section 139 of the Constitution, 1996, few post-intervention measures for improvement were institutionalised, which resulted in continued performance challenges.

The stark differences between South Africa's 278 municipalities necessitate different approaches to capacity building, to reflect these varied capacities and contexts. For example, strengthening administrative and financial capacity might require changes to current organisational forms, such as reassigning particular functions and scarce skills to district municipalities (the Presidency, 2010). This would entail municipalities adopting organisational structures representative of the particular responsibilities and capacities of the municipality itself, rather than adopting a generic form, which defines capacity. The concept of capacity is described by Morgan (2006) thus: "We see the concept and practice of capacity development as a part, but only a part, of the development puzzle."

The concept of capacity building cannot be seen as the "missing link" in development or something that provides an overarching framework for all other interventions. Rather it contributes to and borrows from other ways of thinking, such as governance, institutional development or organisational development. Indeed, it must borrow liberally from these other ways of thinking in order to generate real insights.

Without the experience of public administration and management, for example, the concept of capacity can tell us little about the structure and behaviour of public institutions. Without political economy, capacity analyses have little to offer in terms of the effects of political power on organisational adaption. Without institutional economics, capacity cannot tell us much about the rules of the game that shape the effectiveness of many capacity development interventions.

Without systems thinking and ideas such as "emergence", capacity analyses are limited in explaining the dynamics of capacity development. To understand the capacity challenges in local government, it is essential to develop a clear definition of capacity.

6.2 Capacity: A multi-dimensional aspect

The National Capacity Building Framework for Local Government (CoGTA, 2008) defines capacity as "the potential for something to happen". The framework furthermore distinguishes three types of capacity – individual, institutional and environmental. The difficulty in defining

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capacity is not just evident in the South African public sector, but also among a myriad of international organisations. The term “capacity building” was introduced at least partially to improve on the practice of providing technical assistance. Public sector capacity is a multi-dimensional issue, consisting of human capacity, organisational capacity and institutional capacity (World Bank, 2005).

Individual capacity is the “potential and competency, or lack thereof, found within a person, normally reflected through his/her specific technical and generic skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour, accumulated through forms of education, training, experience, networks and values” (CoGTA, 2011). In the local government context, this means appointing appropriate individuals to the post in which their specific capacity can be used to the maximum advantage of the community served.

Individual capacity is built through training, mentoring and establishing learning networks. In 2009, the CoGTA reported that local government had an overall vacancy rate of 12% among senior management. In one example, a municipality in Limpopo had all senior management (also known as Section 57) posts vacant, except for the chief financial officer and the director of community service (CoGTA, 2009).

The Limpopo example highlights the difficulties that rural and poorer municipalities have in attracting and retaining scarce skills, which has a severe impact on service delivery. However, the manner in which capacity building is defined is a contentious issue. This is because capacity constraints or capacity challenges or a “lack of capacity” are used continuously to excuse serious underlying pathologies, such as a lack of accountability, the practice of cadre deployment and the flouting of credible recruitment and selection processes.

Institutional capacity can be defined as “the potential or competency, or lack thereof, found within organisations. It includes human resources (collective individual capacities), strategic leadership, organisational purpose, orientation, institutional memory, internal confidence, partnerships, inter-governmental relations, powers and functions, resources and support systems, infrastructure and financial abilities, structures, processes, culture and by-laws” (CoGTA, 2011). Intergovernmental relations deals with the important interactions occurring among governmental institutions in all spheres. The distinctive features of intergovernmental relations suggest the increased complexity and interdependency of political systems (NSG, 2017).

The municipal institutional capacity needs to “encompass a broad range of issues, such as policies and procedures, knowledge management and institutional memory, competency profiles of staff, background and experience and organisational ethics” (National Treasury,

2007). Municipalities should ensure that institutional capacity, which includes operational capacity, is maximised for the benefit of service delivery.

Environmental capacity is found outside municipalities' formal structures, in areas that are beyond the control of the municipality. Examples include socio-economic and demographic composition; the political, legislative and social capital within communities; the ecological, geographic and non-municipal infrastructure; and the natural, mineral and environmental resources available. Environmental capacity can be enhanced by interventions that might improve the intergovernmental fiscal system and operating environment of a municipality, and changing national policies and legislation that affect the municipality (CoGTA, 2009).

6.3 Strategies to address municipal performance failures

In 2009 the National Treasury's discussion document Strategy to Address Municipal Performance Failures captured the issues underlying municipal performance failures and initiated a discussion on how to address the performance failures. The strategy builds on the National Capacity Building Framework for Local Government (CoGTA, 2011) and suggests a structured approach to defining and addressing the challenges experienced by under-performing municipalities. The strategy defines well-performing municipalities as those municipalities that perform their functions (as defined in the Constitution, 1996), achieve their desired outcomes, and where both political leadership and organisational capacity support sustainable performance levels.

The lack of success with previous capacity-building initiatives can be mainly attributed to (National Treasury, 2011):

- uncertainty surrounding the roles and responsibilities of municipalities (changing powers and functions);
- the assumption that a lack of capacity is the root cause of all municipal performance failures;
- a lack of clear articulation of national, provincial and other role players' roles and responsibilities in local government;
- a lack of capacity in provinces and district municipalities to support local municipalities;
- a lack of performance incentives for municipalities to address performance failures;
- perverse incentives inherent in the hands-on support approach;
- a lack of prioritisation of municipal needs;
- a lack of performance monitoring; and
- the absence of a mechanism to manage the transition between support and intervention.

Some of the lessons that should inform future local government capacity-building initiatives are (National Treasury, 2011):

- identifying and addressing the true root causes of local government performance failures;
- ensuring a sustainable, long-term, dynamic process for performance improvement;
- incentivising good performance;
- getting the basics right;
- sequencing initiatives correctly;
- properly designing, developing, managing, implementing and evaluating capacity initiatives; and
- allowing for performance failure in extreme instances.

6.4 Narrowing and broadening the approach to capacity

The approach to capacity needs to be both broad and narrow (Morgan, 2006:18). Narrowing the concept of capacity is essential for developing a more grounded and operational way of assessing and managing capacity issues. However, the concept of capacity also needs to be broadened to encapsulate some of the inherent complexities. This would require any capacity-building programme to be broad – encompassing all three dimensions of capacity. However, the programme's implementation would have to be sufficiently flexible and broken down into specific, narrow and measurable interventions. At a macro level, incentives should therefore be created to identify and acquire appropriate capacity and to foster behaviour change.

Monitoring of the impacts of training should include not only the immediate benefits to the individual, but also the effects on organisational capacity (OECD, 2006). Existing systems and processes may have to be optimised in parallel to individual training, and the proper sequencing of initiatives would be critical. This is required in order to evaluate outcomes, understand impact, and determine accountability, and has implications for capacity-development design and reporting (Otoo, et al., 009).

An example of a lack of integration of capacity-building efforts may be found in the health sector in Mali, where much effort was put into fixing weaknesses in organisational capacity, when the main problem was in fact poor incentives for staff (Thomas, 2006).

The skills challenges at municipal level are by no means new. In its submission to the Policy Review Process on Provincial and Local Government, SALGA identified a number of challenges. These include the under-investment in people, particularly where technical, management and leadership skills are required, and assumptions about short cuts to acquiring

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specialist skills rather than obtaining the required education and work experience (CoGTA, 2009).

Municipalities do not appear to have the required skills base for optimal operational results. Between 2006 and 2009, municipal employment in the financial administration and technical sectors declined because of, among other reasons, skills shortages (National Treasury, 2007). The high level of staff mobility has also led to dependency on the services of consultants. The real need is to stabilise the senior management teams of municipalities in order to improve service delivery outcomes.

The 2011 Development Report suggests that the appointment of senior personnel should be subject to relevant and rigorous tests in both key competencies and management expertise (Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2011). The need for appropriate technical skills to be in place in order to improve municipal capacity was the motivation behind the Municipal Regulations on Minimum Competency Levels, which was introduced on 1 July 2007 (National Treasury, 2007).

Also introduced was the Municipal Finance Management Programme (MFMP), which is a training programme in municipal finance management consisting of unit standards at NQF level 5 and 6 certificates. Service providers are required to apply for accreditation with the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) to provide the training. However, many private sector service providers have become disillusioned with the overly rigid, prescriptive and bureaucratic processes for applying for accreditation and implementing the programme.

The training materials are also generic in nature and do not address some of the very real financial management challenges facing municipalities. Even though the Municipal Regulations prescribe general competency levels required of select officials and senior managers, municipalities tend to ignore them (National Treasury, 2011). When municipalities have had the opportunity to appoint new staff, specifically to Budget and Treasury Offices, they have appointed people with inappropriate qualifications and experience. Therefore, incumbents with inappropriate experience and qualifications are still being appointed for positions (FFC, 2011).

One significant problem with the implementation process has also been in the “train all” approach adopted by municipalities, which fails to consider officials’ current qualifications and work-related experience, even though this information is available in the municipal human resource (HR) system (FFC, 2012).

7. THEORIES OF TRAINING TRANSFER AND THEIR IMPACT ON TRANSFER MOTIVATION

Motivation to transfer was hypothesised in Holton's (1996) model to connect learning with individual performance change. Motivation to transfer can be described as trainees' desire to use the knowledge and skills mastered in the training programme on the job. Behavioural change will likely occur for trainees who learn the material presented in training and desire to apply that new knowledge or skills to work activities. To support the degree of transfer of training desired, it is important to understand why individuals choose to apply their knowledge, skills and attitudes in their workplace.

7.1 Theories of training transfer

Several theories of human behaviour exist to assist us to understand and predict behaviours that contribute to performance at work, as well as to clarify the motivation to transfer factor in Holton's model. The theories of training transfer are identified and explained in the paragraphs that follow.

