

COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM AND RCMP TRAINING

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With deepest appreciation,
I dedicate this work to Robin,
Carissa and Scott for their love,
patience, sacrifice, support, and encouragement
at each step and misstep throughout
this long journey.

Abstract

This research project explores competency-based curriculum and police training, examining the question: *what does competency-based curriculum mean to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and its members?* Three texts are generated: a literature text, the researcher's educational autobiographical text, and a philosophical text. The literature text examines the granularity of the RCMP *Bridging the Gap* training program, two divergent competence ideals, and the middle ground established between the two ideals. The autobiographical text explores personal learning relationships and learning relationships in the RCMP. The final text examines the researcher's philosophical framework including his vision, mission, values and goals, and the use of this framework as a guide to personal and professional endeavors. The three texts are examined with hermeneutic purpose, a process that reveals a personal journey of discovery, learning and awareness. The research revealed the RCMP competency-based curriculum is one component of a larger competency-based human resource management system that is about to be implemented across the RCMP. The researcher learned that competency-based curriculum is theorized as a hybrid framework of educational ideals and the RCMP model is unique for establishing a middle ground between the behaviorist and rationalist perspective on the issue of competence. The research brought awareness to the dramatic organizational change that is forthcoming within the RCMP as competency-based curriculum and human resource management systems are implemented. Potential benefits to the RCMP and its members are explored, and potential difficulties in implementing competency-based curriculum and human resource management are also considered.

Acknowledgments

This project is about what competency-base curriculum means for the RCMP and its members. This project is representative of the contribution others have made to my education as I explore this and other questions.

My parents, Andy and Pearl Laing, gave me the gift of a happy childhood and a stable home where I felt loved. I met Robin Harding in grade seven at Earl Grey Junior High School in Winnipeg, Manitoba and before leaving high school we established a friendship and love for one another that led to marriage. Together we became the parents of two children, Carissa and Scott, who have taught me more than I could have ever imagined. In the past twenty-four years of my part-time studies, Robin, Carissa, and Scott have given me their love, support, and patience for which I am deeply grateful.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Nor is it fitly said, there are three times, past, present and future: ... it might more fitly be said, there are three times: a present of things past, a present of things present, and a present of things future. St. Augustine, *Confessions*

In my present circumstance as both a sworn peace officer with more than twenty-six years service in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and as a graduate student in the Master of Education program at the University of Lethbridge, my interest and perspective on the present of things past, the present of things present, and the present of things future regarding RCMP training is insightful, authentic, and unique. This project is about a new competency-based curriculum being pilot tested by the RCMP, and what this potential change could mean for the RCMP and its members.

The RCMP is Canada's national police service. With an on-strength establishment of approximately 16,000 sworn peace officers, 2,600 civilian members, and 4,000 public servants, the RCMP enforces the laws of Canada, the provinces, and municipalities. The Force provides police services under the terms of policing agreements to all provinces and territories (except Ontario and Quebec), and under separate municipal policing agreements to 199 municipalities (RCMP, <http://www.rcmp.ca>, December 10, 2004).

Laing and Hickman (2003) report:

The RCMP is organized pursuant to the authority of the R.C.M.P. Act. In accordance with the act, the RCMP is headed by a Commissioner, who, under the direction of the Solicitor General of Canada, is responsible for the control and management of the Force. The RCMP consists of 14 divisions, with headquarters

in Ottawa, Ontario. Each division is managed by a commanding officer and is alphabetically designated. Divisions roughly approximate provincial boundaries. The divisions have 52 subdivisions and more than 700 detachments, ranging in strength from 1 to 380 officers. (p. 29)

Prime Minister John A. MacDonalld formed the RCMP (known then as the North West Mounted Police) in 1873 to bring law and order in advance of western settlement, and establish friendly relations with First Nations people, in an effort to maintain peace as the Canadian west was settled (RCMP, <http://www.rcmp.ca>, December 12, 2004). As a paramilitary force, modeled after the Royal Irish Constabulary, members of the North West Mounted Police were trained and equipped for plains warfare, but given primarily civil responsibilities. The modern day RCMP are stewards of a colorful and proud heritage; the contributions of approximately 70,000 sworn peace officers, civilian members, and public servants in the past 130 years have made the RCMP an icon in Canada, and respected throughout the world as a leader in policing.

