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Exploring Professional Development for Missouri City Police Department Sergeants

By

Keith Jemison
M.A., Governors State University, 2003

Capstone Project

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctorate of Education in Interdisciplinary Leadership

Governors State University
University Park, IL 60484

2016

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Abstract

The purpose of this project was to explore creation of an organizational development program that prepares potential mid-level managerial candidates to effectively assume the responsibilities associated with the rank of Sergeant in the Missouri City Police Department (MCPD). To that end, the researcher sought to identify the Knowledge, Skills, Abilities (KSA) and/or resources, if any, perceived by internal stakeholders, more specifically holding the rank of Sergeant as well as those who supervise those holding the rank of Sergeant, to be beneficial to potential candidates who want to assume the responsibilities of the position or to those who already hold the position. Data was collected using focus group interviews with MCPD target population. The data collected will be used for creating MCPD's first professional development program for potential and current Sergeants.

Keywords: Police Supervisory Training, professional development, learning organizations, action research, human resource development

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Introduction

The contemporary expectations of public safety agencies levied by the communities they serve, both codified and inferred, are ever evolving and so must the expectations of the supervisory staff of the agencies that serve them. Brewer (2005) described the changing expectations of supervisory staff, particularly first-line supervisors, when he said that they are responsible for representing the leadership vision of the entire law enforcement organization to the officers under his or her authority. According to Capsambelis and Schnering (2011), the demands on supervisors have increased as agencies missions have grown more diverse and complex and law enforcement agencies can no longer wait until an individual is placed into a leadership position before receiving proper education and training.

A key member of any law enforcement agency culture is the first-line supervisor (Serier II, 2012). Gove (2006) opined that “police work is a dynamic occupation that requires a supervisor be flexible, adaptable, patient, and ready to use contingency plans when required” (pg. 4). In order for supervisors to be ready to meet the needs of the organization that they represent and the community that they serve, they require basic organizational knowledge as a foundation in order to do their jobs effectively. Bernard and Goodyear (2004) suggested that supervisors should be cognizant of, educated in, and skilled in providing supervision, and further, should have an understanding of the issues related to their supervisory roles.

Ekaterini (2011) stated that the demands on middle managers are changing in that they are being called upon increasingly to play an integrative role for downward and upward communication about strategy formulation and integration. Burgelman (1983) said that middle managers play a crucial role in supporting initiatives from operating levels.

Ekaterini's (2011) work complemented Burgelman (1983) by stating the following:

Middle managers are responsible for progress towards certain goals in accordance with certain plans, and that it is likely that the middle level managers have been given the goals, plans and standards of performance by managers at higher levels in the organizations (pg. 562).

First-line law enforcement supervisors are representatives of the entire law enforcement organizations leadership vision and have influence on the perception of the sincerity and credibility of the vision (Schwarzwald, Koslowsky, & Agassi, 2001).

Consistent with Bernard and Goodyear (2004), Robinson (2007) identified failure to train as one of two legal causes of action that should be of concern to law enforcement leadership. Perhaps, instead of failure to train, a better explanation of the challenge would be failure to prepare. Robinson (2007) further offered that the most important thing that an organization can do is to deliver the best training that it is able. This is congruent with ensuring that employees are placed in positions possessing the knowledge and ability to do their jobs. Robinson's position is punctuated by the existence of federal court case law (*City of Canton, Ohio vs. Harris, 1989*) that has held officers, supervisors and public entities individually and jointly liable for negligent failures to train personnel. Police training at all levels has taken on a significant role in US police organizations (Birzer, 2003). Birzer (2003) further offered that police training is an important tool in the process of facilitating change within police organizations.

Hogan, Bennell, & Taylor, (2011) identified the role of the middle manager as crucial to a police organization. Ingram and Lee (2015) said that direct supervisors structure the work environment for employees in that they communicate job roles and expectations, provide feedback to employees, and relay information about the broader organization. In doing so,

supervisors impact how employees perceive the organization. Because of this impact, in police organizations, first-line supervisors, especially sergeants, play a critical role in the processes of the organization.

Research Problem

The Missouri City Police Department (MCPD) has no clearly defined program or supporting policy to develop and prepare mid-level managerial candidates within the organization for promotion to Sergeant. Similarly, MCPD has no program or supporting policy to develop mid-level managers once they have achieved the position. Not only is there a general lack of supervisory preparatory training within MCPD for mid-level managerial employees and candidates, there are inconsistencies with the training afforded those who are promoted.

Historically, MCPD has taken a promote and then train posture when it comes to promotion into mid-level management positions, rather than providing training to potential candidates and then promoting them into these supervisory positions. Virtanen (2000) took the position that organizations are vulnerable if new employees are placed into positions without having been provided the proper skills and training. I would make the argument that given the importance of the position of sergeant within the law enforcement profession, that it is imperative that MCPD reexamine this practice, as well as consider involving their employees in the process of identifying knowledge, skills, and abilities that they perceive to be beneficial in helping them to fulfill their supervisory responsibilities within the organization.

Traditional Policing Structures and MCPD

Police departments have been referred to as having “hyper-bureaucratic military organizational attributes—those of formal rank, formal hierarch, and a chain of unquestioned and

unquestioning command” (Toch, 2008, pg. 60). It was believed that the paramilitary model was necessary to address the public’s need for public safety. By adopting this model, command and control was maintained with few major issues (Cruickshank, 2013).

Most police agencies have maintained a tradition and structure fashioned after a military organizational model (Morreale & Ortmeier, 2004, p. 1). MCPD is no different. The Missouri City Police Department (MCPD) has an authorized strength of 104 sworn officers with a much defined rank structure. The leadership of the organization is known as the command staff and are responsible for executive oversight of the department’s operations and resources. The command staff of the MCPD is comprised of seven (7) sworn positions including the Chief of Police, two (2) Assistant Chiefs, and four (4) Captains. The two assistant chiefs are the direct reports to the chief. The four captains report to the two assistant chiefs. Command staff positions are considered executive level positions and rank for assistant chiefs and the chief are denoted by two and three gold stars respectively, worn on the uniform collars. This is similar to military officers. The badge of office worn by command level officers is gold while non-supervisory MCPD personnel don a silver badge of office. Captains (division commander) wear two gold colored bars on their uniform collars in addition to their gold colored badges. Traditional military courtesies and deference are rendered to command level officers by those employed within the law enforcement profession as well as to all employees within the organization with supervisory authority and responsibilities.

Below command level officers, additional organizational supervisors hold the ranks of lieutenant and sergeant. Sergeants are the first line supervisors within MCPD and are responsible for coordinating and supervising the police officers assigned to them. Sergeant’s responsibilities are both administrative and technical in nature. Within MCPD, a police squad may be comprised

of between nine and eleven police officers. Lieutenants within MCPD are responsible for the supervision of between two and three sergeants and therefore are responsible for multiple squads of police officers. These positions also wear gold colored badges of office to denote increased supervisory responsibility and authority.

The organizational structure of MCPD consists of two bureaus (Operations and Administration) and a total of four divisions. There are two divisions under each bureau. The four divisions consist of: Patrol, Criminal Investigations, Support Services, and Administration. Each division is commanded by a captain. The Patrol Division consists of uniformed police officers who respond to calls for service and conduct preliminary investigations of reported crimes. The Patrol Division (PD) turns over cases to the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) for investigation and follow-up, as well as for officially filing charges. This division is normally staffed by non-uniformed, specialized investigators, who receive assignment specific training to conduct their responsibilities. The Support Services Division (SSD) consists of mostly civilian employees and includes responsibilities that typically don't require sworn employee involvement including, records, crime analysis, dispatching, and code enforcement. The Administrative Division (AD) is responsible for the department's training program, the human resources and organizational development function, professional standards and internal affairs, along with policy, research, planning, and grant management. Each division except for the SSD has sergeant level supervisors responsible for the day-to-day management of department personnel, both sworn and non-sworn. The operations bureau is comprised of patrol and CID. The administrative bureau is comprised of support services and administration.

To put things into perspective, MCPD has thirteen (13) employees holding the rank of sergeant. Out of 104 sworn employees, 78 hold no supervisory authority or responsibilities. All

78 sworn, non-supervisory employees are supervised by a sergeant. With that having been established, this means that 8% of the department's sworn employees (sergeants) are responsible for the first-line supervision of at least 75% of the department's other sworn employees. The potential impact that those 8% have upon the department's sworn employees is substantial. The fact that MCPD sergeants are also responsible for the supervision of the department's civilian employees increases their organizational impact exponentially.

Police Cultural Context & Police Leadership

From my years of experience in law enforcement, I have been immersed in the culture of police. I have found it to be insular and resistant to outside intrusion and scrutiny. In addition to sharing the trait of seeing themselves as a paramilitary organization and societal outsiders (Serier II, 2012), there is a tendency to be hyper-vigilant (Gilmartin, 2002) to the environment in which they work. Serier II's (2012) work spoke to the experiences expressed by police sergeants who when promoted, felt like they were being "partially severed" (pg. 11) from one part of the police culture and having to become a part of a new sub-group of that culture. The visceral language speaks to the depth of the emotion experienced among those who operate within the culture of police, particularly as they begin the ascent into the supervisory ranks of police organizations. The strong emotional connections and allegiances are nurtured throughout the culture. Germann (1962) identified the existence of self-sustaining bureaucratic structures within the police culture contributing to a lack of desire to innovate. Germann's (1962) work pointed towards leadership artifacts within the culture that reinforced top-down authoritarianism. As early as 1966, Bordua and Reiss identified how the relationships between police managers and police employees can further entrench police culture within the organization and reinforce the reluctance for them (police) to change or to be open to change.

MCPD promotion and training practices

With regards to promotions within MCPD, the department has a formal promotion policy (See Appendix B). The policy establishes procedures to be followed for the promotion of officers to a higher rank and identifies the criteria that determine employee's eligibility to move up in position. The policy generally speaks to a variety of testing instruments that may be used to determine suitability for promotion as well as what steps will be taken in preparation for the testing process. Eligibility criteria are outlined which may provide for minimum time-in-grade requirements to establish candidacy for promotion, incentive points for having met educational, certificate, and seniority milestones, as well as providing for assessment of performance evaluations and disciplinary exclusions. What the policy does not include is a requirement that those promoted receive training in order to prepare them for the responsibilities associated with the promotion. Demmon-Berger (2007) suggested that developing "a matrix outlining levels of learning" be required for preparation for leadership positions (p. 20).

In addition to there being no requirement codified within MCPD's promotional policy that those promoted to higher ranks receive training for the position, there is no consistent organizational training vision identified for how and when promotional candidates are trained. Within MCPD, the promotion and training process is somewhat disjointed. The training that those promoted to sergeant receive varies depending upon which command or division that they are ultimately assigned to. Generally speaking, in many cases, it is highly dependent upon what the employee requests to attend or the division commander's preference, and as such, the supervisory training received normally comes from multiple different sources and does not provide nor contribute to a uniform organizational supervisory knowledge base. Additionally, a change in the division commander could easily translate into a change in the training agenda.

This furthers the notion that the organizational mission, vision, and supervisory expectations may not be communicated consistently.

With MCPD's current process, the training requested is normally assignment specific rather than rank (Sergeant) specific. What this means is that an employee whose assignment is ultimately slated to be in patrol operations or criminal investigations, will choose trainings supportive of that specific assignment rather than trainings that holistically support the supervisory responsibilities and expectations of the organization. For instance, a sergeant that is assigned to CID may choose a course that covers supervision within a detective unit and a patrol sergeant may only choose courses that involve supervising within the patrol context. Again, organizationally, this results in a lack of organization specific supervisory understanding of the mission, vision, and expectations of the supervisor.