7.1.1 Expectancy theory

Vroom (1964) defined expectancy as "a momentary belief concerning the likelihood that a particular act will precede a particular outcome". His formulation suggested that job performance (P) is the result of the interaction of two components, force (F) and ability (A), with ability representing the potential for performing some task. The force to perform an act is the algebraic sum of the products of the valences of all outcomes (E) and the valence or rewards of those outcomes (V). In equation form, the theory reads: $P = f(FXA)$ (cited in Kilgore 1997). Vroom's model emphasises an individual's capacity or ability, rather than willingness to perform a specific task. Since first introduced, the model has been refined and extended.

An exception is the version of expectancy theory presented by Porter and Lawler, which takes a novel view of the relationship between employee satisfaction and performance (as cited in Moorhead & Griffin, 1992). Although the conventional wisdom was that satisfaction leads to performance, Porter and Lawler argue the reverse: if rewards are adequate, high levels of performance may lead to satisfaction.

The Porter-Lawler extension includes abilities, traits and role perceptions (how well the individual understands his/her job). At the beginning of the motivation cycle, effort is a function of the value of the potential reward for the employee (its valence) and the perceived effort-reward probability (an expectancy). Effort then combines with abilities, traits and role perceptions to determine performance.

Performance results in two kinds of rewards. Intrinsic rewards are intangible – a feeling of accomplishment, a sense of achievement, and so forth. Extrinsic rewards are tangible outcomes, such as pay or promotion. The individual judges the value of his/her performance to the organisation and uses social comparison processes to form an impression of the equity of the rewards received. If the rewards are regarded as equitable, the employee feels satisfied. In subsequent cycles, satisfaction with rewards influences the value of the rewards anticipated, and actual performance following effort influences future perceived effort-reward probabilities.

Expectancy theory is based on four assumptions (Vroom, 1964). One assumption is that people join organisations with expectations about their needs, motivations, and past experiences. These influence how individuals react to the organisation. A second assumption is that an individual's behaviour is as a result of conscious choice. That is, people are free to choose those behaviours suggested by their own expectancy calculations. A third assumption is that people want different things from the organisation (e.g., good salary, job security, advancement and challenge).

7.1.2 Equity theory

Equity theory is based on the simple premise that people want to be treated fairly (Adams, 1963). The theory defines equity as the belief that employees are being treated fairly in relation to others and inequity as the belief that employees are being treated unfairly in relation to others. Vroom (1964) recognised that individuals seek equity in their jobs; thus, job satisfaction reflects the extent to which rewards received match the rewards the employee believes should be received. Vroom also stated that “the greater the difference between these two amounts, the greater the tension or dis-equilibrium experienced by the person”.

Equity theory (Adams, 1963, 1965) draws from exchange, dissonance and social comparison theories in making predictions about how individuals manage their relationships with others.

Four positions capture the objectives of the theory:

- Individual employees evaluate their relationships with others by assessing the ratio of their outcomes from and inputs to the relationship against the outcome/input ratio of a comparison other;
- If the outcome/input ratios of the individual and comparison other are perceived to be unequal, then inequity exists;
- The greater the inequity the individual perceives (in the form of either over-reward or under-reward), the more distress the individual feels; and

- The greater the distress an individual feels, the harder he/she will work to restore equity and, thus, reduce the distress. Equity restoration techniques include altering or cognitively distorting inputs or outcomes, acting on or changing the comparison other, or terminating the relationship.

The above findings are confirmed by Carrel and Dittrich (1978), who stated that equity theory rests on three main assumptions: (1) people develop beliefs about what constitutes a fair and equitable return for the contributions they make to their jobs, (2) people compare their own returns and contributions to those of others, and (3) beliefs about unfair treatment (inequity) create tension that motivates people to reduce that tension.

Mechanisms for reducing perceived inequities include: (1) cognitively distorting the inputs or returns/outcomes, (2) acting on the comparison with others to change his/her inputs or outcomes, (3) changing one's own inputs or outcomes, (4) changing the person with whom a comparison is made, and (5) leaving the situation where inequity is felt (Campbell & Pritchard, 1976). Equity theory predicts that individuals will choose a method of inequity reduction that is personally least costly (Adams, 1963). However, predicting which mode will be seen as least costly has proven to be quite difficult (proposition 4).

Noe (1986, cited in Kilgore, 1997:55) explained the relationship between motivation to transfer and equity theory: "If an individual feels that by attending training he/she is likely to gain equity in pay or other sought after rewards, there is a greater chance that learning will occur, and such learning will transfer to the job". It can therefore be argued that in studying motivation to transfer of training, it seems logical to focus on what employees feel they should receive from their jobs.

7.1.3 Goal-setting theory

Goal-setting theory suggests two cognitive determinants of behaviour: intentions and values. Intentions are viewed as the immediate precursors of human action. The second cognitive process manifests itself in the choice or acceptance of intentions and subsequent commitment to those goals (Locke, 1968). It is the recognition that instructions will affect behaviour only if they are consciously accepted that makes goal setting a cognitive theory of motivation. A goal is that level of performance the individual is trying to accomplish; it is the object of behaviour.

According to Locke (1968), goals direct attention and action. Additionally, they mobilise effort in proportion to perceived requirements of the goal or task. Therefore, goal setting, like expectancy theory, may explain how and why behaviour is facilitated or restrained in the pre-training, training, and post-training processes. Goal setting theory holds that, once a hard task is accepted, the only logical thing to do is to try until the goal is achieved or until a decision is

reached to lower or abandon the goal (Locke, 1968). Research further suggests that both goals and feedback are necessary to improve performance and that participation, incentives and individual differences impact performance primarily through goal setting (Locke, Shaw, Sarri & Latham, 1981).

The major consistent finding supporting this theoretical model of goal setting is that setting specific and difficult goals leads to high levels of performance if these goals are accepted by individuals (Locke, 1968). From the above expositions it can be deduced that goal setting can be an effective method of influencing performance by directing attention, mobilising effort, increasing persistence, and motivating strategy development.

7.1.3.1 Mechanisms for goal setting effects

Given that goal setting works, it is pertinent to ask how it affects performance. According to Locke, Shaw, Saari and Latham (1981), goal setting is most likely to improve task performance when the goals are specific and sufficiently challenging, the employees have sufficient ability, feedback is provided to show progress towards goals, rewards such as money are given for goal attainment, the manager is supportive and assigned goals are accepted by the individuals concerned.

7.1.3.2 Goal attributes and attributes for effective goal setting

According to Locke and Latham (1990), goals have two primary attributes: content and intensity. Goal content refers to the features of the goals themselves, such as the difficulty and specificity of the goals. Goal intensity, on the other hand, is the process by which the goal is set and accomplished. It relates to such factors as commitment, and the cognitive process involved in attaining the set goals. An effective goal-setting strategy involves a number of attributes, for example, goal difficulty, goal specificity, participation, peer competition, feedback on goal performance, goal acceptance, goal commitment and supervisory support (Locke & Henne, 1986).

7.1.3.3 Assigned, self-set goals and commitment

Research has indicated that when goals are imposed, they may be perceived as more difficult to attain, thereby resulting in frustration instead of accomplishment (Locke, 1988). Assigned goals can have beneficial outcomes, some of which are: affording a feeling of purpose, guidance and explicitness concerning expectations; broadening an individual employee's beliefs regarding what they can accomplish and, directing individuals toward developing high quality plans to realise their goals.

Although assigned goals can increase commitment, studies suggest that participatory goal setting produces even greater commitment. Wood, Mento and Locke's (1987) research, which focused on participation, found that employees set higher goals for themselves in a participatory setting than supervisors alone would dare to impose, since individuals seem to be aware of the factors within their control.

Strickland and Galimba (2001) found that the use of self-set goals structured the work pattern of workers, with less switching between tasks relative to work pattern of a group of participants who did not set their own goals. These employees reported less cognitive interference in their efforts to achieve their goals, suggesting that self-set goals are possibly chosen at an easily attainable level, eliciting the required intrinsic motivation, which, in turn, has a positive effect on performance.

Thus, although self-set goals may provide a structuring function and a reduction in task stressful cognitions, they do not have the same motivational functions associated with assigned goal setting (Latham & Locke, 1990). Setting own goals creates a sense of commitment regarding those goals. It helps individuals to become motivated to pursue the goals in the first place and also helps them to cope with setbacks and frustrations that occur during the process of goal pursuit (Munroe-Chandler, Hall & Weinberg, 2004).

7.2 Impact of these theories on transfer motivation

According to the theories of transfer, trainees leave training programmes with different levels of motivation to utilise their learning on the job. According to Holton (1996), influences on transfer motivation fall into four categories: intervention fulfilment, learning outcomes, job attitudes and expected utilities. All of these categories can be explained by expectancy theory, equity theory, and goal-setting theory as follows:

7.2.1 Intervention fulfilment

Intervention fulfilment refers to the extent to which training meets or fulfils training expectations and desires (Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 1991). Tannenbaum et al. (1991) conducted a rigorous study and found that training fulfilment played a significant role in understanding training motivation. Training motivation is similar to motivation to transfer because it is a measure of the trainees' perception of the relationship between training success and future job performance (Holton, 1996).

Intervention fulfilment can be explained by goal-setting theory and expectancy theory. If individuals perceive that what they learn is relevant to their goal (what they need to know) or

an intervention has met their expectations and fulfilled their need for performance-related learning, they will be more motivated to transfer learning into on-the-job performance.

7.2.2 Learning outcomes

Tannenbaum et al. (1991) also found that performance during training had an independent relationship with post-training motivation. Expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) suggests that individuals will be more motivated if they are of the opinion that their efforts will lead to enhanced performance. More successful learners would be expected to feel better able to perform and, therefore, more motivated to transfer. In contrast, less successful learners would be expected to be less motivated to transfer learning (Holton, 1996).