The training the RCMP provides its members attempts to keep pace with the policing needs and demands of an ever-changing Canadian society and the world beyond. The curriculum of this training includes a broad range of topics, from first aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation certification mandatory for all employees, to highly specialized training for investigators assigned the responsibility of combating organized crime within Canada and beyond. Although training in the RCMP has become multifaceted, the RCMP does have a long history of performance-based assessment. Whether the training is general or specific to a few, RCMP members are accustomed to being assessed on their

ability to satisfy a performance level required of a specific duty. The RCMP has recently introduced a competency-based pilot training program entitled *Bridging The Gap*.

Bridging The Gap appears to integrate a more structured and contemporary competency-based curriculum design with the existing RCMP training program. While competency-based training may be an offshoot of performance-based assessment (Cornford, 2000, p. 151), training in the RCMP is undoubtedly about to change dramatically.

In his annual directional statement for 2005, the Commissioner of the RCMP, Giuliano Zaccardelli, makes a commitment that the RCMP will be “guided through changing times by unchanging values” (RCMP Directional Statement 2005, RCMP Infoweb, November 30, 2004). The Commissioner of the RCMP reports of a disturbance of the equilibrium in policing:

The unprecedented pace of change and the emergence of new pressures facing our society means that we cannot simply ask, ‘what worked in the past and how do we improve it?’ but ‘what is required of policing in the 21st century and how do we build and deliver it?’ (RCMP Directional Statement, 2005, RCMP Infoweb, November 30, 2004)

Bridging the Gap is the training program component in a larger competency-based management framework. In a report entitled *RCMP Competency-Based Management Framework* (2003) the new system is intended to “manage change across the organization by changing the way we (the RCMP) manage” (p. 2). *Bridging the Gap* may also be intended as a transformative mechanism to increase what Piaget calls *reequilibration*. Doll (1984) citing Piaget, discusses reequilibration, which is an unfamiliar term for the

familiar notion that an individual or perhaps even an organization may thrive and have a better-off-afterward experience following a significant disruption, trauma or life-changing experience (p. 130).

Statement of the Problem

Just as change is inevitable, change inevitably brings both positive and negative experiences to those affected by it. The issue of change in curriculum, especially in the last three decades is not new. Cited by Doll (1993), Schwab (1970) stated with remarkable insight:

The field of curriculum is moribund. It is unable, by its present methods and principles, to continue its work and contribute significantly to the advancement of education. It requires new principles ... a new view ... of its problems ... (and) new methods appropriate to the ... problems. (p. 161)

Doll (1993) points out, “today, the curriculum field is no longer moribund” (p. 161).

Slattery (1995) agrees, “the postmodern curriculum, in all its kaleidoscopic perspectives, offers an opportunity for education to move beyond moribund modes of analysis to a new understanding of curriculum development in the postmodern era” (p. 257). Today, the notion of a more flexible curriculum, a curriculum that is custom-designed in an effort to meet the needs of an organization and its employees, is both prevalent and pervasive in the field of adult education. This flexibility and responsiveness is certainly evident in the RCMP as training is modified or developed in response to changing crime trends or legislation.

On the issue of adult education more generally, Kowalski (1988) observes that it

is a “growing enterprise in a changing world” (p. 10); however, he raises a concern that the proliferation of adult education practice may have eclipsed adult education as a field of study (p. 207). Adult education as a whole is a “multibillion-dollar enterprise (that) has arisen in response to adult learning interests - an enterprise that spends more dollars than elementary schools, high schools, and post-secondary schools combined” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. xi). Adult education is big business and innovations to meet market demand are being developed at the speed of business. Competency-based curriculum design appears to be carving out a niche in the adult education business model.

Fletcher (1992), an advocate of competency-based curriculum, suggests an organization may use competency-based systems to introduce corporate or national qualifications or standards, enhance flexibility and quality of training, provide clear goals and facilitate progression for learners, link training with internal appraisal systems, form a basis of credit transfer with formal qualifications, evaluate training programs, and facilitate selection and recruitment (p. 31).

Competency-based curriculum is not without controversy. Cornford (2000), a critic of competency-based curriculum, raises a concern that competency-based curriculum is a “simplistic solution based on a flawed ideology” (p. 136). Cornford is critical of competency-based curriculum for: not achieving the objective of increasing skill levels; being implemented without appropriate evaluation; being ineffective, resulting in skill shortages; high costs and problems in implementation; being inappropriate except for lower-level skill learning; and having an underlying ideal that is too tempting to politicians, bureaucrats, and others who desire the ‘broad vision’ and the

'meta-narrative' (pp. 135-151).