This sort of self-directed professional development practice has resulted in the supervisory portion of the department's training for those promoted or promotion candidates being largely inconsistent in its content delivery and the knowledge attained, as well as failing to provide basic organizational knowledge necessary to function within the mid-level managerial ranks. Training variances are to be expected when the focus of the training is upon a specific assignment within the agency and not upon the development of the requisite cross-disciplinary supervisory skills expected of all employees holding Sergeant's rank within the organization. If Charrier's (2004) contention that "change cannot be delivered to front-line officers within an organization without the emotional commitment to, ownership of, the new vision by the middle managers" (pg. 2), is accurate, then it would make sense that those tasked with the communication of organizational change, and support of the vision, would be provided the same knowledge base in order to establish a common understanding thereof. Failing to do so, it is

reasonable to conclude that the ordinary and routine functions and responsibilities that would be expected of supervisors may go unfulfilled if they have not been provided the knowledge and skills to perform them.

As one of the organization's leaders, I am aware that the organization (MCPD) has realized the existence of a problem when knowledge necessary for success at the individual and organizational level is neglected. Failing to adequately provide training that imbues employees with essential organizational knowledge and skills positions them poorly for success. Poorly prepared supervisors translates to poorly supervised employees which in turn has an effect upon organizational efficiency and organizational efficacy.

Research Questions

Research questions were developed in support of a multi-part project to professionally develop MCPD first line supervisors. To that end, it was important to identify potential interventions and/or data that would be important to successfully perform within the position. HRD theory pointed towards a needs assessment in order to better identify and understand any potential organizational needs.

The data collection method utilized was focus groups. Deluccia, Gavagan, & Pitre (2009) recommended no more than three objectives or questions guide studies utilizing this particular data collection method, as any more would be too much to effectively cover or accomplish in one study. Consistent with that recommendation, the following two (2) research questions guided the project:

1. What knowledge, skills, resources, if any, do you feel would have been beneficial for you to have had to prepare you to perform the duties and responsibilities of Sergeant?

2. What knowledge, skills, resources, if any, do you feel that you need to effectively perform the duties and responsibilities of Sergeant?

The first research question represents an inquiry into the perceptions of the employee with regard to what they feel would have helped them before having been promoted into the position. It is specifically focused upon exploring and understanding employee needs that may ease transitions from line-level non-supervisory responsibilities to those associated with having to be responsible for others in a supervisory capacity. The second question is slightly different in that it seeks to understand those same needs from the perspective of being in situ, and from being responsible for those in situ. This question recognizes the possibility that knowledge, skills, and abilities that may prepare you for a position may not be those same knowledge, skills and abilities that assist the employee in either remaining in the position or, being able to function successfully in the position.

Background of problem

The Missouri City Police Department is not unlike many other agencies within the field of law enforcement with respect to the lack of mid-level managerial preparation. Isenberg's (2010) work documented that most police departments fail to provide the training necessary to help sergeants to carry out their developmental and supervisory responsibilities, despite acknowledging their place as the principal leaders of line officers. Within MCPD, beyond completion of the basic field training program for line-level patrol officers, there is nothing codified to support continued development towards the next level of promotion (Sergeant), and none once they have achieved the position of Sergeant.

In contrast, newly hired police officers with MCPD will typically spend approximately twenty weeks in a Field Training Instruction (FTI) program to prepare them to assume basic

patrol responsibilities and functions within the department. This is after they have completed the state mandated basic police academy. In the FTI program, the focus is on skills acquisition and development, building upon those already acquired in the police academy, orientation to the organization and its' systems, and hands-on and practical application of the knowledge and skills in simulated and field environments. After successfully completing the field training program, sworn personnel typically spend anywhere from two to three years working in the patrol division before they are eligible for competitive testing for promotion to the ranks of detective, sergeant, or lieutenant.

Beyond the training courses mandated by the Texas Commission On Law Enforcement (TCOLE), the regulatory agency tasked with maintaining Texas peace officer licensing standards, education and records, there are typically no set prerequisite courses to prepare officers to assume the advanced responsibilities of the position of Sergeant or mid-level manager. Additionally, there are no mechanisms in place nor to assist them with acquiring or cultivating the requisite knowledge and skills vital to success in this supervisory role. This means that in addition to there being no substantive requirements or training program to prepare employees for mid-level managerial roles, there are also no continuing education or training requirements in policy connected with remaining in the position once promoted. Interestingly, it would seem that the organization is acknowledging the challenge of transitioning into the responsibilities of being a new police officer, and in response, providing training in response to it in the form of a FTI program, however, when it comes to those tasked with the challenge of supervising those same employees, they are being allowed to languish and little to no supporting training for the position is being provided to them nor is there any required of them.

This problem is not unique to Missouri City Police Department. It appears that it extends up to the state level. The FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin (1994) documents that out of the fifty states, very few mandate management training for middle or upper-level managers (7 and 5, respectively). Even within the state of Texas, TCOLE only mandates a 20 hour “first line supervisor’s” course within the first 12 months after being promoted to a supervisory position. Prior to 2016, the mandate allowed up to 24 months to become compliant. There is no requirement beyond that unless you are promoted to a chief executive or chief administrator position for a law enforcement agency. An appointment to that position comes with a requirement to attend a specific 80 hour block of instruction initially and 40 hours of another specific block of instruction every 24 months thereafter for the duration of your appointment. Further, outside of chief executive or chief administrator positions wherein one will be administratively removed from the positions for failure to comply with the training requirement, there are no codified sanctions for failing to adhere to the 20 hour requirement for new supervisors nor is there any mechanism in place to ensure that the initial requirement is even followed. The researcher is aware of instances of law enforcement supervisors not attending the course until as many as six years after the initial promotion as well as others where the person promoted has never attended the required course.

Over the years, the command staff of the Missouri City Police Department has identified organizational inefficiencies and deficiencies that they believe may be directly attributable to a failure to adequately professionally develop departmental first-line supervisors. Most often, these are noted or come to light during the process of employee discipline. This may be in the form of routine performance management such as performance evaluations or day-to-day counseling. Other times, it has been as a result of more formalized disciplinary proceedings,

usually as a result of an internal or external (citizen) complaint. Yet still, there are times when the issue comes to light during routine and periodic work product inspections when command representatives may become aware of behaviors that are inconsistent with those organizationally expected.

Strategic plan

In 2011, the former chief of police, Dr. Joel Fitzgerald developed a strategic plan for the Missouri City Police Department (MCPD). This strategic plan was created as a blueprint to codify the department's mission, accountability, commitment, core values, guiding principles, performance goals, and strategies to deter and combat crime, as well as to improve the quality of life of the citizens of the city of Missouri City. That document also cemented MCPD's commitment to community policing principles well as starting the process of MCPD working at fostering sustainable relationships with the communities that the department serves.

The document was developed, involving all ranks of the organization. Every employee, sworn and non-sworn, from the rank-and-file officers through to the executive levels was given an opportunity for input. Divisionally, internal stakeholders evaluated the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the organization. External stakeholder input was solicited through meetings with the members of the more than 80 homeowner's associations throughout the city, as well as holding town hall meetings, and attending meetings of business associations and groups. Concepts identified by all stakeholders were considered and codified throughout the development of the plan.

The document was designed to cover a five year span (2011 to 2016) and was to be revisited on an annual basis. This annual process involved a continual assessment and reassessment of where the organization intends to go and what it wants to achieve. Additionally,

the document provided and continues to provide direction for the organization's future. Even though there has been a change in the chief executive of the organization, the core concepts of the 2011 to 2016 strategic plan still serve as a guiding force for MCPD's operations and the department's professional development and training agenda.

The 2011 to 2016 MCPD Strategic Plan directs that every employee is accountable to the strategic plan and that it is a blueprint for daily operations and change. This accountability to the strategic plan is further codified within the MCPD General Policy Manual (GPM) as it is the foreword to the manual. Each department employee is required to read and acknowledge its' contents on an annual basis or whenever changes are made. In MCPD's 2011 to 2016 strategic plan, six (6) departmental values are established, as well as four (4) key elements or strategies of organizational and operational change are identified and addressed. Respectively, they are as follows:

VALUES:

1. **Integrity** – Honest and ethical behavior; commitment to personal and professional excellence, while doing the right things right.
2. **Respect** – Treating ourselves and others in a dignified and courteous manner, while considering all viewpoints.
3. **Proactivity** – Using individual initiative and skills to anticipate challenges and opportunities, then taking personal responsibility for final outcome or action.
4. **Communication** – Open, honest and continuous exchange of ideas, information, etc.
5. **Teamwork** – Empowered employees working together and in partnership with the community in an atmosphere of trust and mutual accountability.

6. **Employee Development** – Ongoing commitment to improve the capacity and ability of each employee to meet individual, organizational and community needs.

STRATEGIES

1. **Retain existing property values** - continue the development of existing projects, while starting new commercial developments, which could result in the increase of property value.
2. **Increase commercial development** – this will enable the City to generate additional revenues in sales and property taxes that will enable the city to continuously increase the overall quality of services it provides.
3. **Create value added measures in all areas of service** – Use existing resources in a creative, effective, efficient, responsive and quality driven manner, to give residents a quality of service that exceeds the level residents expect for their tax dollars.
4. **Develop an Organization for Optimum Performance** - Become a learning organization where employees have opportunities to develop skills required for today and the future, while providing opportunities for career advancement for high potential individuals in the organization.

With respect to the focus of this capstone project, the most salient organizational value is *employee development*, which represents a commitment to focus upon improving the capacity and ability of employees to meet organizational needs. The most relevant of the four organizational strategies addresses the organization’s need to “*develop an organization for optimum performance*”. In this strategy, the organization was first introduced to the concept of becoming a “learning organization” and began MCPD on the journey towards achieving this goal. Ultimately, the creation and implementation of this capstone project represents a commitment to those provisions outlined within the 2011 to 2016 strategic plan.

Conceptual Framework

Human Resource Development (HRD) provided the framework for the capstone project in that it outlines a systematic process model for identifying organizational needs with respect to

developing employees and organizations. McQuire & Jorgensen (2011) acknowledge that numerous attempts to define the field of HRD has failed to achieve consensus among scholars. Despite the lack of scholarly consensus, McLagan's (1989) work brings a little more focus to HRD by maintaining that it is comprised of training and development, organizational development, career development.

Werner and DeSimone (2009) defined HRD as "a set of systematic and planned activities designed by an organization to provide its members with the opportunities to learn necessary skills to meet current and future job demands" (pg. 4). They made the argument that HRD interventions should be designed using a "four-step process or sequence" (pg. 27). That sequence is often referred to as the "A DImE" framework and includes:

1. Assess (or needs assessment)
2. Design
3. Implementation
4. Evaluation.

The individual components of Werner & DeSimone's (2009) HRD intervention process will be discussed in greater detail within the review of the literature. This capstone project focused specifically upon the first step of Werner & DeSimone's (2009) process. The next three steps are to be explored later as MCPD seeks to move further towards program development.

Review Of Literature

The literature review is narrowly focused. It specifically addresses concepts that would assist MCPD in identifying organizational needs and preparing MCPD representatives to meet the needs of its employees, should any be identified. Doing so is closely connected to understanding how to build capacity within the agency's employees and furthers the goal of developing an organization for optimum performance.

The Learning Organization

Dr. Fitzgerald's introduction of the concept of MCPD becoming a learning organization was really an introduction to the work of Peter Senge (1990) who is considered by many to be one of the seminal authors of the concept of the learning organization. The concept of MCPD becoming a learning organization is in part the impetus for moving towards exploration of my capstone program development. As such, it becomes important that the reader understands what this concept means. Senge's 1990 work, *The Fifth Discipline*, set the foundation for the concept of the learning organization. Senge saw interrelations of forces within the world and he sought to encourage similar visioning. He believed that when people began to see the interconnectedness between themselves and the organizations that they were a part of, that they could begin building a *learning organization* or organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, "where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (pg. 1).