7.2.3 Job attitudes

Expectancy theory, goal-setting theory, and equity theory would lead us to speculate that people with high commitment and job satisfaction would be more likely to exert effort to transfer. Noe and Schmitt (1986) investigated the relationship between training transfer and trainees' attitudes concerning jobs, careers and participation in the training programme.

Results of the study suggest that job involvement and career planning are antecedents of learning and behaviour change. Tannenbaum et al. (1991) also found that participants with more positive job attitudes would be expected to be more motivated to transfer learning to work performance.

7.2.4 Expected utilities or payoffs

According to Clark, Dobbins and Ladd (1993), trainees who perceived training to have more job and career utility are more motivated. These assumptions are consistent with expectancy theory, which states that individuals will be more motivated to transfer if they perceive that their effort will lead to rewards that they value (Porter & Lawler, 1968).

7.3 Theories for training transfer design

According to Holton (1996), one cause of failure to transfer is that training design rarely provides for transfer of learning. That is, cognitive learning may well occur, but programme participants may not have an opportunity to practise the training in a job context or may not be taught how to apply their knowledge on the job, so the training itself can have a direct influence on transfer of training.

It can, however, be argued that Holton's evaluation model (1996) does not provide guidelines to explain what constitutes appropriate transfer designs. Thus, it is important to understand the theories that provide information about the conditions necessary to achieve positive

transfer. The two major viewpoints that describe the conditions necessary for transfer are the identical elements and the principles theories.

7.3.1 Identical elements theory

According to the identical elements theory, proposed by Thorndike and Woodworth (1901), transfer is improved by increasing the degree of correspondence between the training setting stimuli, responses, and conditions and those related factors operative in the performance setting. Holding (1965) summarised this work on transfer by detailing the type of transfer expected based on the similarity of the stimuli and responses.

Holding (1965) explains that if the task is identical in both training and transfer, trainees are simply practising the final task during training, and there should be high positive transfer. The second case assumes that the task characteristics – both stimuli and responses – are so different that practice on one task has no relationship to performance on the transfer task. The third case is common to many training programmes. The stimuli are somewhat different in the training and transfer settings, but the responses are the same. In this case, the learner can generalise training from one environment to another. The fourth case presents the basic paradigm for negative transfer; if the response to identical stimuli in the two settings is different, negative transfer results.

7.3.2 Principles theory

The principles theory suggests that training should focus on the general principles necessary to learn a task, so that the trainee can apply them to solve problems in the transfer environment (Goldstein, 1986). This theory suggests that it is possible to design training environments without too much concern about their similarity to the transfer situation, so long as it is possible to utilise underlying principles.

According to Laker (1990), transfer of training can be near or far. Near transfer is the application of learning to situations similar to those in which initial learning has taken place; far transfer is the application of learning to situations dissimilar to those of the original learning events. Whether one achieves near or far transfer appears to be dependent on which theory of transfer guides the development and presentation of the training programme.

Research reviewed by Clark and Voogel (1985) suggested that the following recommendations would increase the likelihood of near transfer:

- The more the course content and programme reflect the workplace, the more successful the near transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988).

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- The greater the specificity as to where and how the training is to be applied to the job, the more successful the near transfer (Clark & Voogel, 1985).
- The more overlearning of the task is encouraged, the more successful the near transfer (Noe, 1986).
- The more the procedural nature of the task is emphasised, the more successful the near transfer (Clark & Voogel, 1985).
- The more the application of the training is restricted to only those areas for which the trainee was prepared, the more successful the near transfer (Clark & Voogel, 1985).

Therefore, the identical elements theory influences the acquisition of near transfer. According to Spitzer (1984), near transfer would be the objective of short-term skill development that can be applied immediately to improve performance in one's present position. Near transfer would seem to be most desired when pursuing technical training (Laker, 1990), because technical training usually teaches particular behaviours and procedures applicable to the individual's current job.

On the other hand, the theory of transfer through principles emphasises the importance of creating variety and explaining the *why* that underlies what an individual is being taught. From this perspective, the following factors may hypothetically influence the acquisition of far transfer:

- The better trainees understand the underlying principles, concepts, and assumptions of the skills and behaviours they are learning, the more successful the far transfer (Goldstein, 1986).
- The more trainees practise in different contexts and use novelty in their practice exercises, the more successful the far transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Goldstein, 1986).
- The more encouragement trainees receive during training to discuss and apply the training in situations of their own choosing, the more successful the far transfer (Noe, 1986).
- The more encouragement trainees receive after training to apply the training to situations other than those for which they were trained, the more successful the far transfer (Goldstein, 1986).

Principles theory is critical to far transfer because knowledge can be abstracted and connected to new problems. If trainees can understand the principles and concepts and if they have a chance to practise exercises and apply situations in training programmes to their workplace,

they are more likely to apply their newly acquired skills and behaviours when they are faced with new challenges and unfamiliar problems. According to Laker (1990), far transfer might be most attractive for management development or creative problem solving, as these types of training are frequently directed toward long-term goals and future positions.

7.4 Theories supporting transfer climate

Training that fails to transfer to the workplace is prevalent in all countries, including South Africa. According to one survey of learning and development professionals, only 34% of trainees apply what they've learned to the workplace one year after a training intervention (Saks & Belcourt, 2006). Yet much research supports the fact that learning transfer improves when one's workplace provides the right kind of support. There are many ways an organisation can have an impact. One can leverage opportunities prior to, during and after training.

A few underlying threads that run through workplace support include an acknowledgement that learning takes time to apply, training must be more than a one-time event, learning is a social process, and that learning often happens informally.

Transfer climate was described by Schneider and Rentsch as a "sense of imperative" (cited in Holton et al., 1997) that arises from an individual's perception of his/her work environment. It influences the extent to which that person can use learned skills on the job. Transfer climate is seen as a mediating variable in the relationship between the organisational context and an individual's job attitudes and work behaviour (Holton et al., 1998). Thus, when learning occurs in training, the transfer climate may either support or inhibit application of learning on the job. Organisational climate is at least as important as learning in facilitating transfer (Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993). The conceptual framework and theory that help to explain Holton's transfer climate factor – how organisational environment supports transfer of training – are presented below.

7.4.1 Transfer climate framework

Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) offer a conceptual framework for operationalising transfer climate; they suggest that transfer climate consists of two types of workplace cues, including eight distinct dimensions, defined in Exhibit 1. The first set of workplace cues – *situation cues* – remind trainees of opportunities to use what they have learned when they return to work. There are four types of situation cues: goal cues, social cues, task cues, and self-control cues. The second set of workplace cues – *consequence cues* – is the feedback trainees receive after they apply their knowledge, skills and attitudes gained in the training to their jobs.

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There are four types of consequences: positive feedback, negative feedback, punishment, and no feedback. Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) use this framework in a study of fast-food restaurant management trainees and demonstrate that the transfer climate added significantly to the explained variance in post-training job performance. They also found that a positive organisational transfer climate appears to be important if transfer of training behaviour is to take place.

Exhibit 1: Definition and illustration of transfer climate items

Situation cues. Cues that serve to remind trainees of their training or provide them with an opportunity to use their training once they return their jobs.

Goal cues. These cues serve to remind trainees to use their training when they return to their jobs; for example, existing managers set goals for new managers that encourage them to apply their training on the job.

Social cues. These cues arise from group membership and include the behaviour and influence process exhibited by supervisors, peers and/or subordinates; for example, new managers who use their training supervise differently from existing managers. (This is reverse-scored.)

Task cues. These cues concern the design and nature of the job itself; for example, equipment is available in this unit that allows new managers to use the skills they gained in training.

Self-control cues. These cues concern various self-control processes that permit trainees to use what has been learned; for example, "I was allowed to practise handling real and job relevant problems."

Consequences. As trainees return to the jobs and begin applying their learned behaviour, they will encounter consequences that will affect their future use of what they have learned.

Positive feedback. In this instance, the learners are given positive information about their use of trained behaviour; for example, new managers who successfully use their training will receive a salary increase.

Negative feedback. Here, trainees are informed of the negative consequences of not using their learned behaviour; for example, area managers are made aware of new managers who are not following operating procedures.

Punishment. Trainees are punished for using trained behaviours; for example, more experienced workers ridicule the use of techniques learned in training. (This is reverse-scored.)

No feedback. No information is given to the trainees about the use or importance of the learned behaviour; for example, existing managers are too busy to note whether trainees use learned behaviour. (This is reverse-scored.)

Source: Rouiller and Goldstein, 1993:383.

7.4.2 Organisation theory

Organisation theory describes the organisational climate supporting transfer of training in Holton's (1996) model. According to Kozlowski and Salas (1997), the need for change, the implementation of interventions, and the transfer of trained skills are embedded within the context of work team, sub-unit, and organisational levels. They propose an organisation theory that benefits from the application of concepts drawn from systems-oriented theories. Key concepts that underlie the systems framework include: organisations are open to external environmental influences, subsystem events are embedded in the larger systems context or network of relations, and it is impossible to comprehend complex events in systems by reducing them to their individual elements.

Organisation theory enhances the identification of tangible work environment characteristics. Contextual factors exert an influence on individual responses through their perceptions of the organisational environment. This means that important, tangible, and meaningful work environment factors (structure, reward systems, or decision autonomy) are stimuli that underlie perceptions of the context. Under this analysis interpretive perceptions serve as mediating mechanisms to link salient contextual features to individual responses (Kozlowski & Farr, 1988).

Kozlowski and Salas (1997) posited that theoretical concepts or themes – levels, content, and congruence – underlie organisational context from the perspective of climate theory. This framework can be used to identify issues to improve the effectiveness of training implementation and transfer that are missing in Holton's (1996) transfer of training model.