With advocates on one side, and critics on the other, the controversy surrounding competency-based curriculum brings currency to the problem of whether the *Bridging the Gap* training program is appropriate for the RCMP and its members.

Research Question

This project will investigate what competency-based curriculum means for the RCMP and its members. This study will examine adult education as a theoretical foundation for competency-based curriculum; the RCMP philosophical framework, existing training programs and supporting technology; the RCMP *Bridging the Gap* training model; and a sample of peripheral interests, including a synopsis of organizational change within the RCMP and the process of becoming, what is known in the literature as, a learning organization. This research project will conclude with a discussion on recommendations and insight on future directions for competency-based training in the RCMP.

Overview of the Study

This study is made up of six chapters. The first chapter sets the stage by introducing the problem in its context: a research question, an overview of the study, definitions of terms used in the study, and a description of the possible significance the study holds for an identified audience. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature with a twist. The review of the literature functions as a research methodology to discover information that will later generate a separate text. Chapter 3 explains the research design, which is qualitative, using multiple methods and methodologies. The research design is put into

action in the three remaining chapters. In Chapter 4 three texts are generated: (1) a text from the review of the literature and relevant documents, (2) the researcher's educational autobiographical text, and (3) a philosophical text focusing on the researcher's philosophical framework. The three texts are then examined with hermeneutic purpose in Chapter 5 to investigate what competency-based curriculum means for the RCMP and its members. Having *read the lines* in Chapter 4, and *read between the lines* in Chapter 5, Chapter 6 attempts to *read beyond the lines* to imagine what the future may bring.

Definition of Terms

In support of his assertion that there is a clear benefit in defining appropriate terms for the reader, Cresswell (1994) cites Firestone (1987): "The words of everyday language are rich in multiple meanings. Like other symbols, their power comes from the combination of meaning in a specific setting" (p. 106). For the purpose of this study, the following definitions of terms are provided to assist the reader in his or her overall interpretation of the study.

Adult education:

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) ... defines *adult education* as:

The entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional

qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development. (Cited in Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 9; Selman, et al., 1998, p. 18)

Andragogy:

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) cite Knowles (1980) in defining *andragogy* as the “art and science of helping adults learn” (p. 13).

Behaviorism:

The Merriam-Webster Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1985) defines *behaviorism* as: “a school of psychology that takes the objective evidence of behavior (as measured responses to stimuli) as the only concern of its research and the only basis of its theory without reference to conscious experience” (p. 141).

Bridging the Gap:

Suzanne Monahan, the Chief Learning and Development Officer in the RCMP, explains *Bridging the Gap* as “a process that clearly identifies operational priorities at the unit level, along with the knowledge, skills and abilities that employees need to achieve those goals” (RCMP, RCMP Infoweb, November 30, 2004).

Competence:

Dictionary.Com defines *competence* as “(a) The state or quality of being adequately qualified; ability. (b) A specific range of skill, knowledge, or ability (<http://dictionary.reference.com>, May 10, 2005). More specifically, the *RCMP*

Competency-Based Management Framework (2003) report defines *competence* as “an observable and measurable knowledge, skill, ability or personal characteristic defined in terms of the behaviors required by employees to achieve the performance output / outcome needs of the organization of excellence” (RCMP Infoweb, November 30, 2004).

Competency-based adult education:

Kasworm (1980) cites the Report of the USOE Invitational Workshop on Adult Competency Education (1978, p. 1) defining *competency-based adult education* as, “a performance-based process leading to demonstrated mastery of basic and life skills necessary for the individual to function proficiently in society” (p. 4).

Curriculum:

Taylor and Richards (1986) propose a broad definition of *curriculum* that subsumes the “content of education, course of study, educational experiences, subjects to be studied, subject matter (and) educational activities” (p. 3).

Employee development:

Dubois and Rothwell (2004) define *employee development* as:

The pursuit of any activity that leads to continuous learning and personal growth and contributes to achieving both the individual’s and the organization’s objectives. It is a continuous learning process that deepens an employee’s understanding of his or her values, interests, skills, aptitudes, personality attributes, and competency strengths. (p. 186)

Function:

The *RCMP Competency Profiling Methodology* (2003) report defines *function* as

consisting of similar jobs that are grouped together based on the similar competencies required to perform the function (RCMP Infoweb, November 30, 2004).