Senge's (1990) work revolved around organizations becoming skilled at the following five activities:

1. Systematic problem solving that relies on scientific method rather than guesswork,

2. Experimentation with new approaches,
3. Learning from experience and past history,
4. Learning from the best practices of others, and
5. Transferring knowledge quickly and efficiently through the organization

According to Senge (1990), a new type of practitioner was beginning to emerge, one that is willing to combine his or her own personal learning with broader collective action in an organization. Senge (1990) opined that learning organizations value and derive competitive advantage from both individual and collective learning. He believed that without the ability for the organization to learn that they would lose their ability to survive in a changing world. This in turn would have an impact upon those supported by the organization and beyond.

Senge (1990) believed that while all people have the capacity to learn, the structures in which they have to function are often not conducive to reflection and engagement. Senge saw greater purpose in organizations than merely being the place that employees went to work as a means to an end. He saw increased potential when an environment was nurtured in which people were encouraged and empowered to put aside old ways of thinking, learned to be open with others, began to cultivate a richer understanding of how their company worked, and after formulating a plan, could then work collaboratively towards achieving or bringing that plan or vision to fruition.

Within the context of Dr. Fitzgerald's vision for MCPD becoming a learning organization, I believe that he shared Senge's (1990) vision of organizations that leveraged the collective knowledge of the employees towards solving problems and enhancing service delivery. I remember personal conversations with him in which he was concerned that "the way we have always done it" had become a cancer within the organization that would hamper

MCPD's ability to progress and to remain competitive within a changing community. Consistent with Dr. Fitzgerald's vision of MCPD becoming the learning organization described by Senge (1990), Jones & Hendry's (1992) work supports the notion that organizations need to provide learning for employees, and that the vision for what "could be" must be shared with the employees and throughout the collective.

Connecting directly to the concept of exploring professional development for MCPD sergeants, Peters (1996) work posits six areas that an organization must set out to learn if it is going to be a learning organization:

1. Learning about the jobs in the organization
2. Creating a level of debate in the organization which addresses future scenarios and challenges existing paradigms
3. Anticipating future competencies
4. Preventing the organization from being too introspective by "learning outward"
5. Aiming for and creating organizational alignment
6. Creating organizational memory banks

Peters (1996) offered that one learning how to do their job better is extremely important to people and that learning within an organization is deeply connected to learning how to do a great job. To Peters, learning how to do your job within an organization means understanding the technical aspects of doing your job and understanding the dynamic interplay of the people around you. It would seem that those organizations that are endeavoring to move towards being a learning organization are committed to a perpetual diagnostic state in which they are continually evaluating themselves to ensure that they are comporting with the associated tenets of the learning organization as well as making the adjustments necessary.

The dimensions and characteristics of a learning organization identified through Senge's (1990) work influenced my thoughts about employee development, and I believe points to a need to make changes at the organizational level within MCPD. More specifically, I became persuaded that the organization should be beginning the process of developing and integrating "systems" into the department that identify and transfer the organizational knowledge needed by the individual employees, particularly those within first-line supervisory positions, throughout the organization. I began to envision programs designed to infuse the missing knowledge within the organization and within these programs, I could easily see MCPD building in adjusting mechanisms whereby changes are periodically made to the programs, be it in response to a changing world, a changing organization, or simply changes in regulations that govern organizational or occupational operations.

Human Resource Development

Arguing that HRD defies definition, Blake (1995) is one of several scholars, including Lee (2001) that have refused to define it. As such, a consistent definition of what constitutes HRD is at times, elusive. Swanson and Holton (2009) defined Human Resource Development (HRD) as a "process for developing and unleashing human expertise through training and development and organizational development for the purpose of improving performance" (p. 4), with *learning* being the core of all HRD efforts. Werner and DeSimone (2009) defined HRD as a "set of systematic and planned activities designed by an organization to provide its members with the opportunities to learn necessary skills to meet current and future job demands" (p. 4). Continuing, Werner & DeSimone's (2009) identify the focus of HRD as being to "develop people's knowledge, expertise, productivity, and satisfaction, whether for personal or group/team

gain, or for the benefit of an organization, community, nation, or, ultimately, the whole of humanity” (p. 322).

HRD emerged primarily during the 1960’s and 1970’s, when professional trainers began to see that their role extended beyond the classroom (Swanson, 2012). . Since the 1960’s, the HRD field has gone through a substantive metamorphosis. In 1964, Harbison and Myers described HRD as the process of increasing the knowledge, skills, and capacities of all the people in society (p. 2). By 1983, Chalofsky and Lincoln had begun to incorporate adult learning into HRD and were defining it as the study of how individuals and groups in organizations change through learning. In 1991, Watkins began to incorporate Organizational Development (OD) into HRD by defining it as the field of study and practice responsible for the fostering of a long-term, work-related learning capacity at the individual, group, and organizational level of organizations that includes, but is not limited to training, career development, and organizational development (p. 427) Marsick and Watkins (1994) integrated HRD and learning organizations when they described HRD as a combination of training, career development, and organizational development offering the theoretical integration needed to envision a learning organization (pg. 355). Nadler (1990) defined HRD as “...organized learning experiences in a given period of time to bring about the possibility of performance change or general growth for the individual and the organization” (p. 1).

McLagan (1989) identified HRD roles and competencies needed for effective HRD functioning. McLagan’s (1989) study documented a shift from the traditional training and development topics to include career development and organizational development. McLagan’s (1989) work identified three primary HRD functions:

1. Training and Development (T&D)

2. Organization Development (OD)

3. Career Development

T & D focuses on “changing or improving the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of individuals” (Werner & DeSimone, 1990, p. 10). Training focuses upon providing employees the knowledge and skills needed to do tasks. Developmental activities focus more on enhancing employee’s abilities to do the job that they currently do as well as preparation for future jobs. Training’s focus is more short-term and represents activities that begin earlier on in the hiring process. More specifically, they involve skills acquisition that prepares employees to do the job that they have been hired for. Development, in contrast, is a longer term commitment to the employee and represents acts geared towards preparing the employee for the next level or the next assignment (Werner & DeSimone, 1990).

Organizational Development (OD) is defined as the process of enhancing the effectiveness of an organization and the well-being of its members through planned interventions that apply behavioral science concepts (Werner & DeSimone, 1990). Egan (2002) was able to identify 27 definitions for OD, all with different perspectives on what OD means. Despite the apparent differences in how scholars view OD, OD interventions have a role in change within the organization and generally include processes and procedures supportive of internal change. According to McLean (2006) it involves planned interventions and improvements in an organization’s processes and structures and requires skills in working with individuals, groups, and whole organizations (p. 13).

Career Development represents Werner and DeSimone’s (1990) final role of HRD. Career development is defined as “an ongoing process by which individuals progress through a series of states, each of which is characterized by a relatively unique set of issues, themes, and

tasks” (Werner & DeSimone, 1990, p. 12). Their work notes a strong relationship between T & D activities and career development.

As discussed above Werner and DeSimone (2009) offer “A DIImE” (assess, design, implement, and evaluate) as a way to remember their framework for workplace learning interventions (p. 26). Utilizing “A DIImE” as the framework, Werner and DeSimone (2009) first identified the necessity to do a needs assessment in order to determine if there is a need, and more importantly, to properly identify what that need is. A need can simply be a current deficiency, or a gap between what employees or organizations have or want, and where they want to be. This information is typically used to establish priorities for HRD efforts, defining specific training and objectives, and establishing evaluation criteria. Werner and DeSimone (2009) identify that needs assessments are extremely important for identifying:

- An organization’s goals and its effectiveness in reaching those goals
- Discrepancies or gaps between employees skills and the skills required for effective current job performance
- Discrepancies (gaps) between current skills and the skills needed to perform the job successfully in the future
- The conditions under which the HRD activity will occur (p. 106).

The data acquired during the needs assessment is critical for designing any HRD interventions. It is possible that the needs assessment may reveal that training is not the ideal solution for the issues or problems facing the organization. It is also possible to find that some other intervention is necessary from an organizational development perspective that necessitates change within practices, policies, or processes.

After determining the design of an intervention, the implementation phase begins. Implementation means finding the most appropriate training, trainer, and delivery mechanism to be responsive to the identified need. Any plan will have to be mindful of environment, location, and any potential challenges to intervention implementation. This may involve strategic planning, it may have budget repercussions, or there may be employee resistance or organizational push-back that practitioners have to be mindful of and further, have to be prepared to strategize how to adapt and overcome them.

Finally, after the needs assessment, design, and implementation of the subsequent phases have been completed, it will be extremely important to evaluate the outcome. In this segment, the effectiveness of the intervention is gauged or measured. According to Werner and DeSimone (2009), “careful evaluation provides information on participants’ reaction to the program, how much they learned, whether they use what they learned, and whether the intervention improved the organization’s effectiveness” (p. 29). The evaluative process is critical in learning organizations in that it is connected to the diagnostic process associated with being a learning organization.

Adult Learning

Understanding how people learn is of crucial importance to furthering their development and potential (McGuire & Jorgensen, 2011). Continuing HRD’s focus upon learning, and the fact that the focus of most of HRD’s efforts are geared towards adults, Malcolm Knowles’ (1970) work in the adult education field cannot be overlooked. Knowles coined the term “andragogy” or the “the art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles, 1970, p. 38). This was a move away from the concept of “pedagogy” or the “the art and science of teaching children” (Knowles, 1990, p. 28). He thought it clear that learning theorists saw learning as a

process by which behavior is changed, shaped, or controlled (p. 7). Knowles (1973) believed that teaching adult learners required different methods and strategies than those associated with teaching children. He believed in the notion of lifelong learning that continued beyond throughout adulthood. Additionally, he believed that internal motivators influenced adult pursuit of education and that they had a greater sense of purpose as one of those motivators. Knowles (1970) initially identified four assumptions about adult learners, and later revised his first assumptions (1989) to:

1. Adults have a need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it.
2. Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions. They have a deep need to be seen and treated by others as being capable of self-direction.
3. Adults come into educational environments with a greater volume and quality of experience than younger learners.
4. Adults have to be ready to learn and will resist doing so when not ready.
5. Adults are motivated to learn when they feel it advantageous to do so.
6. Adult learners become motivated to learn when they are moved to do so by internal pressures.

Knowles' work was more learner focused rather than teacher or instructor focused. In other words, the learner's desires, as they pertained to adults were considered more substantively than before. He believed the learner needed to have input into what they learned. Knowles' work acknowledged the contributions that the sum of the adult's experiences brought to the learning experience and advocated including them in the learning process.

With respect to HRD and the adult learner entering new environments, workplaces, and positions, Knowles joined forces with Holton and Swanson. Knowles, Holton, & Swanson (2005) discussed, from a performance improvement perspective, that each boundary crossing requires employees to “learn new cultures and sub-cultures” (p. 308). They thought this was a critical time in employee development. Further, each boundary crossing creates a “new” employee with unique learning needs that must be met in order for that employee to move towards high performance. Knowles, Holton, & Swanson (2005) took the position that an employee, irrespective of time with that organization, that was moving into a new position, is no different than a brand new employee to that organization. They believed that they were functionally the equivalent to any other person new to the organization and therefore, crossed into a new cultural context for performance.

That crossing into a new cultural context touches upon Fisher’s (1986) four content domains for new employee learning: individual, people, organization, and work tasks (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005, pg. 310). The work task domain is considered to be the most familiar in that it speaks to understanding the tasks of the job and having the correct knowledge, skills, and abilities being essential to new employee success (pg. 316). The work task domain is particularly relevant in that it speaks to the challenges associated with moving into new positions such as promotions and touches upon the needs of the adult learner under those circumstances.