The dominant feature of their model is the distinction among the levels that comprise the organisational system-individual, team or unit, and organisation. Second, the model distinguishes between techno-structural and enabling process content, which provides a means to identify relevant features that comprise contexts. Third, the framework incorporates congruence as a critical mechanism for conceptualising configurations or alignments among key variables comprising the organisational system. It addresses the connection of variables within content domains, between content domains, and between levels.

Changes in system functioning produced by training interventions are (a) congruence between content areas within levels, (b) congruence between higher level embedding characteristics and lower level training targets, and (c) composition processes that link training-induced change at lower levels to higher level change targets.

Training significantly benefits from integration with concepts drawn from organisational theory. According to this theory, trained knowledge, skills and attitudes at the individual level are

embedded in team or unit-level technology, coordination processes, and social system contexts, with broader contextual constraints originating at higher system levels (Kozlowski & Salas, 1997). From this perspective, preparing individuals to accept training-induced change and encouraging them to express their new capabilities in the work environment require training that is delivered at the appropriate level and is congruent with contextual supports.

Kozlowski and Salas (1997) assert that the transfer processes in this model implicate the pre-training environment as well. If a context does not support or actively discourages the use of new skills prior to the implementation of training, it is unlikely that trainees will be motivated to learn.

Goal setting, for example, can have a significant impact on transfer outcomes. Prior to training, supervisors should communicate goals regarding the desired performance, the conditions under which the performance will be expected to occur on the job, and the criterion of acceptable performance (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). Following training, trainees should be prompted by their supervisors to set proximal and distal goals for applying newly acquired competencies in the workplace (Taylor et al., 2005). Research indicates that specific and difficult goals, in combination with feedback, can greatly enhance motivation and, in turn, performance (Robbins & Judge, 2009).

Furthermore, the same goals may not prove beneficial when applied to different people, as individuals differ in their abilities and the degrees to which they identify with certain goals. Nevertheless, research generally indicates a positive relationship between goal setting and transfer (e.g. Burke & Hutchins, 2007).

Managers can likely facilitate optimal transfer outcomes by implementing goal setting while remaining cognisant of its potential limitations. Managers can also support trainees by providing recognition, encouragement and rewards, and modelling trained behaviours (Salas & Stagl, 2009; Salas et al., 2006). In addition, Lim and Johnson (2002) identified supervisors' participation in discussions of new learning, involvement in training and provision of positive feedback as forms of support most recognised by trainees as positively influencing their transfer. Cromwell and Kolg (2004) showed that trainees who received high levels of management support transferred more knowledge and skills one year after participating in a training programme than those who reported lower levels of support.

Finally, supervisor support emerged as one of the strongest predictors of transfer in a recent meta-analysis by Blume et al. (2010). Support from peers has also shown consistent relationships with transfer. Chiaburu and Marinova (2005), for instance, reported that peer

support showed a strong, direct relationship with transfer, as well as an indirect influence through its impact on motivation.

7.4.3 Factors that support learning transfer

The following aspects can assist in supporting learning transfer (Burke & Hutchins, 2007; Cromwell & Kolg, 2004; Gegenfurtner, et al., 2009; Saks & Belcourt, 2006).

7.4.3.1 Go for a positive transfer climate

Transfer climate refers to the conditions in the work environment that inhibit or enable newly learned skills, knowledge and attitudes back on the job. A positive environment that promotes learning transfer provides a strong alignment between the training programme and the organisation's goals; various opportunities to apply new knowledge and skills; positive consequences when new skills are used; and social support from peers and supervisors.

7.4.3.2 Frame the training

Studies show that a person's attitude prior to training determines his/her motivation to transfer learning to the job. In fact, pre-training motivation to learn and to apply new knowledge and skills is a predictor of post-training transfer. Organisations can influence motivation by framing upcoming learning experiences in a favourable light.

7.4.3.3 Promote learner readiness

One can promote learner readiness through these strategies:

- Be clear as to whether training is mandatory or voluntary
- Provide realistic information prior to training
- Allow trainees to provide input
- Communicate the municipality's expectations, and

Even before an employee engages in a formal learning experience, one's organisation can promote or hinder transfer motivation.

7.4.3.4 Make it relevant

An employee's motivation to transfer training back to the job is shaped during the learning experience. It comes as no surprise that when trainees perceive learning as relevant, useful, and valuable, they are more likely to apply their newly learned skills. Some factors that influence the perception of training as valuable include:

- Acknowledgement that the trainee needs to improve his or her job performance;
- Belief that the new skills will improve job performance;

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- Practicality and ease of transferring skills to improve performance;
 - Creation of a culture of learning; and
 - Encourage your organisation to promote the importance of learning at work as a value.
- A culture of learning promotes both formal and informal learning. It acknowledges that employees need opportunities to try out newly learned skills and that mastery or competence takes time. It's possible that creating a culture of learning will reduce resistance to change, because change is an inevitable part of learning and performance improvement.

7.4.3.5 Supervisory support

Supervisor support is an essential dimension of the social aspect of learning. It refers to the extent that managers and supervisors reinforce and promote the use of new skills on the job. Training transfer is facilitated when trainees perceive that supervisors are supportive in this way. An important qualifier here is that when supervisors are coercive, it wipes away the effect. Ways for managers and supervisors to promote transfer are to:

- participate in training events;
- allow trainees to contribute and provide input to training;
- discuss new learning and how to apply it;
- provide coaching, encouragement and feedback; and
- hold trainees accountable for using new acquired skills.

7.4.3.6 Peer support

Support from peers and colleagues is another important dimension of the social aspect of learning. Peer support may be even more important than supervisory support in promoting training transfer. Organisations can promote peer support by encouraging work group discussions and participation. Work group discussions are essential for trainees to share ideas about newly learned knowledge and skills that can be transferred to the workplace. Participation in internal and external communities of practice is also essential for effective skills transfer. Opportunities for mentoring of learners must also be provided timeously.

8. FACTORS INFLUENCING SELECTION OF TRAINEES

Specifically, the characteristics of the trainees can influence how much is learned and whether it will be transferred. The cognitive ability of the people being trained has one of the strongest relationships with training outcomes. Cognitive abilities are brain-based skills we need to carry out any task from the simplest to the most complex. They have more to do with the

mechanisms of how we learn, remember, problem-solve, and pay attention, rather than with any actual knowledge.

Cognitive ability is essentially a measure of a person's overall intelligence – it influences how much they can learn, how much they can remember, and how well they can apply what was learned to a new environment. Training scientists have found that the cognitive ability of the people being trained predicts whether what is learned in training will be transferred to the workplace. It is important for trainers to be aware of the influence of cognitive ability when selecting who will participate in training. Additionally, if trainees believe in their ability to learn from training and to transfer what they learn, they are more likely to do so.

A study by Blume, Ford, Baldwin, and Huang (2010) provides scientific evidence for the relationship between self-efficacy and the transfer of training. Self-efficacy is an employee's belief about whether he/she has the ability to perform a certain task. This is important because if trainees do not believe they can learn from training or they can successfully use what they learn on the job, they likely will not do so. If trainees are confident in their abilities, however, they will be more motivated to learn from training and to use their new knowledge and skills.

Self-efficacy, which has also been linked to the transfer of training, can be defined as a judgement an individual makes about his/her ability to perform a given task (Bandura, 1982). The higher the trainees' self-efficacy, the more confidence they will have in their ability to successfully acquire targeted skills and perform trained tasks. In challenging situations, individuals with low self-efficacy are more likely to lessen or discontinue their effort, whereas those with high self-efficacy are more likely to exert additional effort in order to meet the challenge (Robbins & Judge, 2009).

Clearly, this notion has important implications for training programmes that often focus on novel or difficult work behaviours. Not surprisingly, self-efficacy has consistently shown positive relationships with the transfer of training (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). One example is a study that collected data at two points in time following training, and found that performance self-efficacy significantly related to training transfer (Velada et al., 2007).

The more motivated trainees are, the more they will transfer training. Related to self-efficacy is trainees' level of motivation, which is important for transferring training as it influences the amount of effort that people expend toward achieving a goal. The training literature shows that both the motivation to learn and the motivation to transfer can help determine whether training is transferred to the job.

How tightly learning is tied to contexts depends on how the knowledge is acquired (Eich, 1985). Research has indicated that transfer across contexts is especially difficult when a subject is taught only in a single context rather than in multiple contexts (Bjork & Richardson-Klavhen, 1989). One frequently used teaching technique is to get learners to elaborate on the examples used during learning in order to facilitate retrieval at a later time.

The practice, however, has the potential of actually making it more difficult to retrieve the lesson material in other contexts, because knowledge tends to be especially context-bound when learners elaborate the new material with details of the context in which the material is learned (Eich, 1985). When a subject is taught in multiple contexts, however, and includes examples that demonstrate wide application of what is being taught, people are more likely to abstract the relevant features of concepts and to develop a flexible representation of knowledge (Gick & Holyoak, 1983).

One way to deal with lack of flexibility is to ask learners to solve a specific case and then provide them with an additional, similar case; the goal is to help them abstract general principles that lead to more flexible transfer (Gick & Holyoak, 1983). A second way to improve flexibility is to let students learn in a specific context and then help them engage in “what-if” problem solving designed to increase the flexibility of their understanding. They might be asked: “What if this part of the problem were changed, or this part?” (Cognition and Technology Group at Vanderbilt, 1997).

A third way is to generalise the case so that learners are asked to create a solution that applies not simply to a single problem, but to a whole class of related problems. For example, instead of planning a single boat trip, students might run a trip planning company that has to advise people on travel times for different regions of the country. Learners are asked to adopt the goal of learning to “work smart” by creating mathematical models that characterise a variety of travel problems and using these models to create tools, ranging from simple tables and graphs to computer programs. Under these conditions, transfer to novel problems is enhanced (Bransford et al., 1998).