Functional competencies:

The *RCMP Competency Profiling Methodology* (2003) report states that *functional competencies* are:

Typically the ‘knowledge, skills and abilities’ areas that are required by employees within a particular function. Often, these competencies are more trainable than the organizational competencies. They describe what the employee needs to know or be able to apply in order to perform effectively in that function. For example, all Forensic Identification Specialists must have a knowledge of forensic techniques including photographing a crime scene, video recording an activity or crime, measuring a scene, developing fingerprints, etc. (2003, p. 3)

Job:

The *RCMP Competency Profiling Methodology* (2003) report defines *job* as a collection of related tasks that are carried out by an individual employee. There could be one or more positions in the RCMP that are characterized by the same job (RCMP Infoweb, November 30, 2004).

Member:

In the RCMP vernacular, a *regular member*, or *member*, is a sworn peace officer regardless of rank.

Organizational competency:

The *RCMP Competency Profiling Methodology* (2003) report states:

The organizational competencies reflecting personal characteristics are arranged into four groups: commitment to learning and development, thinking skills, client-centered service and people skills. These groups reflect the essential core groups of competencies that every member of the RCMP must have to deliver on the mission, vision and values, and support the strategic framework. These competencies underlie successful on-the-job performance across the RCMP. Typically, these are less ‘trainable,’ and reflect an individual’s personal qualities or attributes. (2003, p. 3)

Rationalism:

The Merriam-Webster Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1985) defines *rationalism* as: “a view that reason and experience rather than the nonrational are the fundamental criteria in the solution of problems” (p. 977).

RCMP Philosophical Framework:

A phrase I have coined to describe the amalgamation of RCMP statements that constitute a recognizable philosophical outlook; statements include the RCMP mandate, mission, vision, values, commitment to communities, commitment to employees, strategic goal, strategic priorities, and strategic objectives.

Training:

Dubois and Rothwell (2004) cite Rothwell and Sredl (2000) in describing *training* as:

A short-term learning intervention. It is intended to build on individual knowledge, skills, and attitudes to meet present or future work requirements (p.

9). Training should have an immediate and highly specific impact on work performance and should be grounded in the organization's requirements and unique corporate culture. It differs in this respect from education and employee development, which prepare the individual for life and work. (p. 126)

Significance of the Study

This study has the potential to shed light on competency-based curriculum, as it relates to RCMP training. Stakeholders in competency-based curriculum and police training may find value in this study—in particular, peace officers, police training facilitators, learning and development specialists, curriculum designers, human resource officers, and leaders in police and other professional organizations.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

According to Cresswell (1994) a review of the literature is a procedure that achieves at least three distinct objectives:

(1) It shares with the reader the results of other studies that are closely related to the study being reported (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990). (2) It relates a study to the larger, ongoing dialogue in the literature about a topic, filling in gaps and extending prior studies (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). (3) It provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study, as well as a benchmark for comparing the results of a study with other findings. (pp. 20-21)

As with many other qualitative studies, the nature and scope of this research is unique; a review of the literature was unable to locate a similar study. However, several closely related or peripherally linked topics have been widely researched. Those topics include: adult education, competency-based curriculum, and organizational change and learning organizations. Relevant RCMP documents were also examined: RCMP philosophical statements, existing RCMP traditional and on-line training programs, and the competency-based *Bridging the Gap* training program. The review of the literature examines eight interrelated topics to lay the ground work for generating a literature text that will be subject to further hermeneutic enquiry. In this way, the review of the literature in this study can also be considered a research methodology.

Adult Education

The investigation into what competency-based curriculum means for the RCMP and its members, focuses first on the topic of adult education: the theoretical foundation

that undergirds competency-based curriculum. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) and Knowles (1990) acknowledge the term *adult* can be defined from at least four perspectives: biological, legal, social, and psychological. The same authors approach the definition of *education* differently: Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) defines education as the “deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, or skills” (p. 6); whereas, Knowles (1990) quotes Whitehead (1993) in defining education as “a lifelong process of continuing enquiry” (p. 167). With *adult education* defined elsewhere in this study, it is appropriate to emphasize here that, according to Bratton, Mills, Pyrch, and Sawchuk (2004), adult education seeks “to fulfill the twin objects of preparing men and women for their work roles on the one hand, and promoting independent and critical thinking for their social role on the other” (p. 6). Adult education, therefore, fulfills economic, social, and cultural purposes.