Under the work task domain, there is an acknowledgement that there are several things that have to be considered with regard to developing employees, particularly those new to positions:

- **Work Savvy:** Information must be sorted to determine what is important, limited resources must be allocated, and skills learned in training must be applicable to

real work problems. The employee has to understand how to apply knowledge, and skills to the job, and acquire generic professional skills (for example, communication, time-management) necessary to function in the job.

- **Task Knowledge:** Mastery of tasks is necessary but must not occur in isolation. It must be supplemented through learning. Merely teaching the task is not enough. The employee needs to understand the basic skills required on the job and ways to perform them successfully.
- **Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:** Identify knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform tasks successfully, both now and in the future; develop formal and informal learning skills necessary to acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005, 316-317).

Knowles, Holton, & Swanson (2005) posited that development of new employees, or those moving into new positions was cyclical in nature, where newcomers may “cycle through learning tasks and learning events repeatedly” (pg. 317). Knowles, Holton, & Swanson’s (2005) work reaffirmed the necessity of the organization making sure that the employee that is promoted is adequately prepared to assume the responsibilities of the job that they are taking. Their work pointed to the criticality of organizations eschewing the notion of knowledge, skills, and ability transfers occurring simply because of how long an employee has worked for the organization.

The literature review data was important in framing the researcher’s understanding of the organization, the problem perceived, and offered a blueprint that pointed towards how to address the problem perceived. Dr. Fitzgerald’s introduction to Senge’s (1990) learning organization (LO) work oriented the researcher towards the concept of MCPD being an agency committed to change and being open to it. Senge’s work supported the notion of the organization not merely

identifying its problems and lamenting their existence, but taking steps to do something about it. Beyond just doing something about it, whatever mechanism that was identified to address the change had to be a part of a system of perpetual diagnosis and change in response to identified problems. Further, it provided the academic support to the concept of doing things differently than they had previously been done, and working towards making changes that would foster the beginnings of that commitment to organizational self-reflection and subsequent change throughout the organization from the bottom on through to the top of the organization.

The HRD literature, while sometimes elusive in its definition, pointed to the instrument (training) through which Senge's (1990) work could be actualized within the organization. Additionally, through Werner & DeSimone's (2009) work, the framework of "A DImE" identified a process to begin the groundwork to identify what intervention, if any, would be best utilized to address the perceived problem. The end result of identifying the intervention to use is a better understanding of the problem and the generation of actionable data necessary for the organization to begin taking steps towards addressing the problem.

Finally, the adult learning literature was instrumental in understanding how best to utilize the data obtained. With its' focus upon tailoring the delivery and subject matter of the identified HRD intervention towards the adult learner, the literature gave clues about what techniques may be important for involving the employee in the learning process and later assisting with knowledge transfer within the organization. Taken collectively, the literature was instrumental in helping the researcher identify a probable solution to the research problem or at the very least, pointed me in the right direction.

Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology used to collect the required data to address the needs of newly promoted and potential first line supervisors. The first section discusses the data collection framework. The second section provides information on the target population and sample. The third section discusses the researcher's role within the organization or the researcher as instrument. The fourth section discusses data collection. The fifth section describes the method of evidence collection.

Research Design

This project was in essence only the first phase of a multi-phase action research study. A needs assessment was conducted using qualitative data collection and analysis strategies. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) offered that a qualitative approach "emphasizes the qualities of entities, processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency" (p. 8). According to Merriam and Simpson (1995), qualitative methods are "well suited for investigations in applied fields such as adult education and training because we want to improve practice" (p. 97).

Action research (AR) is used when the researcher has a specific problem to solve (Creswell 2012). According to Stringer (2014), AR enacts localized, pragmatic approaches, investigating particular issues and problems in particular sites at particular moments in lives of interacting individuals and groups. Creswell (2012) describes AR as a practical focus of information collection that culminates in a plan of action for change.

Practical Action Research (PAR) is the framework that guided the methodology of the project. PAR is narrowly focused on a specific problem or issue and has as its goal improving practice. Stringer (2007) identifies the purpose of PAR as improving the quality of people's

organizations, communities, and family lives. The research journey of PAR may include quantitative and qualitative data collection to facilitate a broad understanding of the problem and to effectively devise the action plan (Creswell, 2012).

PAR is particularly conducive to this project in that it uses continuing cycles of investigation to reveal effective solutions to issues and problems experienced in specific situations and localized settings (Stringer, 2014). PAR and AR allow for organizational specificity tailored for the needs of an individual organization. Action research is based upon the proposition that “generalized solutions, plans, or programs may not fit all contexts or groups to whom they are applied and that the purpose of inquiry is to find an appropriate solution for the particular dynamics at work in a local situation” (Stringer, 2014, p. 6).

Creswell (2012) describes action research as dynamic, with a flexible process for which no blueprint exists for how to proceed. The PAR literature outlines a general process associated with inquiry in action research projects (Creswell 2012, p. 581). Mills’ (2011) work, outlined a four-step model for action research projects that he called the dialectic action research model. This model includes identifying an area of focus, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting the data, and finally, developing an action plan. PAR’s process is congruent with HRD’s “A DImE” process in that a needs assessments typically start the process, followed by data analysis, action plan development, and finally, implementation.

From an empirical research paradigm, there are limitations to AR. Given the element of focused particularity associated with AR, the results thereof are not generalizable to other populations and contexts, however based on the action research paradigm of investigating unique problems, with unique contexts, there is no expectation for generalization. Also, the fact that AR

does not follow the “carefully prescribed experimental procedures that have been inscribed as the scientific method” (Stringer, 2014, p. 42), drives some scholars to question its validity.

For purposes of this project, it is important to remember that the focus was upon the first three steps of the intervention. Given the fact that the researcher perceived there to be a problem, the stage was set for a needs assessment to determine what, if anything was the problem, and if there was one, what did those who were most affected by it, feel was the remedy. After collecting and analyzing the data, the implementation of the action plan is to occur in the near future.

Research Setting

The Missouri City Police Department has an authorized strength of 104 sworn employees. Of that, 26 are supervisors. Of those supervisors, 13 hold the rank of sergeant, four hold the rank of lieutenant and seven are command level officers holding the rank of Captain and above. Two supervisors hold a unique rank of “Supervisor”. The title and supervisory authority is in deference to programmatic responsibilities assigned to those positions.

According to Neuman (1997), purposive sampling is an acceptable form of data collection for special situations in which subjects are selected for a specific purpose. The target population was those employees that fell within the titles of sergeant, lieutenant, or command level, 24 employees fell within those categories. MCPD has an additional 40 civilian (non-sworn) employees, both supervisory and non-supervisory. Those positions were not included in the data collection.

The sample used for the study was 22 total employees out of the 24 possible. One of the employees holding the rank of sergeant was out on an extended vacation. Another sergeant was out on extended medical leave. The participation rate was 92% of the target population.

Researcher Role

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam & Simpson, 1995). The researcher's current assignment within MCPD is as Assistant Police Chief over the Administrative Bureau. The researcher has performed in that capacity for almost five years. In this role, the researcher is positioned to evaluate organizational needs, specifically as they apply to training, performance evaluations, discipline, professional standards, promotions, and accountability. All of these functions are either within the researcher's purview directly or indirectly and delegated specifically to the researcher for organizational development. Many of the job functions are inextricably intertwined.

The Administrative Bureau researches and conducts promotional processes with the city Human Resources and Organizational Development (HROD) team. Additionally, Administrative Bureau cadre coordinate all training for the department as well as establishing organizational training agenda in response to organizational needs and shifts in professional trends as well as those mandated through process of law. The Administrative Bureau is also tasked with insuring that all employees remain in compliance with all statutory and regulatory provisions related to professional licensing.

As commander of the Administrative Bureau, Internal Affairs, Professional Standards, and training, the associated responsibilities uniquely place the researcher within the organization to be able to identify areas where organizational systems fail or where there is potential for failure. Those systems failures include those attributable to simple employee misconduct, as well as those in which employees were either not properly prepared to deal with workplace situations, were ill-equipped to do so, or those in which the system itself simply failed them either through inadequate policies or the absence thereof. In the former, the employee

themselves bear the responsibility. In the latter, the organization bears responsibility and must initiate action to either mitigate or remediate its' culpability.

Training and education have played a large part of the researcher's professional career responsibilities. In addition to the researcher's career responsibilities to the police department, the researcher has been employed for seven years at a local community college district as an adjunct professor of political science and government. Along with teaching adult learners at the collegiate level, the researcher teaches professional development courses at several area police academies and universities. The researcher holds multiple instructor level licenses through the state, in several disciplines, including certification as an instructor through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The researcher's advanced training has included nationally recognized executive level professional development managerial programs including the Senior Management Institute for Police (SMIP) conducted by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), Northwestern University's School of Police Staff and Command (SPSC), the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Command College, and Harvard University's Senior Executives in State and Local Government program.

The researcher's role within the organization can have a significant impact upon research. In this case, I am clearly an insider researcher due to my affiliation with the site of the research as well as my role within the organizational hierarchy. With respect to that insider standing, Costley et al. (2010) spoke to the importance of the researchers 'situatedness' and context, as it relates to the research. More specifically, they highlight the value of the insider researcher in work based research. As an insider, I am in a unique position to study the issues in-depth and I possess "special knowledge" (p. 3) about the issues affecting the organization. Additionally, because of my position within the organizational hierarchy, I can challenge the organizational

norms from an informed position and perspective, as well as have influence upon organizational changes.

There are inherent weaknesses associated with insider research. Costley et al. (2010) spoke to the potential for a lack of impartiality, skewed data perspectives, and vested interests in certain results being achieved. I can absolutely concur that as a researcher, I am expecting certain outcomes and do not necessarily see that expectation as a negative. One of those expected outcomes is that the data collection method will yield actionable results that can be used for organizational change. My experiences within the occupation and in executive level managerial development coupled with my training experiences lead me to believe that there is a likelihood that there is an organizational challenge. While the weaknesses associated with insider researchers are certainly concerns, the prudent researcher will take steps to insulate the work from the potential influences. In this case, the data collected was carefully analyzed and triangulated in an effort to minimize the effects of researcher bias. Certainly, the effects of having an outsider to the organization come in to assist with data analysis is beneficial in minimizing the effects of researcher bias (Creswell. 2012).

Data Collection

The researcher used focus groups as the method of data collection to elicit the desired information. Kitzinger and Barbour (1999) described focus groups as “group discussions exploring a specific set of issues” (p. 4), and identifies them as ideal for exploring peoples’ experiences, opinions, wishes, and concerns. Morgan (1997) described focus groups as a form of qualitative research, which is basically group interviews in which the researcher, who is also typically the moderator, relies on the interactions between the group to produce data and insights (p. 2). Morgan’s (1997) work supported the notion that focus groups, when used in a self-

contained method, can be the principal source of data and can be the basis for a complete study. Plummer-D'Amato (2008) called focus group data "particularly rich and complex" (p. 69) and Morgan (1997) described the strength of focus group usage as being grounded in its' flexibility for the researcher, and the ability afforded to the researcher to more closely collect data from groups discussing topics of interest to the researcher. Barbour and Kitzinger (1999) identify focus group data as "well suited for use in pilot projects" (p. 119).

Most experts agree that human learning, training, and performance improvement initiatives should begin with a needs assessment (Gupta, 2007). Gupta (2007) suggests a two-prong question for determining if a needs assessment should be conducted. The first question is to determine if there is dissatisfaction with a current situation. The second question is to determine if there is a desire for change. If the answer to both is affirmative, then there exists a gap between the current condition and the desired condition. According to Gupta (2007), that gap is called a need, and addressing it involves determining what need is important and how to address it. The researcher chose to use focus groups as the primary data source for identifying if there was a need and if so, what was the best strategy for addressing it.