9. PROBLEM REPRESENTATIONS

Advantages of abstract problem representations have been studied in the context of algebra word problems involving mixtures. Some students were trained with pictures of the mixtures and other students were trained with abstract tabular representations that highlighted the underlying mathematical relationships (Singley & Anderson, 1989). Students who were trained on specific task components without being provided with the principles underlying the

problems could do the particular tasks well, but they could not apply their learning to new problems. By contrast, the students who received abstract training showed transfer to new problems that involved analogous mathematical relations. Research has also shown that developing a suite of representations enables learners to think flexibly about complex domains (Spiro et al., 1991).

Not surprisingly, the actual training plays a major role in whether it transfers to the workplace. One of the most effective strategies for training is behaviour modelling. In this approach, the trainer provides clear descriptions of the behaviours that trainees are supposed to be learning and presents models of the behaviours being performed. These models might involve the trainer actually acting out the behaviour or presenting a video that demonstrates the behaviour. Following this, the trainees spend time practising the new behaviours, and the trainer provides feedback.

A study by Paul Taylor, Darlene Russ-Eft, and Daniel Chan in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* found that behaviour modelling increased the transfer of training the most when the models of behaviour included both positive and negative examples, when trainees were able to create their own situations for practising rather than using situations that were created by the trainer, and when trainees set goals for exactly what they wanted to learn from the training intervention.

Another way to improve training transfer is to conduct training in an environment that realistically represents the actual job setting. It is important for student employees to learn and practise in a realistic environment. This will assist in creating a culture favourable to skills transfer. No matter how good the training, students will not transfer new knowledge and skills to the job unless their work environment encourages them to do so. Certain characteristics of the work environment can make the transfer of training more or less likely. Support has shown to be one of the strongest relationships with transfer (Gerald, 2006).

10. CHARACTERISTICS THAT INFLUENCE SKILLS TRANSFER

Various characteristics that influence skills transfer in the workplace exist. These characteristics are identified and discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

10.1 Self-efficacy

Closely related to self-confidence, self-efficacy is an individual's belief that they will be able to learn and perform a task. Many studies point to self-efficacy as an overriding force in training

transfer. “You can do it” messages in the registration email and early course slides, as well as success stories from previous participants, can boost learners’ self-confidence.

10.2 Belief in usefulness

Workplace learners need to see how they will be able to use what they learn. E-learning and live virtual developers should avoid pressure from subject matter experts to include nice-to-know content and verify with target population representatives which content is need-to-know. The National School of Government and MJ Mafunisa Consulting (2017) define E-learning as learning that takes place via a technological platform – also called online learning.

10.3 Openness to experience

Trainees who are open to new experiences are better able to capitalise on learning successes, to acquire skills faster, and to transfer the new skills to their jobs. It is of no value to learn new skills but later fail to transfer those skills to the workplace. Training courses can set the stage and encourage learners to open their minds as they experience the training.

10.4 Career link

Learners who have career plans that they regularly consult and update, and learners who see a link between specific training and their career paths, are more likely to apply their learning to their job performance. A career path is a resource designed to help you identify the skills and abilities you need to progress within some of the main job areas in today's marketplace.

10.5 Commitment to the organisation

There is a relationship between identification with workplace groups and the desire to obtain and use new work-related knowledge. Trainees who have a strong commitment to their organisation, or to their team or work unit, are more likely to use in their jobs what they have learned in their training. A popular term closely associated with this is employee engagement.

10.6 Knowing how to learn

Trainees who have metacognitive skills such as how to focus, self-regulate, and take tests effectively, are better able to learn and transfer technology-assisted training. These types of skills are helpful for participants in face-to-face learning environments too, but due to the increased isolation – physical and psychological – of e-learning and live virtual training, metacognitive skills play a larger role in participants’ ability to transfer their learning.

10.7 Attitude

Learners with positive mental emotional states – or at least the absence of negative mental emotional states – are more likely to transfer their training. Whether in regard to the training itself, or a general life attitude, positive attitudes support better skills transfer.

10.8 Motivation

Internal and external trainee motivation before, during, and after training plays a key role in transfer of training to the workplace. Internal motivation to learn and use the training may help propel the trainee toward learning and use but it will likely falter without support from the environment. Motivation to learn and use the learning also affects and is affected by openness to experience and links to career progress.

In relation to transfer, motivation has been conceptualised and studied in various ways. Specifically, pre-training motivation, motivation to learn and motivation to transfer have all exhibited important relationships with training outcomes (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). Naquin and Holton (2002), for example, developed a construct termed motivation to improve work through learning (MTIWL) that encompasses both motivation to learn and motivation to transfer. The authors found that MTIWL predicted transfer significantly greater than other relevant variables in their studies, in an investigation of the effects of trainee characteristics on training effectiveness.

10.9 Computer confidence

If participants are uncertain about using the technology associated with the training, the learning is less likely to be applied. While most (but not all) employees in today's workplaces are comfortable using a personal computer, some may not be completely comfortable using technologies associated with live virtual training, such as VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol), threaded discussion, type-in chat, and virtual breakout groups.

10.10 Cognitive ability

Trainees' cognitive abilities affect their levels of learning and how much they apply their learning to the job. This factor is closely related to knowing how to learn.

10.11 Age

Younger learners tend to achieve higher levels of learning transfer in technology-supported training because they have been users of related technologies for most, if not all, of their lives. Initial learning is necessary for transfer, and a considerable amount is known about the kinds

of learning experiences that support transfer. Knowledge that is overly contextualised can reduce transfer; abstract representations of knowledge can help promote transfer.

Transfer is best viewed as an active, dynamic process rather than a passive end-product of a particular set of learning experiences. All new learning involves transfer based on previous learning, and this fact has important implications for the design of instruction that helps students learn (Ericsson et al., 1980).

11. TRAINING TRANSFER AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE STRATEGIES

Some trainers are faced with the challenge of motivating their training programme participants to use the new skills they learned during the programme back in their workplace. Whether it is using the new software system to enter customer interactions, acting in a more collaborative manner with other team members or delegating more often to direct reports, this is what the training programme is meant to be all about. If the training programme does not in the end change workplace behaviours, public funds and time spent on training is simply wasted.

Behaviour modelling has emerged as an effective training strategy, perhaps because it incorporates several different learning principles. Based on Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, this approach includes clearly defined explanations of behaviours to be learned, models displaying the effective use of these behaviours, opportunities for trainees to practise learned skills, and the provision of feedback and social reinforcement following practice (Taylor et al., 2005).

In a meta-analytic review, Taylor et al. (2005) concluded that behavioural modelling facilitated transfer the most when mixed (both positive and negative) models were provided, when trainees generated their own scenarios during practice, when trainees were prompted to set goals, when trainees' supervisors also underwent training and when rewards and sanctions were instituted in the work environment.

Behavioural modelling thus appears to be an effective strategy for promoting the transfer of training. Providing opportunities for trainees to observe and practise targeted behaviours enhances their ability to learn and retain new information. Of the array of learning strategies to choose from when designing training programmes, research suggests that behaviour modelling is of particular importance for the transfer of training.

Error management is a related training strategy that has also proven to effectively promote transfer (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). Allowing trainees to make errors and providing error management instructions have emerged as effective ways to facilitate the proper use of

targeted knowledge and skills in the workplace. Heimbeck et al. (2003), for example, found that training transfer was greater for trainees who were provided with error training and error management instructions as compared to trainees who received error training alone or those who were prevented from making errors during the training process.

Error-based training allows trainees to anticipate what can go wrong, and equips them with the knowledge of how to handle potential problems. Furthermore, such training can enhance the perceived utility of training by exemplifying negative outcomes that can occur without the acquisition of trained skills (Burke & Hutchins, 2007).

Additional support was found in a recent meta-analysis in which error management training yielded greater transfer outcomes than error-avoidant training methods (Keith & Frese, 2008). Error management training was especially effective for post-training, rather than within training performance, and for novel, rather than similar tasks, two critical components of training transfer. In sum, transfer is facilitated when training incorporates information regarding potential errors and how they should be dealt with. Providing information about incorrect behaviours appears to be equally as important as communicating target behaviours. Organisations can benefit from recognising error management as an effective strategy for promoting the transfer of training.

11.1 Before training

Get the participants' supervisors or managers to conduct a pre-course briefing with each participant and if they do not know how, they should be shown. This briefing is the place for each manager to introduce discussion about how the principles, techniques and skills learned will be applied practically once the participant returns from the training event. A manager is also in the best position to ensure that participants have completed any pre-requisite reading or exercises. Most important of all, the pre-course briefing sends a powerful message that the organisation cares about the employee's development and is serious about seeing the benefits of training.

11.2 During training

For training to be effective, the fundamentals of training design will need to have been followed. These basics include selecting the right trainees, matching performance objectives to organisational outcomes, delivering at the right time and choosing the appropriate methods and delivery modes. In addition, the following four points need to be kept in mind while the training sessions are conducted.

11.2.1 Goal orientation

Participants actively engage the subject matter when they see a purpose in the learning. This could be reducing time to market for new products or minimising the company's environmental impact. If there is a sense that the programme is "going somewhere", that there is a significant point to the training beyond the training room, many trainees will latch onto that purpose – so long as there is a "hook" to make that connection. That "hook" may be personal. It may be the social acceptance that will come from passing the course, or it may be earning the eligibility to join a respected professional association, for example. The organisational objectives of the programme should be clearly described to trainees at the start of the programme and the WIIFM ("What's In It For Me") should be stated.

11.2.2 Real work relevance

Showing how the programme relates directly to people's day-to-day work significantly lifts the level of participant interest in the programme. Firstly, the trainer should demonstrate expertise in the knowledge and skills being taught, or at least rely on subject matter experts at the appropriate times. A host of real-life examples and scenarios from the participants' own workplaces should be used. Role-plays, simulations and examples should be made as true to life as possible.

In addition, how models, theories and principles need to be contextualised for each workplace situation should be demonstrated. Participants should be involved in making those connections by generating free and frank discussion about how the learning can be applied back on the job. Another fruitful strategy is using the participants' supervisors and managers to introduce the programme or each session. This sends a strong message that the person to whom the participants report considers the programme to be practical and relevant to their work. Where possible, the participants' supervisor or manager should deliver one or more components of the programme.

11.2.3 Practice

Building in opportunities for practice during the training helps to spark participants' interest as they experience new aspects of the skill and build their self-confidence as they gain success. Factoring in opportunities for practice also increases motivation to use the skills on the job by revealing to participants first-hand how the new skills can improve their work on the job. Theory should be interspersed with practice sessions. The variety of physical movement and mental activity also helps to maintain participant interest.

11.2.4 Interpersonal interaction

Learning in the workplace is largely a social activity, in which goals and aspirations are shared, experiences are discussed, different approaches are debated and ways of doing things are demonstrated. In some programmes, participants will learn more from each other than from the trainer. And when the participants return to their workplaces, shared learning between them will be paramount. Interactions that encourage participation and collaboration will foster motivation and transfer.

Relationships can quickly become fractured and learning blocked through the actions of one or more attention-seeking, disruptive or abusive participants. Therefore, ground rules should be established at the start of the programme. Lastly, trainees should be given rewards to mark their achievements. Success that is recognised helps to develop team spirit, especially if all of the participants are striving toward a common goal. That goal will be to acquire skills relevant to their workplace.

11.3 After training

Transferring skills to the workplace at the conclusion of the training programme begins with a post-course debriefing. Continuing on from the pre-course briefing, participants' managers should review with the participants the content of the training and the participants' experiences. The post-course debriefing is an ideal juncture at which to identify, plan and agree with the employee where the skills will be applied and to set specific goals for their application (Allan, Undated).

12. INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES IN SKILLS TRANSFER

When analysing international case studies, each case (although specific to its own context) provides some guidelines for a future approach to capacity building.

12.1 The case of Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, a governmental health and nutrition project highlights that maintaining the correct balance between autonomy and flexibility is important when using grant allocations and enhances accountability. In this project, districts were allowed greater freedom to use capacity-grant allocations to address their particular capacity needs, while the accountability element was strengthened by the signing of transparent management agreements.

These management agreements addressed issues such as payment modalities, obligations of the recipients, financial management and auditing requirements, and issues of termination

(World Bank, 2005). The introduction of audits with predetermined objectives could facilitate the collection of more reliable and relevant data on capacity-building efforts in municipalities, thereby contributing to more independent and objective assessments of the success of capacity-building initiatives.

12.2 The case of Ghana

A study conducted in Ghana into the human resource development challenges facing local government found a need to professionalise the human resource development practitioners appointed in these local government roles. The importance of building the capacity of those responsible for capacity building within local government therefore becomes of cardinal importance (Antwi, Analoui & Cusworth, 2007). This calls for a professional and responsive human resource development department in municipalities, with clear and innovative strategies to respond to capacity building, recruitment, staffing, career development and retention.

12.3 The case of Tanzania

In Tanzania, lessons learnt about an integrated approach to capacity building in the public sector included the need for (Kiragu, 2005; Morgan & Baser, 2007):

- securing political will and commitment;
- strengthening key institutions involved in capacity building;
- stabilising key positions and appointments;
- championing innovation and technical assistance;
- adopting a maintained, comprehensive support rather than a “big bang” approach;
- following a sector-wide approach; and
- restoring integrity and ethics.

Integrity is one of the enduring values of ethical governance. Ethics deals with values relating to human conduct, with respect to rightness or wrongness of particular actions and to the goodness or badness of the motives and ends of such actions. Ethical governance refers to the right and justified conduct of activities of an institution (or government) to serve the larger public interest.

The Tanzanian case study’s lessons are, to a certain degree, mirrored in the Philippines-Canada Local Government Support Programme, which focused on the development of local government capacity in the Philippines. Here, the success of the programme was ascribed to (Agriteam Canada Consulting, 2006):

- the programme’s scope and longevity;

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- the use of appropriate and innovative delivery methodologies (peer-to-peer exchange and on-site coaching for context appropriate support); and
- local ownership.

There is a move to include systems thinking in capacity-development theory. The appeal of this approach lies in its coherence, whereby capacity building is considered an ongoing cyclical process that includes all parts of the system(s), in addition to the linkages between them (AusAid, 2009). A systems thinking approach recognises the complexity and interconnectedness of an organisational system, suggesting that precise measurement and impact evaluation based on “gap analysis” (which assumes a static reality) may not always be an accurate reflection of reality. This has implications for defining capacity development in a way that can be measured and monitored.

12.4 The Ugandan case

Uganda’s use of local market forces to provide for local capacity-building needs was deemed successful because the government recognised that measures to stimulate supply and demand for capacity development at the local level would be required for sustainability. The Ugandan Ministry of Local Government (Nelson, 2007) played a leading role in setting minimum standards, developing capacity incentives, and monitoring progress in open, published reports. This market for capacity building was created by providing an annual “capacity-building grant” to local governments, which is used to procure the services of training providers on a competitive basis. The Ministry of Local Government assesses these service providers in terms of their competencies and past performance on an annual basis.

12.5 Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands perspective

AusAid and its partners reflected on the role of technical assistance in capacity building, as a result of lessons learnt in deploying Australian civil servants. Although the civil servants were specialists, they had little experience in overseas development. AusAid began a more staged approach to capacity building, where technical advisors would move gradually – from direct implementation to indirect support for capacity development. As competencies were developed, systems and processes improved and other issues relating to a lack of capacity were addressed. However, despite this change in approach, the challenge remains to shift from the “hands-on approach” to relying on context-specific understanding and interventions that recognise longer-term capacity-building methods which are required in order to build and sustain capacity (AusAid, 2009).

In Indonesia, the importance of external agencies as facilitators of capacity and change processes has been emphasised. The role that external agencies can play in providing innovation and learning to promote capacity within government is critical (Land, 2004).

Vergara (2003) argues that capacity-building interventions should not create dependency. International and local experience show that the impact and sustainability of capacity-building interventions are limited when they are consultant driven and not embedded through knowledge transfer in the daily operations of the municipality. This is because the municipality being capacitated is assumed to be able to draw on sufficient capability, strategically align different instruments, build local networks and drive a coherent development agenda (Sibisi, 2009).

12.6 South African context

Despite undergoing the biggest transformation process in the South African history, municipalities in South Africa still have a long way to go before they can claim to be sustainable and functional. The municipal transformation process itself has been beset by capacity constraints and performance challenges.

Questions have been raised about the viability of such a large number of municipalities in South Africa, the changing powers and functions of various municipalities, political leadership problems, the scarcity of skills, the lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities of municipal functionaries, and the service delivery protests.

The municipal institutional capacity needs to “encompass a broad range of issues, such as policies and procedures, knowledge management and institutional memory, competency profiles of staff, background and experience and organisational ethics” (National Treasury, 2011). Municipalities should ensure that institutional capacity, which includes operational capacity, is maximised for the benefit of service delivery.

Environmental capacity is found outside municipalities’ formal structures, in areas that are beyond the control of the municipality. Examples include socio-economic and demographic composition; the political, legislative and social capital within communities; the ecological, geographic and non-municipal infrastructure; and the natural, mineral and environmental resources available.

Environmental capacity can be enhanced by interventions that might improve the intergovernmental fiscal system and operating environment of a municipality, and changing national policies and legislation that affect the municipality (CoGTA, 2009). In 2009 the National Treasury’s discussion document Strategy to Address Municipal Performance Failures

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captured the issues underlying municipal performance failures and initiated a discussion on how to address these performance failures. The strategy builds on the National Capacity Building Framework for Local Government (CoGTA, 2011) and suggests a structured approach to defining and addressing the challenges experienced by under-performing municipalities.

The strategy defines well-functioning municipalities, or well-performing municipalities, as those municipalities that perform their functions (as defined in the Constitution), achieve their desired outcomes and where both political leadership and organisational capacity support sustainable performance levels.

According to the National Treasury (2011), the lack of success with previous capacity-building initiatives can be mainly attributed to:

- uncertainty surrounding the roles and responsibilities of municipalities (changing powers and functions);
- the assumption that a lack of capacity is the root cause of all municipal performance failures;
- a lack of clear articulation of national, provincial and other role-players' roles and responsibilities in local government,
- a lack of capacity in provinces and district municipalities to support local municipalities;
- a lack of performance incentives for municipalities to address performance failures;
- perverse incentives inherent in the hands-on support approach;
- a lack of prioritisation of municipal needs;
- a lack of performance monitoring;
- the absence of a mechanism to manage the transition between support and intervention; and
- the lack of management support for trainees to transfer what they learnt to the workplace.

Some of the lessons that should inform future local government capacity-building initiatives are identified by the National Treasury (2011) as follows:

- Identifying and addressing the true root causes of local government performance failures;
- Ensuring a sustainable, long-term, dynamic process for performance improvement;
- Incentivising good performance;
- Getting the basics right;
- Sequencing initiatives correctly;

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- Properly designing, developing, managing, implementing and evaluating capacity initiatives; and
- Allowing for performance failure in extreme instances.