DeLuccia, Gavagan and Pitre (2009) describe focus groups as ideally suited for employee research in that the group dynamic replicates the collaborative environment of the work place. This can be especially true in environments where employees are accustomed to working together. Krueger and Casey (2000) identify focus groups as more natural environments than individual interviews because the "participants both influence and are influenced by others---just as they are in life" (p. 11). In the case of focus groups, "the inductive researcher derives understanding based on the discussion as opposed to testing a preconceived theory or hypothesis" (Krueger & Casey, 2000, pg. 12).

The overall focus of the needs assessment was not only to try to identify any resources, knowledge and skills perceived to be necessary to be an effective mid-level supervisor (Sergeant) in MCPD, it was to try to identify needs from multiple perspectives. In doing so, the researcher had the best chance of eliciting a richer understanding of the need, if any. The first part of the needs assessment involved identifying the resources, knowledge and skills that MCPD employees perceive necessary for mid-level supervisors to have had to prepare them for effective performance within those ranks or believe would have contributed to their success in the position. The second part of the needs assessment involved identifying the resources, knowledge and skills, that those currently holding the mid-level managerial positions believe either would have contributed to their success in the position, or that they feel they currently need within the position.

The focus groups within the sample were broken down into three (3) different groups, by rank, based upon Krueger and Casey's (2000) work that suggested maintaining the homogeneity of the focus groups in order to facilitate ease of analysis, as well as participant comfort. Also, Krueger and Casey (2000) recognized the degree to which sharing can be influenced by differences in participants characteristics (p. 72). Separation by rank and grouping by rank is also important because the focus of the research is not intended to place the individual group participants at odds with each other or to cause discomfort with the day to day working relationships, but instead seeks a common understanding by both.

Focus group differentiations by rank had an additional benefit. Group homogeneity gives a perspective of what participants perceive relative to their position within the organization. In other words, each homogenized group will have a unique perspective about their expectations of a given position or issue and those expectations are connected to how success in that position

within organization and specific job responsibilities is perceived. Further, the higher the rank within the context of quasi-military organizations, the more that position responsibilities will transition to those that are generally more conceptual in nature, as well being closely connected to organizational mission and vision setting. As different ranks have differing oversight responsibilities over others, it becomes reasonable that their perception of the needs of other members be taken into consideration and may later have to be reconciled with their responsibilities to the organization as well.

The first focus group was command level officers (Captain's rank and above) and will hereafter be referred to as "Group 1". Group 1 was composed of seven employees. The second group were non-command level officers holding the rank of lieutenant and will be hereafter be referred to as "Group 2". Group 2 was composed of four employees. The third group were non-command level officers holding the rank of sergeant. Group 3 was composed of 11 people. Since Group 3 was a relatively high number, in comparison to the optimal number of five or six identified by Kitzinger and Barbour (1999), this group was randomly subdivided into two (2) sub-groups based upon availability.

Due to the size of Group 1 (7 employees) and Group 2 (4 employees), random assignment to the individual groups was rendered moot. Groups 1 and 2 had their own individual focus groups. Due to the size of Group 3 (11 employees), random assignment was necessary in order to maintain optimal focus group size. It became necessary to allow for two separate focus group times in order to maintain a more manageable group size. The random assignment for Group 3 was achieved through posting focus group times via the Missouri City Police Department employee email system and allowing group participants to assign themselves to the available time slots on a first come basis. A cap of seven was placed upon each time slot.

Calendar invites were sent to all members of the target population with dates and times to participate.

Consistent with DeLuccia, Gavagan, and Pitre's (2009) suggestion, the calendar invites sent to the members of the target population contained:

- A personal message, which explains that the recipient was selected to participate
- A brief description of the study's objectives
- Relevant logistical information (time, date, location, etc.)
- Contact information

The calendar invites were sent 12 days prior to the first focus group date. This gave invitees ample time to check their schedules and to pick focus group sessions that best fit their circumstances. The use of the calendar invite system of scheduling is consistent with the culture of the organization.

Due to the response rates and participant availability, the focus groups were conducted over the course of one week instead of the initially expected two weeks. Each individual session was scheduled for no more than 120 minutes. The researcher was prepared to schedule follow up sessions should additional information need to be considered however, that became unnecessary. Participants received their normal salary during the time period spent in the focus groups.

In preparation for the focus groups, the researcher assembled a research team to support the research and assist with the data collection and analysis for the project. The team was comprised of four people including the researcher. One team member was a research assistant employed by one of the local universities. The research assistant was specially trained in research data coding and analysis and performed those activities in support of multiple research

projects at the university level for approximately two years. The research assistant was employed in that capacity at the time of the research project and was paid for their services.

Another team member was a note-taker and provided technical support. This team member was employed by the agency (research site) as a program manager and as such, had organizational research and development responsibilities as a part of their normal duties. Due to that person's unique skillsets, the note-taker was also tasked with monitoring the audio and video technology to address potential failures. The last member of the research team was a transcriptionist who also assisted in note-taking. This team member had experience as a researcher, having recently completed a master's level graduate degree in clinical mental health counseling at a local university. This team member was also employed by the research site and has provided support to the administrative bureau for the past three years, and was employed by the organization for approximately ten years.

All research team members except for the research assistant are familiar with the focus group participants on both a personal and professional level. They would be able to assess not only the content of the data from the focus groups, they would have insider knowledge on the context as well. Due to the highly confidential nature of each of the team member's work assignments, particularly those employed within the agency, the researcher was confident of their ability to maintain the integrity and confidentiality of the data.

Research team members were set up in a control room adjacent to the main room where the focus groups were to be held. The control room allowed research team members to monitor the focus groups real-time, through the use of technology. The control room is equipped with white boards on two walls and the video feed was displayed on a third wall. The technology within the room where the focus groups were held affords 360 degree observation of the room.

While focus group participants were aware that the research team was monitoring, they were not able to see or hear the research team. Focus group participants were also made aware of who the research team members were in order to ease participant's comfort levels.

All of the focus groups were held in the training room of Missouri City Police Department's Public Safety Headquarters (PSHQ). All the sessions were audio and video recorded with the secure feeds channeled to a secure location on the MCPD data servers. Access to MCPD data servers was compartmentalized with restricted access levels. No focus group participant had access to the data feeds. Not all members of the research team had access to the compartmentalized data. The audio and video recording equipment in the training room is unobtrusive as they were built into the room schematics.

Prior to each focus group the attendees were given a consent release which was signed and returned to the researcher prior to beginning the questions. This consent release was used to confirm their voluntary participation in the focus group activities as well as the study. The consent release forms along with all associated documentation was stored in the researcher's locked office. Office access was limited to only the researcher. Focus group participants were told that the sessions would be audio and video recorded. These assurances were captured on the audio and video recordings. There were no objections brought to the attention of the researcher by any group participant. The inconspicuous nature of the equipment and possibly the level of comfort and familiarity with the focus group location (MCPD training room) may have contributed to this.

A total of four focus groups were conducted. The researcher moderated all four sessions. Harkening back to Morgan's (1997) work, the researcher is typically the moderator and that a part of the strength of focus group research rests with the strength of the relationship between the

moderator/researcher and the participants. The researcher has previously conducted training for departmental supervisors. Prior training sessions have largely been leadership seminars that focused upon alignment of supervisory responsibilities with organizational expectations. All of the participants of the focus groups in this proposed study were employees of the organization during that time period. Most of them would have participated in the leadership training taught by the researcher. The atmosphere from the prior supervisory training conducted by the researcher in this venue was considered collegial and productive from the perspective of the researcher.

From the perspective of the researcher, all of the prior supervisor leadership seminars were generally well received. Many attendees have expressed a positive level of satisfaction with the seminars. Many have gone so far as to express the desire for the organization to continue similar trainings in order to more closely maintain homogeneity in understanding of supervisory expectations. The positive feedback received contributed to the researcher's belief that the department's supervisory cadre would be amenable to participation in the research project. It was also a factor for consideration when determining whether there was a necessity for a professional moderator instead of the focus groups being facilitated by the researcher, despite the researcher's relative position within the organizational hierarchy.

The fact that the focus group participants had prior experience with the researcher as the instructor or facilitator, in supervisory development training, seemed to render the researcher's organizational position relatively benign. This is consistent with Morgan and Krueger's (1998) position that the need to use professional moderators to conduct focus groups is a myth that is frequently associated with focus group research scrutiny. Instead, Morgan and Krueger's (1998) work reinforces that the moderator's experience will be most valuable to the research when it is

directly relevant to the topics and participants in the actual project. To further downplay the researcher's position within the organization, the researcher facilitated the focus groups sans departmental uniform and, following Krueger's (1998) work, questions were direct and asked "in a conversational manner" (p. 3).

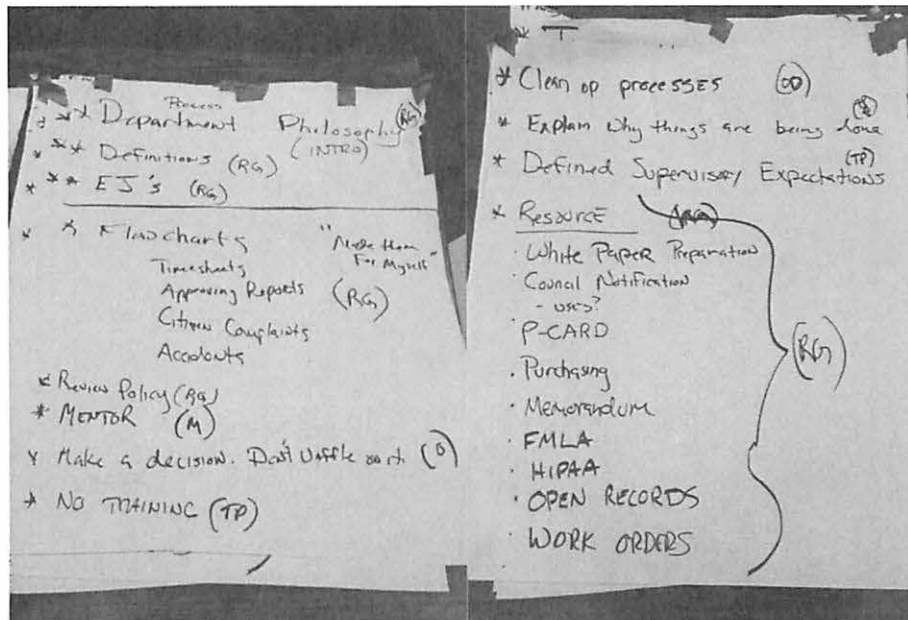
During the focus groups, the researcher (moderator) took brief field notes utilizing flip charts. The research team note-takers in the adjacent control room took more extensive notes utilizing the whiteboards to support those notes taken by the researcher. The researcher presented the two research questions to the members of each focus group and allowed those to serve as the guides for the conversations. Individual notes were started on each focus group so as not to confuse which group a particular concept emanated from however, throughout the focus groups, the researcher did refer back to prior group data.

The researcher's note-taking strategy followed several of Krueger's (1998) recommendations including, "capturing direct quotes, paraphrasing quotes, and summarizing themes identified by participants" (p. 77). Research team members adopted Krueger's (1998) note-taking recommendations as well. The researcher periodically restated data back to participants in order to ensure understanding and/or meaning prior to final note-taking. The researcher periodically asked follow-up or focus questions to elicit further information or to explore deeper into topics that may have evoked stronger responses. An example would be when the moderator said, "Well, being mindful of the fact that part of your responsibility is to teach and mentor subordinates or develop them, what else could we do? "

After the conclusion of the focus groups, the research team began the process of analyzing and coding the resulting data. Krueger and Casey (2000) described focus group data analysis as "deliberate and planned—not capricious, arbitrary, or spontaneous" (p. 128). They

further described it as a systematic and sequential process that helps ensure that results will reflect what was shared in the group (p. 128).