13. THE PROBLEM OF TRAINING TRANSFER

Many municipalities encounter challenges in skills transfer because they fail to implement the skills learnt and there is no monitoring and evaluation. "Transfer of training", as it relates to workplace training, refers to the use to which training participants put the skills and knowledge they learned in their actual work practices. (Note that it is sometimes referred to as "transfer of learning".) This is important for managers and training professionals to get the best value from skills transfers.

14. BENEFITS AND DISADVANTAGES OF SKILLS TRANSFERS

It is essential to transfer skills learnt in the training session to the workplace. The following are some of the benefits associated with skills transfer in the workplace (Thorndike, 1923):

- Employees are confident, open to change and supportive of each other.
- They are motivated to apply learning and expect to achieve improved performance as a result.
- They have the time and energy to implement new skills as well as the necessary human, financial and physical resources.
- They do not experience supervisor/manager sanctions when implementing new learning.

There are several disadvantages associated with skills transfer. These disadvantages are listed below (Cree & Macaulay, 2000):

- Implementation of new learning on the job is not perceived to lead to positive outcomes for the individual.
- Failure to apply new learning is not seen to be noticed or dealt with.
- Trainees receive little supervisor/managerial consultation/support either before or after training. They are not well briefed or prepared for training.
- The training content is not clearly relevant.
- Employees do not associate improved performance with positive outcomes or reward although it may be noticed/valued.

- The implication is that learning cannot be rushed; the complex cognitive activity of information integration requires time.

15. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND FINDINGS

The review of the skills transfer literature prompts several questions that descriptive-analysis is uniquely suited to address. The research questions below concern aspects related to skills transfer to the workplace. These aspects include learners' support and motivation and barriers to effective skills transfer.

Research Question 1 B: What are the key barriers (if any) affecting the learning process in your workplace?

Some respondents cited lack of relevant equipment to use in performing assigned duties, office accommodation, financial constraints for funding the training, lack of job descriptions and lack of conducting performance assessments. Financial constraints were raised by several respondents as one of the barriers affecting the learning process in the workplace. Other barriers identified by the respondents include:

- language;
- limited resources;
- the training itself, in that the training provided is in most cases not relevant to the work that employees perform in their various departments;
- workload;
- resistance to change;
- no skills audit conducted before training;
- lack of study leave;
- lack of infrastructure, especially for artisans;
- lack of team work during training;
- senior personnel not willing to transfer skills to junior ones; and
- managers who do not understand the value of skills development in the workplace.

A manager who has 17 years experience in Emergency Services indicated that the attitude of longer serving staff members who believe that they cannot be taught anything by anybody, and also the mindset of personnel who are of the opinion that facilitators must provide solutions to all scenarios in the learning environment are barriers to effective learning.

It must therefore be argued that municipalities must set aside enough budget to cover the training costs for, at least, scarce and critical skills to ensure effective service delivery. Job

description must also be drafted for all employees. Relevant municipal employees must be involved in the drafting of these job descriptions as they are involved with the activities that are to be put in the job descriptions. These job descriptions must be adapted periodically for them to meet the demands of the ever-changing positions. It is the duty of senior staff members as change agents to change the attitude of long serving personnel to start to believe in other people, as nobody knows everything. This refers also to them.

Research Question 2 B: What percentage of learning do you think is applied back at the workplace in your municipality?

In responding, some managers indicated that, on average, 50 percent of what is learned in training is applied in the working situation. In the case of the Department of Finance, the research respondents are of the opinion that 98 percent of what is learned in training is applied back at the workplace.

This confirms the statement that finance officers are motivated by the unqualified audit reports they have to attain and also by the principle of public accountability. The other statement confirming this is that the training finance officers receive is part of preparation for the workplace.

Research Question 3 B: How (if at all) does your organisation measure whether effective learning transfer has happened or not?

Responding to the question, some respondents indicated that they conduct skills audit, some indicated that they utilise the services of an implementing agent to come and assess the learners individually to determine whether each learner has acquired relevant skills, others are of the opinion that improved service delivery is used as a measure to determine whether effective training has indeed taken place or if the skills instilled during training are successfully implemented. In the Emergency Services Department, the municipalities measure whether effective learning transfer has happened by conducting drills to test personnel on outcomes of training attended.

Annual performance assessments are also used to determine whether effective learning did take place. One respondent from the Department of Finance indicated that in finance it is easy because their work is mainly compliance to standards such as GRAP 17, GRAP 12, 13 and 26 and the Annual Financial Statement. The office of the Auditor-General's role is to check whether these standards have been applied.

Research Question 4 B: How (if at all) are learners/trainees systematically prepared to apply learning (post-training) at their workplace?

Responding to the question, some supervisors indicated that there is no official preparation provided, some managers indicated that in finance, training at academic institutions is part of preparation, other managers indicated that mentoring before learners undergo training is used as part of preparation. Other respondents believe that filling in a skills audit form serves as preparation for the learners.

Research Question 5 B: How are learners/trainees motivated to directly apply what they have learned at the workplace? (List as many as possible)

Responding to the question, finance officers are of the opinion that the motivation for them is accountability as they have to account for all they do. Another motivation is for them to obtain an unqualified report opinion to indicate that their finances are reliable. Trainees are also assigned tasks that demand that they apply the skills learned in training (and the mentor will assess their performance). Some respondents argued that employees are motivated if they are trained on the aspects of the work at hand.

Learners are also provided with testimonials that can assist them when applying for a job or promotion. Some managers indicate that they encourage them to work hard and also participate fully in training sessions. Other supervisors feel that the mere fact that they are entrusted with the duty of serving members of the public is a motivation in itself. Involving juniors in making decisions and problem solving have also been identified as factors that motivate trainees to directly apply what they have learned in the workplace. Trainees can also be given an opportunity to come up with innovative solutions to challenges at the workplace.

Research Question 6 B: How (if at all) does your organisation reward post-learning application of acquired skills or knowledge at the work environment? (List as many as possible)

Responding to the question, managers who were interviewed for this study indicated that there is no direct reward for any post-learning application. However, indirect or long-term reward includes placing learners in positions where they are best fitted in terms of their skills and promoting them to senior positions. Some managers indicated that in case there is a need for those skills, they try to convince their seniors to create posts for those learners. Some managers stated that what is important is not the reward to be provided to learners by their municipality but personal satisfaction.

Research Question 7 B: How does your municipality ascertain that each employee has an agreed learning plan to inform the learning journey?

Some responses indicated that employees make use of a workplace skills plan where all employees submit their training needs to the skills development facilitators.

In other words, a work skills plan assists the municipality to identify the skills needs of each municipal employee. They further indicated that a skills audit is also utilised in this regard. Personal development plans must be prepared for municipal employees. These plans must include training and development needs of employees and be adapted annually for them to be relevant.

Research Question 8 B: How does your municipality ascertain that sufficient support is afforded to learners/trainees to enable attainment of learning objectives?

Responding to the question, municipal officials indicated that the municipality provides payment for accommodation in close vicinity to the training institutions and training costs to service providers and training institutions. Municipalities also provide a travelling and subsistence allowance to the employees who attend training.

A face-to-face meeting between the trainee and the supervisors are held in which the supervisor will determine the challenges the trainee is experiencing in his/her work. These meetings are also platforms for the trainees to raise their concerns with regard to their learning process.

Research Question 9 B: How does your municipality continuously review learning quality to keep it aligned with agreed objectives and required output?

Managers who responded to this question indicated that the municipality continuously reviews learning quality through skills assessment and by conducting annual reviews.

However, these skills assessments and annual reviews are done haphazardly – there is no planning or systematic way of doing it in the municipality. It can therefore be argued that there must be continuous review of learning quality within municipalities because a haphazard review of training is not systematic and cannot instil a culture of learning in municipalities.

Research Question 1 C, 2 C and 3 C: Which five skills would you say are abundant (i.e. readily available) within your municipality? and: Which three critical skills (skills that would positively impact service delivery) should be developed urgently within your municipality?

Managers who responded to this series of question identified financial skills, technical skills, administration skills and communication skills as the skills that are readily available in some municipalities whereas job evaluation skills, operational management skills, leadership development skills, policy development skills, project management skills, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) skills and management skills are critically lacking in some municipalities.

Management can be defined as a directing activity aimed at achieving the predetermined goals or objectives of an institution through the optimal utilisation of the workforce (labour), money, materials and information. Some managers identified planning as a critical skill within the municipality, which is not surprising as planning is part of the management principles. Listening and communication skills are also identified as critical skills.

Planning is defined as the fundamental management function that determines what an organisation wants to achieve and how it should go about this. In other words, it involves those activities of management that determine the mission and goals of an organisation, the ways in which these are to be attained and the deployment of the necessary resources to realise these goals.

It can therefore be argued that it is necessary for senior municipal officials to be capacitated on management principles for them to manage their juniors and resources effectively, economically and efficiently. Other resources to be managed by municipal officials include financial resources, time and information. The management training provided to senior municipal officials must include planning, organising, leading and controlling. Leadership development training must include the attributes of a leader, leadership styles, and theories of motivation.

It is the duty of the municipality to also ensure that the planning skills, organisational skills, communication skills and coordination skills learned by the senior municipal officials in the learning or training environment are transferred to and applied in the learning environment.

16. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Connecting with the employees about the training experience after training is as important as connecting with employees before they attend training. This is because the learning experience is fresh in the employee's mind and the motivation and inspiration acquired during training still exist immediately after the employee returns. To ensure that the employee applies what was learned, it is important to invite the employee to talk about and share the learning experience with the manager and even the larger team.