The audio and video recordings were compiled for transcription as transcript based analysis represents the most rigorous mode of analyzing data (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009). Deluccia, Gavagan, and Pitre (2009) describe transcriptions as the easiest way to analyze focus group data and to identify quotes to support key findings (p. 110). There were approximately seven hours of audio and video data needing transcription. The transcription was initially begun by a member of the research team. After several days, research team members began to realize the tedium associated with transcribing the data. As a result, the researcher hired a professional service to transcribe approximately two hours of the data. The professional service that was utilized is one routinely used by local governments and courts in order to maintain confidentiality. Even after receiving the transcripts from the professional service, research team members had to go back through and make adjustments to align the professionally transcribed data with the other five hours that were prepared by the research team. The total number of pages of transcribed data from the four focus groups was 134 pages of information. Transcriptions were transcribed verbatim. Approximately twenty pages of flip-chart data existed from the moderator notes that were taken during the individual focus group sessions (See Figure 1). They too were saved for later analysis.

Flip Chart Data - Figure 1

Data Analysis

DeLuccia, Gavagan, and Pitre (2009) identify transcript analysis as a necessity to begin analysis of the focus group data. After compiling the transcripts, research team members were allowed copies of the transcripts in order to begin independent theme identification. After three days, the research team was assembled to begin coding and analyzing the data. The process of coding involves identifying relevant comments, interpreting them, and flagging them each with a code—a word or two that summarizes the main idea (DeLuccia, Gavagan, & Pitre, 2009).

Transcript-based analysis is often supplemented with field notes taken by researchers (Krueger & Casey, 2000, pg. 130). In this case, the notes prepared by the researcher on the flip-charts during the focus group sessions were coded and analyzed as well.

Coding

Research analysis of focus group data is typically focused upon identifying themes within the data. Ryan and Bernard (2003) describe themes as abstract, often fuzzy, constructs which

investigators identify during, and after data collection. Krueger and Casey (2000) recommend several strategies for analyzing focus group data and developing themes. Those recommendations include, the *long table* approach, where the transcripts and notes are spread out over a long table and recurring words are color coded and counted, utilizing computer-based focus group software (eg. QDA Miner, NVIVO, etc.) for analyzing in which recurring words are cut and paste into groups, as well as sound software in which a program does an analysis on the audio portion of the focus group to determine the frequency with which certain words are spoken during the focus group session.

The researcher chose a combination approach. Instead of the long-table approach whereby transcripts are spread out and color coded with recurring themes and the data is placed in groups, the research team took that approach with respect to the moderator notes from the flip charts. Those notes were spread out on a long table and read collaboratively by members of the research team in an effort to glean emerging themes. In the case of this research study, the note-taking that was done by the moderator as well as the research team during the focus groups was examined first to identify themes.

After identifying themes in the moderator and research team notes, the research team then began to work on identifying themes in the one hundred and thirty-four pages of focus group transcripts. While there are software packages available specifically for organizing, managing, and facilitating qualitative data analysis, Barbour and Kitzinger (1999) identify them as unnecessary and “rarely an analytic requirement” (p. 147). Instead, a simple use of the “find” and “replace” functions of Microsoft Word allowed the researchers to quickly glean key words and key word variations throughout the documents in order to establish number and frequency of

themes throughout the transcripts. Krueger and Casey (2000) describe this as essentially using the computer to perform the “long-table analysis” (p. 137).

All one hundred and thirty-four pages of focus group transcripts were examined and analyzed. It should be noted that members of the research team were allowed to examine the transcripts individually prior to the entire team assembling for group coding. This was to allow for individual observation by team members to facilitate initial independent theme identification. By identifying themes independently prior to the group coding, team members were able to lessen the effect of researcher bias or influence on the process of theme identification. All transcripts and field notes were reviewed by the research team.

It should be noted for the sake of establishing reliability, that initial theme identification or coding was done independently by the individual members of the research team. Additional coding was later collaboratively determined by the research team. Doing so in this manner contributes to interrater or inter-coder reliability (Sandelowski, 1995) which in turn reduces the chances of researcher bias. Patton (1990) referred to such agreement among coders as “triangulation through multiple analysts” (p. 468).

The research team assembled for collaborative evaluation of the transcripts for themes. Identified themes were assigned a unique code. For example, “resource guide” would receive the corresponding code of “RG” (See Figure 2). After identifying the recurring themes from the researcher and research team notes, the researcher took the transcripts in electronic format and again, utilized the “find and replace” feature in Microsoft Office 2013, to find the words and relevant comments within the document, and replace (tag) them with the unique code and color for easy identification. Each identified theme or code also received a corresponding color code or scheme (See Figure 3).

Theme Group Code Table - (Figure 2)

RESOURCE GUIDE	RG
MENTOR	M
TRAINING PROGRAM	TP
ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	OD
SERGEANT TRAINNG PROGRAM	STP
OTHER	O

Color Code Table (Figure 3)

RESOURCE GUIDE	RG	225	
MENTOR	M	56	
TRAINING PROGRAM	TP	73	
ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	OD	49	
SERGEANT TRAINING PROGRAM	STP	51	
OTHER	O	24	

Throughout the process, the research team brainstormed words and phrases that were similar in thought and meaning that were noted in the conversations and the transcripts to add to the “find and replace” choices within the program. Careful examination of the transcript documents themselves was valuable in determining what words or similar phrases to utilize especially since the transcript allowed the researcher to be able to see the words and phrases within the context that they were used within the focus groups. This allowed for a richer

understanding of what the participant meant or what they were trying to communicate during the focus group session.

The second round of coding was collaboratively determined by the research team after initial independent examination to reduce the chances of researcher bias. So too was the process of identifying similar words or phrases that participants might use to mean the same thing or that might be categorized under the same theme. For example, an identified theme such as “mentorship” would receive the corresponding code of “M” and similar words or phrases might include the words or phrases “mentor”, “support system”, “sponsor”, or “under their wing” (See Figure 4). As new themes began to emerge, they were added to the list of themes. This was done until all of the notes and transcripts were examined and no new themes were identified or discovered. Consistent with Creswell’s (2012) work, data that did not specifically provide evidence for themes were disregarded.

Mentorship (M) – (Figure 4)

Ride-a-Long	Mentor
Underwing	Shadow
Shadowing	Sponsor
Support System	Mentorship
Mentoring	Mentorship Program

After compiling the themes, the frequency and extensiveness that they appeared was noted however, no inference was drawn solely by either. Frequency refers to the number of times that something is said or that it appears. This can be less important as it is possible for something to be said multiple times by the same person. Extensiveness refers to how many different people said it. Extensiveness can be more important than frequency in that multiple

people saying something could point to enhanced interest by the target population. In the case of a needs assessment based focus group, this could be particularly important.

Finally, it is important to note the measures taken to triangulate the focus group data to help ensure validity. Triangulation traces back to the work of Campbell and Fiskel (1959). Creswell (2012) describes it as the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals (e.g., a principal and a student), types of data (e.g., observational field notes and interviews), or methods of data collection (e.g., documents and interviews) in description and themes in qualitative research (pg. 259).

Of the four types of triangulation identified by Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999), “investigator triangulation” is the most applicable to this study in that it speaks to examining the data from the perspective of multiple observers rather than a single observer. In this case, the members of the research team examined the transcripts for themes both individually and collectively. Final theme identification and coding was done collaboratively. Additionally, triangulation (of sources) was reached through considering the data from the different perspectives of focus groups 1, 2, and 3, with each having different responsibilities within the organization. Doing so in this manner contributed to credibility because the focus group research questions are compared from people with different viewpoints (Creswell, 2012, pg. 259).

As with most research, the question gets asked, “How do you determine validity?” Krueger and Casey (2000) speak to the ensuring that focus group data is trustworthy through the procedures utilized throughout the focus group process. In the case of this research, the process of audio and videotaping the focus groups, coupled with the process of verbatim transcription, contribute to the process of ensuring the validity of the results. In order to further understand

focus group data from a contextual perspective, non-verbal cues (eg. Voice raising, heavy sighing, cutting off another speaker, etc.) were also noted within the transcripts. The nature of the focus group, particularly with an insider researcher as moderator, allows for direct observation of focus group answers and provides opportunities for immediate follow up questioning for purposes of amplifying or clarifying responses. “Moreover, the focus group researcher can feed back the key points and seek verification from participants” (p. 203). Interestingly, Krueger and Casey (2000) suggest that qualitative researchers focus less on traditional concerns of validity, and focus more on “good practice” (p. 203).

Findings

After compiling the focus group data and coding it, the research team began to compile themes and identify commonalities within the focus group participant conversations. Within the findings, conversation identifiers were coded to maintain confidentiality of participants (ie. SG2, SG10, etc). Theme definitions were collaboratively decided upon by the research team. Five major themes emerged from the focus group data analysis:

1. Resource Guide [REDACTED]
2. Mentorship (M)
3. Training Program [REDACTED]
4. Organizational Knowledge & Processes (OD)
5. Sergeant Training Program (STP)

Resource Guide (RG)

The RG code manifested itself fairly evenly throughout all of the four focus groups.

The Resource Guide (RG) data code was used to identify resources that focus group participants felt would be beneficial to them to know how to perform the rudimentary supervisory responsibilities expected of a sergeant within MCPD. In many cases, the focus group participant simply called out the name of the code or in this case said, “resource guide”. This made code identification simpler in some cases.

The duties or responsibilities identified were those that the sergeant was called upon to do on a routine basis that might require specific technical expertise, especially those associated with various organization specific software packages. Examples of this would be manipulating MCPD’s Records Management System (RMS), MCPD’s performance management and

evaluation system (Performance Pro), or MCPD's Employee Support Software (ESS) or payroll system. Example of participant comments:

- "I mean you know performance pro, I struggled with in the beginning but after doing it for so long you figure it out." (SG5)
- "Something as simple as putting in a work order or something, some people don't know how to do". (SG8)
- "I'm gonna chance topic well going off of this but I would like to have seen a resource guide". (SG3)

These types of ordinary and routine responsibilities are going untaught according to focus group participants. These responsibilities and duties affect the organization on a weekly, if not daily basis, and the knowledge associated with performing them is not being uniformly imparted.

New supervisory employees commented that they were finding themselves having to ask how to complete and approve subordinate timesheets, complete personnel and vehicle inspection paperwork, review body camera videos, etc., and in some cases getting conflicting information, because there was no mechanism to make sure that there was knowledge continuity. In the case of the resource guide, many participants described seeking a quick reference book that allowed them to refresh on how to complete some of the task areas with the use of examples, screen shots, and policy references. Participants stated:

- "I would like to have seen a resource guide. I am the youngest sergeant here and it sets the tone of the job. (SG3)
- "Flowcharts you know from, approving time sheets to reviewing reports, to rejecting reports I mean just a flow chart on what needs to be done". (SG9)

- “I think with the example of the resource guide that we built for the new officer, or for the officers, is something that would be beneficial.” (SG11)

Mentorship (M)

The M code manifested itself fairly evenly throughout all of the four focus groups.

The Mentorship (M) data code was used to designate instances when focus group participants made commentary supportive of feeling that they would have liked to have been assigned a mentor to assist with the transition to supervisor. This mentorship request came in a variety of forms. In many cases, the mentorship request was connected to having someone who understood the challenges with making the transition from “buddy to boss” and how to navigate the pitfalls associated entering the new cultural domain of being a sergeant. Many of those who commented about the need for a mentorship program cited how they felt that having one would have been extremely beneficial in providing needed support and ultimately being more successful initially rather than having to make more mistakes at the onset of their supervisory tenure. Examples of focus group participant comments:

- “I wish I had mentoring”. (CM3)
- “No I was just going to say that it’s interesting that mentorships is one of the top um items on the list so to speak because that’s the first thing I wrote down.” (SG2)
- “I found that when I was first committed and I’m looking at it as a sergeant – when I was first promoted, I guess I found myself oftentimes trying to do the work rather than, uh, you know mentoring these guys”. (CM4)

Training Program (TP)

The TP code manifest itself fairly evenly throughout all of the four focus groups.

The Training Program (TP) data code was used to identify topic areas that focus group participants felt necessary for all police supervisors to have knowledge of, irrespective of the specific assignment within the organization. The classes identified primarily included Human Resource (HR) related topics such as how to how to deal with Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) issues, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), among others. There were multiple references to classes on leadership and performance management, as well as courses on how to deal with problem employees, and communicating with people. Focus group participants expressed a belief that sergeants needed to receive a baseline level of knowledge in some of these key areas as they had an impact upon not only how they dealt with their individually assigned employees, but also, how they dealt with those employees had an impact upon the organization as a whole. Examples of participant comments:

- “I’d venture to agree with, with (SG10) is classes, just different classes on how to deal with problem employees”. (SG9)
- “I think any type of leadership training as like the (TPCA) training they have now would be beneficial”. (SG11)
- “Because what I’m finding is a lot of these guys don’t know how to communicate with people that they supervise, you know. They can’t separate, “You know I used to work with you, “and now, “I have to tell you what to do”. (CM1)
- “What I see chief, at least for the degree that I have, the buddy to boss has been the hardest thing to deal with. That was the hardest. And trying to get those

sergeants to understand that it should be a separation, because it is no longer a us and them, because now you're one of the them. You know, does that make sense?" (LT3)

Organizational Development, Knowledge & Processes (OD)

The OD code manifest itself fairly evenly throughout three of the four focus groups.

The Organizational Development, Knowledge and Processes (OD) data code was used to identify process areas that the focus group participants felt needed to be either developed and/or codified (policies or operational directives) so that there was a common understanding of how to do things. To a large degree, it was about organizational change. For instance, one participant said that they didn't feel that the sergeants were all doing some of the processes similarly because there was a lack of common organizational understanding of the position expectations. Further, participants felt the department policies were inadequate in some circumstances because it may tell you to do something, but not tell you how to do it. Participants comments spoke to a need for workflows to identify now only how to do some things, but also, to whom is the completed product given for processing. These processes that focus group participants identified included things like how to complete a "use of force" form, a "supervisor first report of injury", and where to take them upon completion. Some participants identified current programs and policies that were being underused or inadequately supported. Examples of participant comments:

- "I think some of these things we are referring to, that these sergeants are doing or not doing or as they need an organizational understanding why we're doing these things". (SG6)

- “I think we have a pretty good start here with that MPO program you know”.
(CM1)
- “Because when I got promoted this is something that I guess need now or maybe prior to, some of the things that I did as a patrol sergeant, were in my mind, and having some organizational understanding going in, were not needed.” (SG6)

Sergeant Training Program (STP)

The STP code manifest itself fairly evenly in only two of the four focus groups.

The Sergeant Training Program (STP) data code was used to denote focus group participant data indicative of a desire that potential and/or new sergeants participate in a training program similar to the training program offered to newly hired police officers. This is the equivalent of a Field Training Instruction (FTI) program for sergeants. Examples of participant comments:

- “I think just like a new recruit you need to have some sort of FTO program”.
(CM6)
- “I also think that you need ...just like the FTO program...because I had a lot of questions when I first got promoted.”

Discussion

The purpose of this project was to identify the needs of first line supervisors and potential mid-level managerial candidates to effectively assume the responsibilities associated with the rank of Sergeant in the Missouri City Police Department (MCPD). It was the first phase of a multi-phase endeavor to design and implement a professional development program. To that end, the researcher sought to identify the Knowledge, Skills, Abilities (KSA) and/or resources, if any, perceived by internal stakeholders, more specifically those currently holding the rank of Sergeant and those who supervise those holding the rank of Sergeant to be beneficial to potential candidates who want to assume the responsibilities of the position or to those who already hold the position.

A review of available literature indicated the existence of data supportive of the need to train middle-level managers within organizations. That same literature seems to support the importance of the roles that those employees play within those organizations, especially the impact that those within them have upon the performance and behavior of those that they supervise. However, there seems to be little research attention given to how to determine what to train (content) and/or develop these employees, specifically within policing organizations, and further, what processes should be undertaken to do so.

The capstone project focused specifically upon the first step of Werner and DeSimone's (2009) process for determining training and learning interventions at MCPD. The resulting data that came out of the focus groups confirmed not only that there was a need to train and prepare MCPD sergeants to assume supervisory responsibilities, it also gave an indication of the content that should be the focus of the training specifically at this organization. The data indicated that

the supervisory cadre, from command level officer down to sergeants, generally felt that there was a gap between where the organization wanted them to be and where they were.

Most MCPD supervisors felt that a Resource Guide (RG) would be beneficial to provide to new sergeants in order to assist them in navigating some of the routine responsibilities that are thrust upon newly promoted sergeants. Similarly, most MCPD supervisors felt that Training Programs (TP) would be beneficial in providing baseline knowledge about performing their duties as a supervisor within MCPD. The extensiveness manifested by both within the focus groups was consistent throughout them all. Peters (1996) assertion that learning how to do your job with an organization means understanding the technical aspects of doing your job would seem to support the participant's feelings about themes RG and TP.

Most MCPD supervisors felt that theme Organizational Development, Knowledge and Processes (OD) would be beneficial for the sergeants and for the organization. After the researcher evaluated what participants were seeking a little more closely, it became clear that McLean's (2006) as well as Werner and DeSimone's (1990) Organizational Development work was applicable. Werner and DeSimone (1990) defined Organizational Development as the process of enhancing the effectiveness of an organization and the well-being of its members through planned interventions that apply behavioral science concepts. McLearn (2006) said Organizational Development involved planned interventions and improvements in an organization's process and structures. The focus group participants were seeking processes and process clarifications in order to be able to do their jobs better. This would necessitate some organizational adjustments on the part of MCPD.

Most MCPD supervisors felt that MCPD adopting or developing a formal Mentorship (M) program for sergeants would be beneficial for the sergeants and for the organization. While

the extensiveness was not as strong as RG and TP, three out of four focus groups, the data indicates a significant perception of its' value. This is consistent with Hezlett & Gibson's (2007) work that says that interest in mentoring has expanded because of continuous learning, reliance on informal learning, and on-the-job development. According to de Janasz et al (2003), "mentoring has become an effective means for coping with organizational change" (pg. 81).

Most MCPD supervisors felt that a Sergeant's Training Program (STP) should be developed similar to the Field Training Instruction (FTI) program that is the industry norm for new police officers entering into law enforcement and into the individual agencies. This concept is supported by Knowles, Holton, and Swanson's (2005) position that an employee, irrespective of time with that organization, that was moving into a new position, is no different than a brand new employee to that organization. They believed that they were functionally the equivalent to any other person new to the organization and therefore, crossed into a new cultural context for performance. Interestingly, the distribution across the focus groups with regard to this concept was not as even as the others. In other words, the extensiveness of the perceived need was slightly skewed in that primarily two focus groups more heavily perceived the need for sergeants being trained in a STP. What was particularly telling is that the two groups that perceived the need more heavily were Focus Group 3 and Focus Group 4, both of which were the groups that supervise the sergeant's focus groups (Focus Group 1 & Focus Group 2).

During the research process, the researcher noticed several interesting occurrences with regard to the employees participating. The first thing that I noticed was that those most affected by the process, the sergeants, seemed to be the most excited about it. Throughout the process, I noted them being unusually interested in the process, with some inquiries that occurred both in public and private as well. It was almost as if the possibility of a supervisory development

program had been something that they had been desiring, but didn't know how to go about asking. Some of those that struggled the most with acclimating to their new responsibilities were the same ones that seemed the most interested. It was almost as if they had been thrown a lifeline. I noted that some seemed relieved by the process and that the focus groups seemed to have facilitated more communication among the sergeants to express what they felt that they needed.

Another unexpected outcome was the researcher realizing that just through the focus group participation, the participants were gaining new knowledge and insight. The fact that they were a part of the process seemed to invigorate them. Knowles' (1970) assumptions of adult learners needing to be able to engage in activities where they construct knowledge for themselves (experience) and having a deep need to be self-directed in their learning (self-concept), seemed to be manifesting itself before my eyes and throughout the experience. One of the participants said, "Chief, you have no idea how happy I am that we are doing this". This response connected me to three of Knowles' (1989) expanded assumptions including that adults have to be ready to learn and will resist doing so when not ready, that adults are motivated to learn when they feel it advantageous to do so, and that adult learners become motivated to learn when they are moved to do so by internal pressures. This particular sergeant had recently come to the researcher a few weeks prior, explaining that he had an "epiphany", and realized that he had been looking at the organization from the wrong perspective and had now begun to see things in a different light. That employee had apologized to the researcher and solicited assistance in enrollment in several local professional development programs; ones that had previously been completely out of consideration.

It was almost as if the researcher had begun to see the different theories in action. Just the process of exploring program development, and the involvement of the different levels of the organizational supervision began to drive organizational change. One difference that the researcher noted was that the participants “buy in” to the process of improving the organization, facilitated an increased level of support of the organizational and systems changes necessary to make those improvements happen.

What is clear from the research is that Missouri City Police Department Sergeants are in need of professional development. They are in need of supporting programs that provide them with foundational knowledge to be able to perform their responsibilities effectively within the organization. I am convinced that with the process, the researcher has been able to not only identify the need, but is also positioned to develop a program whereby MCPD Sergeants are better prepared to assume the responsibilities of the position within the Missouri City Police Department.

Next steps

The data from the focus groups is critical for program development. The researcher's future efforts will focus upon program development utilizing the remaining three steps to Werner and DeSimone's (2009) "A DIImE" process for HRD interventions. Utilizing the data from the focus groups, the researcher will begin gathering responsive information and compiling it. Lesson plans will be created in a format acceptable to the Texas Commission On Law Enforcement (TCOLE), the state regulatory body that sets the standards and approves law enforcement training statewide.

The researcher aspires to develop a program that incorporates the data gleaned from the needs assessment into a form that prepares potential supervisory candidates as well as provides skills for current supervisory staff to perform the responsibilities expected of mid-level manager (sergeant) within MCPD. The researcher aims to compile a supporting supervisory resource guide and reference instrument. The researcher aims to incorporate the development of an official MCPD mentoring program. Additionally, supporting MCPD policies will be developed to integrate into the promotional process for those seeking MCPD mid-level managerial positions.

A comprehensive individual and organizational development program for mid-managers at the Missouri City Police Department may help increase position specific knowledge of supervisory personnel (sergeant) within the organization. This increase in position (sergeant) specific knowledge will likely help those managers to be more confident in their new roles within the organization as well as increase their organizational competence. Additionally, the Texas Commission On Law Enforcement (TCOLE), the agency responsible for licensure and regulatory compliance for Texas peace officers, can also use the findings in this study for further

consideration of mandating a mid-level manager's professional development program. The findings could further assist other agencies that seek to establish a framework for future supervisory training programs. This study may also be significant in establishing local and regional *best practices* for law enforcement agency supervisory preparation and perhaps beyond. Evidence suggests that properly designed programs for new employees can yield substantial returns (McGarrell, 1983).

Concluding thoughts

The journey towards exploring the development of a professional development program for MCPD sergeants has been an interesting and daunting one. There is a paucity of research that specifically identifies processes on how to identify organizational needs in support of developing police sergeants. This is despite the fact that the available literature supports the notion that first-line supervisors are critical to the efficacy of police organizations and acknowledges the impact that they have on subordinate employees.

Throughout my review of the literature, which included an exhaustive search of research databases and journals, I was only able to find two pieces of research that were similar in program development. Both were conducted over twenty years ago. The results were mixed. One was rated as effective however, seemed to fall short of its' intended mark, and the other was identified as successful but I can't find anywhere else where the process was duplicated or incorporated by anyone else.