In similar fashion to the pre-course meeting, the manager should review with the employee the content of the training and the overall learning experience. The post-course debriefing is an ideal juncture at which to identify, plan and agree on next steps, including how the learning experience will be implemented. Suggestions of sample items to discuss with the employee returning from training include:

- What was the employee's impression of the course? Did this training meet the needs identified during the pre-course discussion?
- Does the employee believe he/she has met his/her objectives by taking the course?
- How is the employee going to apply what he/she learned?
- What barriers to implementing learning exist? How can the supervisor/manager help the employee remove these barriers?
- On what date will the employee and manager meet again to review whether training is being implemented as planned?

Supervisors or managers are in a key position to set the stage for training success. Their involvement or lack thereof before, during, and after training sends a strong message about the organisation's commitment to employee development and its expectations about seeing the results of training. It is therefore important that managers remain visible in their support for employee training, through ongoing communications and connection with the employee.

This report focused on skills shortage challenges facing local government in South Africa, how workplaces support learning transfers, factors influencing selection of trainees, training techniques to assist transfer skills, characteristics that influence skills transfer, types of skills transfer, training transfer and behaviour change strategies, international best practices in skills transfer, the problem of training transfer and the benefits and disadvantages of skills transfer.

Types of skills transfer identified and discussed include positive transfer, negative transfer, zero transfer, proactive transfer, retroactive transfer and bilateral transfer. Characteristics that influence skills transfer to the workplace identified and explained are self-efficacy, belief in usefulness, openness to experience, career link, commitment to the institution, knowing how

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to learn, attitude, motivation, computer confidence, cognitive ability and age. It was argued that initial learning is necessary for transfer, and a considerable amount is known about the kinds of learning experiences that support transfer. Knowledge that is overly contextualised can reduce transfer; abstract representations of knowledge can help promote transfer.

Transfer is best viewed as an active, dynamic process rather than a passive end-product of a particular set of learning experiences. All new learning involves transfer based on previous learning, and this fact has important implications for the design of instruction that helps trainees learn.

In closing, following are some final recommendations for managers in communicating the value and importance of training transfer in all employee discussions:

1. When choosing training courses, ensure the training is specific to the skills the employee needs to develop. For example, it is a waste of time if the manager sends an employee to a general communications course, when in fact the employee needs training on dealing with customer complaints. Make sure training is customised to meet the immediate learning need.
2. Provide information about why the new skills or information the employee will acquire in the training is necessary, ensuring that the employee understands the link between the training and his/her job. Take this one step further by describing how the learned skills contribute to the larger organisation's objectives.
3. Provide training opportunities that are immediately applicable on the job. Identify or set up work situations that provide time to practise the learned skill. Make sure these situations immediately follow the training and are frequent, to help the employee retain the newly acquired skills.
4. Employees should be recognised for successfully completing and subsequently applying learning on the job. Informal recognition such as mentioning the accomplishment in a team meeting, or more formal recognition such as making mention of the completed training session in the company newsletter all create an attitude of motivation.
5. In general, trainees who perceive training as useful and valuable are far more likely to apply new competencies to the workplace than those who do not. Trainees who are not assured of the importance of training will lack the motivation to learn and apply targeted skills. Organisations would be well advised to devote a portion of their training programmes to communicating the necessity and utility of their training efforts.
6. The better trainees understand the underlying principles, concepts and assumptions of the skills and behaviours they are learning, the more successful the transfer. It is the

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- duty of the supervisors and trainers to ensure that learners understand the underlying principles and assumptions of the skills and behaviours they are learning.
7. The more trainees practise in different contexts and use novelty in their practice exercises, the more successful the transfer. It is therefore essential to ensure that learners practise what they learned in different contexts to ensure effective skills transfer.
 8. The more encouragement trainees receive during training to discuss and apply the training in situations of their own choosing, the more successful the transfer. The facilitator must encourage learners to participate in the learning process and thereafter apply what they learnt in the job setting.
 9. The more encouragement trainees receive after training to apply the training to situations other than those for which they were trained, the more successful the transfer. Supervisors must create an environment conducive for skills transfer for their junior officials.
 10. Financial constraints were raised by several respondents as one of the barriers affecting the learning process in the workplace. It must therefore be argued that municipalities must set aside enough budget to cover the training costs for, at least, scarce and critical skills to ensure effective service delivery.
 11. Job descriptions must also be drafted for all employees. Relevant municipal employees must be involved in the drafting of these job descriptions as they are involved with the activities that are to be put in the job descriptions. These job descriptions must be adapted periodically for them to meet the demands of the ever-changing positions.
 12. It was established that there is no planned or systematic way for municipalities to conduct continuous review of quality learning to keep it aligned with agreed objectives and required output. It can therefore be recommended that there must be continuous review of learning quality within municipalities as haphazard review of training quality cannot instil a culture of learning in municipalities.

It was established that management skills are the skills that are critical in municipalities. It can therefore be argued that it is necessary for senior municipal officials to be capacitated on management principles for them to manage their juniors and resources effectively, economically and efficiently.. The management training provided to senior municipal officials must include planning, organising, leading and controlling. Leadership training must include the attributes of a leader, leadership styles and theories of motivation. It is the duty of the municipality to also ensure that the planning skills, organisational skills, communication skills and coordination skills learned by the senior municipal officials in the learning or training environment be transferred and applied in the learning environment.

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ANNEXURE A: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DISTRIBUTE A QUESTIONNAIRE



Polokwane Local Municipality

P.O. Box 111

Polokwane, 0700

10 January 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DISTRIBUTE A QUESTIONNAIRE IN YOUR MUNICIPALITY

The Department of Public and Development Administration, University of Venda is commissioned by the LGSETA to conduct a study on **Skills Transfer in Municipalities in South Africa**. The information gathered will be used for building a body of knowledge on skills transfer with specific reference to South African local government. The study will shed light on the skills profile within local government in South Africa and enable future planning and development in relation thereto. The information gathered will be distributed through the LGSETA Seminar Series, which are held throughout the year.

We hereby request for a permission to distribute this questionnaire for completion by at least twelve (12) employees (especially senior ones) within your municipality.

Hoping to receive a positive response at any time now.

PROF. JOHN MAFUNISA

HOD: PUBLIC & DEVELOPMENT ADMIN & STUDY LEADER

ANNEXURE B: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir/Madam

Please note the Department of Public and Development Administration (University of Venda) is commissioned by the LGSETA to conduct a study on **Skills Transfer in Municipalities in South Africa**. The objective of this project is to shed light on the skills profile within local government in South Africa and enable future planning and development in relation thereto. The information gathered will also be used for building a body of knowledge on skills transfer with specific reference to South African local government. The information gathered will be distributed through the LGSETA Seminar Series, which are held throughout the year.

Would you please follow the instructions below and complete this questionnaire. Your responses will be treated as confidential.

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Skills Development Questionnaire			
Section A: Biographic Details <i>(to be completed by all respondents)</i>			
Race	Gender	Department/Unit	Level of Work (e.g. Supervisor)
Section B: Learning Environment & Processes <i>(To be completed by all)</i>			
1. What are the key barriers (if any) affecting the learning process in your workplace?			
2. What percentage of learning do you think is applied back at the workplace in your municipality?			
3. How (if at all) does your organisation measure whether effective learning transfer has happened or not?			
4. How (if at all) are learners/trainees systematically			

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prepared to apply learning (<i>post-training</i>) at their workplace?	
5. How are learners/trainees motivated to directly apply what they have learned at the workplace? (<i>List as many as possible</i>)	
6. How (if at all) does your organisation reward post-learning application of acquired skills or knowledge at the work environment? (<i>List as many as possible</i>)	
7. How does your municipality ascertain that each employee has an agreed learning plan to inform the learning journey?	
8. How does your municipality ascertain that sufficient support is afforded to learners/trainees to enable attainment of learning objectives?	
9. How does your municipality continuously review learning quality to keep it aligned with agreed objectives and required output?	

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Section C: Scarce & Critical Skills <i>(To be completed by all)</i>	
1. Which 5 skills would you say are abundant (i.e. readily available) within your municipality?	
2. Which 5 skills would you consider scarce within your municipality (i.e. the municipality does not have these skills but should develop)?	
3. Which 3 critical skills (skills that would positively impact service delivery) should be developed urgently within your municipality?	
<p><i>Respondents are required to rate their own skills or those of others in line with the rating scale provided below (mark your response with an X):</i></p> <p>Rating Scale</p> <p><i>1 = entry level</i></p> <p><i>2 = intermediate</i></p> <p><i>3 = advanced</i></p> <p><i>0 = urgent development needed (udn)</i></p>	

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Section D: Strategy & Leadership:				
Rate your municipality on the strategic and leadership skills below <i>(To be completed by all)</i>				
	1 = entry level	2 = intermediate level	3 = Advanced level	0 = urgent development needed
1. Internal and external strategic alignment				
2. Translation of strategic municipality objectives into deliverables				
3. Balancing delivery and political expectations				
4. Strategic planning and execution				
5. Concise and standard monitoring and reporting metrics				
6. Relevant legislation and compliance				
7. Project Management skills				
8. Leadership of people and related transformation				

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9. Defining and monitoring the business scorecard				
10. Municipality values, culture and code of conduct				
<p>Section E: Management, Implementation & Supervision</p> <p>Rate your municipality on the managerial, implementation and supervision skills below (<i>To be completed by all</i>)</p>				
	1 = entry level	2 = intermediate level	3 = Advanced level	0 = urgent development needed
1. Planning and delivery against operational plan				
2. Manage financial resources				
3. Manage and comply with total municipality value chain				
4. Manage People				
5. Monitor and report against set targets				

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6. Meet all standards of work and set work requirements				
7. Identify & filter bottlenecks back to system quality assurance				
8. Act as frontline brand ambassador for the municipality				
9. Overall public service delivery against planned targets and standards				

Section F: Any General Comments or Additional Information may be included below:

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Thank you for completing this questionnaire to shed light on the skills profile within your municipality and enable future planning and development in relation thereto.