In the first piece of research that I found, Lefkowitz (1972) conducted research to evaluate supervisory training for police sergeants in a major mid-western city. As part of a nationwide trend toward increased "professionalization" of the law enforcement function, a consulting firm of organizational psychologists was retained by a police department to conduct a

supervisory training program for first-level supervisors in the department (sergeants). The police command felt that these positions were most critical in the departmental hierarchy.

In that study, a nineteen hour program was developed for training sergeants in order to increase the general supervisory skills of the sergeant (an intra-departmental orientation), and increase their knowledge and improve skills in the area of community relations problems, especially inter-racial conflict (p. 96). The content of the course addressed the changing roles of police officers as they promote, performance evaluations, communications problems, motivation of subordinates, problem-solving techniques in the context of reactions to stress, and the black American. In this study, all of the department's sergeants were to be trained. The primary data source for course content was a biographical questionnaire and an attitudinal questionnaire that had been provided to the participants as well as the entire police department. The training was based upon the information prioritized by the questionnaire however, who decided what went into the questionnaire was never identified. There is no indication that the participants were involved in development of the questionnaire or its content.

The research findings indicated that the trainees were generally in favor of the program and rated it as effective however, there was no indication that employee attitudes changed as a result of the training nor were any better prepared to assume the responsibilities of the position of sergeant after completing the training. In fact, the findings found that some changes were noted in directions opposite of the training goals. The research pointed to multiple potential explanations for the negative outcomes, besides the possible inherent ineffectiveness of the program, including, the length of time devoted to the training was inadequate, as well as the possibility that the research was simply poorly designed. One thing that was noted was that there

was no specific provision made to insure subsequent on-the-job utilization of what might be learned during training.

The second piece of research was conducted in 1993 at the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority Police Department (MARTA-PD). Camp (1999) documented the joint project conducted between the Department of Criminal Justice at Georgia State University and the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority Police Department (MARTA-PD) whereby officers employed by MARTA-PD could “advance in rank according to their performance in a specially designed training curriculum” (p. 32). The project embraced the concept that individuals should be “trained and prepared for promotion to supervisory ranks rather than promoted and then trained” (p. 33), and focused upon MARTA-PD sergeants, lieutenants, and captains.

The MARTA-PD study utilized a comprehensive job-task analysis of supervisory/management position functions to design a training program that was to prepare candidates for promotion. Students were subjected to hands-on and academic exercises to test the application of skills. Training was provided that covered basic techniques of leadership and management as well as training specifically linked to police management at that agency along with issues faced by first-line supervisors at that agency. “The training provided incorporated a series of individual as well as group cognitive and performance-based exercises and included examinations which tested retention and application of the material covered” (p. 33).

Project development consisted of three phases. The first was a job-task analysis conducted on incumbents. This was conducted by survey. The second phase included the development of two training programs. The first was one week designed specifically for lieutenants and captain candidates. The second was an eight day course designed for the

sergeant candidates. The fundamental management techniques was the basis of the eight day course with task analysis results included. The final phase was delivery of both programs to the respective target audiences.

The results of the process showed that sergeants needed to be trained in order to conduct the training themselves. Further, the sergeants believed that some formal training is required in order for them to do their tasks properly. Two groups were put through the process. Attendees were rated according to the results of the varying testing instruments, with candidates placed in three “bands” for promotional consideration by the chief of police. The process was considered to have been a success by GSU representatives and MARTA-PD.

The MARTA-PD promotional process was interesting in that it documented a state supervisory requirement of at least 120 hours in supervision and/or management which is in stark contrast to the requirements codified within most states, including here in Texas. The training for sergeant was initially slated for a two-week training course. The literature did not address what factors influenced the length of the course. Another thing that I noted was that the training topics were determined by university staff and MARTA employees. There is no mention on if the project targets were a part of the process beyond the task-analysis survey.

The MARTA promotional process, “utilizing a link between training and promotion, has met with great internal success” (Camp, 1999, pg. 44) and was praised by a national accreditation team as well as MARTA-PD management. The program and program content was reassessed after about two years. Some revisions, both major and minor, were made in response to regulatory changes and changes within the discipline and organization. According to Camp (1999), the level of performance within the agency appears to have been improved. The results

indicated that this practice may prove to be a promising technique and could provide an alternative to traditional promotional practices in law enforcement.

The fact that the project conducted by MARTA-PD was successful is certainly at least promising. It bodes well for the prospect that the professional development program envisioned for MCPD being successful. The notion of developing a professional development program for MCPD sergeants has gained momentum, it has reinvigorated several members of MCPD's supervisory cadre, especially the sergeants, and its development continues MCPD on the journey of becoming and remaining a learning organization.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Letter



Institutional Review Board
Room G353
1 University Parkway
University Park, IL 60484
www.govst.edu/irb

To: Dr. Brian Vivona and Keith Jemison
From: GSU Institutional Review Board
CC: Fatmah Tommalieh
Date: January 30, 2016
Re: Professional Development...

Project Number: IRB Application #16-01-08 Vivona Jemison

We are pleased to inform you that your proposal has been approved by the GSU Institutional Review Board. Please be advised that the protocol will expire on January 1, 2017.

Before the end of the approval period, if your research is completed, please inform the IRB in writing of the closing date. If you wish to continue this research beyond the approval date, please submit the Annual Continuing Review Form located in the IRB website, much before the expiration date. The proposal must be renewed by the IRB for you to continue this research. If you make any substantive changes in your research protocol before that date, you must inform the IRB and have the new protocol approved.

Please include the exact title of your project and the assigned IRB number in any correspondence about this project.

Best wishes for success with your research.

Appendix B

Missouri City Police Department Promotions Policy

<u>Missouri City Police Department</u>	
Policy #:	40-13
Subject:	Promotions
Issue Date:	09-01-2012
Revised:	
Standards:	4.06, 4.07

I. Policy

- A. It is the policy of the Department to select for promotion those officers most qualified for available positions. Of central importance is the ability of the candidate to demonstrate the potential to be successful in the desired position.
- B. The process must be fair and reasonable, providing all candidates an equal opportunity for success.
- C. This policy applies only to sworn police officers. Civilian personnel promotions are at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the promotion of officers to a higher rank and to identify the criteria that determine an officer's eligibility for promotion.

III. Procedures

- A. Testing Instrument: The testing methodology, which may consist of a profile, oral board, cognitive test, assessment center etc., or combination thereof, will be determined by the Chief of Police, or his designee.

- B. Once the testing methodology and associated ratings, scoring, and / or evaluative techniques have been determined, but prior to administration of the first test component, it may be posted for view by all applicants for promotion.
- C. Eligibility Criteria
1. An officer must meet or exceed expectations on their last yearly evaluation to be eligible to participate in the promotional testing process. An officer is not eligible to participate in the promotional testing process if he is on probation or is under a significant level of discipline, as determined by the Chief of Police, or has had any sustained investigations resulting in suspension that had been adjudicated in the six months prior to testing. Additionally, an officer is not eligible for promotion if he is on probation or under a significant level of discipline, determined by the Chief of Police, or has had any sustained investigations resulting in suspension that had been adjudicated in the six months at the time the promotional position becomes available or is pending appointment.
 2. To be eligible for testing, a candidate must meet the following criteria at the time of the application deadline date:
 - a. Detective: Must successfully complete a field training program and have a minimum of 1 continuous year as a sworn police officer with MCPD after release from the training program.
 - b. Sergeant: Minimum of 3 continuous years as a sworn police officer and/or detective with MCPD.
 - c. Lieutenant: Minimum of 2 continuous years as a sergeant with MCPD.
 - d. Captain: Appointed by Chief of Police.
 - e. Assistant Chief of Police: Appointed by Chief of Police.
- D. Incentive points will be awarded for categories as listed below. All incentive points will be added to the candidate's final testing score. The resulting score will represent the final score for each candidate. Incentive points will be calculated for each applicant on the application deadline date. The maximum number of incentive points allowed is five (5). Categories and available incentive points are as follows:

1. Seniority: Officers may receive incentive points for total years of police service with the Missouri City Police Department as follows:
 - a. 5-9 years: 1 point.
 - b. 10-14 years: 2 points.
 - c. 15-19 years: 3 points.
 - d. 20 + years: 4 points.
 2. Education/Military: Officers may receive incentive points for college hours/degree/military, from highest listing only, as follows (accredited educational institutions only):
 - a. 30-59 hours: 1 point
 - b. Associates degree, 89 hours, **or** 60-2 + years military with honorable discharge: 2 points.
 - c. 90 + hours: 3 points.
 - d. Bachelor's degree: 4 points.
 - e. Master's degree and above: 5 points.
 3. Certificates: Officers may receive incentive points for the following TCLEOSE certificates:
 - a. Advanced Peace Officer: 1 point.
 - b. Master Peace Officer: 2 points.
 4. Master Police Officer: Officers achieving this designation will receive one point, not to exceed the maximum number of five (5).
- E. Candidates from outside the Department may receive consideration for a position other than entry level when:
1. There are no qualified applicants or a limited number of applicants in the pool of applicants within the Department.
 2. Invited at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

IV. Eligibility List Issues

- A. An eligibility list shall consist of all applicants that successfully passed the testing process, ranked from highest to lowest score.
- B. The eligibility list shall be valid for one year from date of official posting. The posting notice shall contain the date of posting and the last date of list validity. The Chief of Police or the Chief's designee may extend the validity of the list in the interest of the Department.
- C. If a vacancy becomes available within the period the list is valid, the officer with the highest score on the list may be promoted. The Chief reserves the right to promote any officer from the list in the best interest of the Department. If an officer is passed over for promotion by the Chief, the officer's position on the eligibility list remains intact.
- D. In the event of a tie score, the Chief shall select the officer for promotion.
- E. A vacancy in a position of rank does not mandate an immediate promotion from an eligibility list; vacancies shall be filled in the best interest of the Department at the Chief's discretion.
- F. If an officer on the eligibility list declines a promotion, his position on the eligibility list is forfeited.
- G. Testing to establish eligibility lists will be conducted as deemed necessary by the Chief.
- H. Candidates who are on an existing eligibility list may participate in the testing process for the replacement eligibility list.
- I. Officers may appeal the promotional process by utilizing the City grievance policy/procedure.

Appendix C

Informed Consent Waiver

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This form details the purpose of this study, a description of the involvement required and your rights as a participant. You also have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

The purpose of this study is:

- The purpose of this project is to create a professional development program, specifically designed to identify and develop resources, knowledge and skills perceived necessary to assist promotional candidates to be better prepared to assume the responsibilities associated with performance as a mid-level supervisor (Sergeant and Lieutenant) in the Missouri City Police Department (MCPD).

The benefits of the research will be:

- To create a mid-level managerial development program that prepares mid-level managers to more readily assume position specific responsibilities and contributes to alignment of mid-level management employees with the mission and vision of the organization as well as the expectations of executive (command) level management.
- To contribute to the body of knowledge specifically targeting the value of better preparation of mid-level managerial police employees to assume the responsibilities of supervisory positions.

The method that will be used to meet this purpose include:

- Discussion (focus) groups of three to six participants

Our discussion will be audio-taped and videotaped to help me accurately capture your insights in your own words. The tapes will only be heard by me for the purpose of this study and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, accessible only by the researcher while data collection is on-going. The data will be stored on a password protected computer and only group data will be included in the final report. Once all data has been entered and analyzed, the audio and video recording mediums will be destroyed.

Insights gathered by you and other participants will be used in writing a qualitative research report, which will be read by my capstone committee and presented for defense in my doctoral program. Though direct quotes from you may be used in the paper, your name and other identifying information will be kept anonymous.

By signing this consent form I certify that I _____ agree to
(Print full name here)
the terms of this agreement.

(Signature)

(Date)