In 1984, Malcolm Knowles garnered significant influence in the field of adult education by marshaling a groundswell of knowledge from several disciplines to formulate a theory of modern adult learning in his landmark book *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*. Often cited in the literature (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Kowalski, 1988; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Scott, Spencer & Thomas, 1998; Selman, Selman, Cooke & Dampier, 1997), the theory of adult learning Knowles (1990) calls the *andragogical model*, explains that adults need to know why they need to learn something before they undertake to learn it. Knowles (1990) further explains that as learners, adults: are responsible for their own decisions and are self-directed; and possess a greater volume and different quality of experience than youths. Being “life-centred,” adults are

motivated to cope with real-life situations. Further, they are responsive to external motivators: better jobs, promotions, and higher salaries. Adults also have internal motivators: the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, and quality of life (pp. 57-63).

Kowalski (1988) cites Plecas and Sork (1986) referring to the study of adult education as an undisciplined discipline (p. 207). Stanage (1987) recognizes that:

Although adult education is not a discipline, it does have a subject-matter; that this subject-matter can be clearly defined; that this subject-matter can be systematically investigated such that adult education can be viewed as the paradigm of rigorous human science. (p. 42)

The subject-matter of adult education is very broad and includes such topics as: the origins of adult education (Knowles, 1990; Scott et al., 1998), theoretical foundations (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Knowles, 1990; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991), and philosophical foundations (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Scott et al., 1998; Selman et al., 1997). It also includes: adult curriculum (Kowalski, 1988; Verduin, 1980), the outside influence on adult curriculum (Jones, 1984; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Selman et al., 1997; Verduin, 1980), evaluating adult education (Verduin, 1980), facilitating adult education (Knowles, 1990; Verduin, 1980), and adult education and the workplace (Bratton et al., 2004; Selman et al., 1997; Tuijnman & Van Der Kamp, 1992). Related adult education topics include: adult education and the use of technology (Curry & Wergin, 1993), participation rates and magnitude of adult education (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Selman et al., 1997), the array of

institutions, agencies, and programs offering adult education (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982), and organizational theory and adult education (Kowalski, 1988). Additional topics include: the sociology of adult education (Jones, 1984); international adult education (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Jones, 1984); and future issues and challenges in adult education (Bratten et al., 2004; Kowalski, 1988; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Scott et al., 1998; Selman et al., 1997).

While Knowles (1990) describes adult education as a neglected species, and Kowalski (1988) raises concern that adult education as a field of study has not kept pace with the proliferation of adult education practice (p. 207), it is abundantly clear that the theoretical foundations of adult education that presently exist, provide support for a broad range of adult education programing, including competency-based curriculum.

Competency-Based Curriculum

Competency-based curriculum has undergone significant change in the past thirty-five years. In the early 1970s the aim of competency-based adult education was to develop the life skills necessary for adults to function in society. The primary strategy for achieving this objective was to improve adult literacy using a process that was flexible, accessible, and relevant to adult learners (Kasworm, 1980, pp. 1-4). In the 1980s competency-based curriculum shifted focus to prepare undereducated adults, including growing numbers of minorities and women, for the increasingly high-tech jobs that were expected to prevail in the post-industrial era (Demetron, 1999, p. 31). Today, competency-based curriculum has moved well beyond adult literacy and basic life skills; it has been adapted for application in higher education, including MBA programs

(Brownell & Chung, 2001; Dodd, Brown & Benham, 2002; Smith & Forbes, 2001; Spee & Tompkins, 2001), teacher training (Hayes, 1999), and other professional programs such as accounting (Hill & Houghton, 2001). Competency-based models and competency-based human resource management systems are at the forefront of human resource management practice (Wooten & Elden, 2001, p. 233). In other words, competency-based training has become a component of a larger competency-based management system used for recruitment, hiring, training, and for developing and promoting employees within the organization.

It is interesting to note that just as there is a twofold perspective of adult education (preparing adults for work and participate more fully in society), a twofold perspective of competence is also found in the literature regarding competency-based curriculum. The twin objects are performance and a creative mind. Doll (1984), with an aim to separate competence from performance and to “show that in the idea of competence there lies a pedagogical field rich enough to support a new model of education” (p. 133), refers to the work of Noam Chomsky and Jean Piaget. In developing both the idea and, to a certain extent, the ideal of competency-based curriculum, Doll (1984) begins by stating:

Performance refers essentially to a ‘doing,’ particularly to a ‘doing’ which is ‘completed, finished, achieved.’ It originated as a word to distinguish between promises made but not completed and those completed. Hence performance is a task finished. It carries no judgement of value as to how well the task is done, just that it is done. Competence refers essentially to a state of being or to a capacity. One who is competent is one who has a certain ‘fitness, sufficiency, or aptitude;’

or to take from the word's Latin derivation, a competent person is one who possesses a certain confluence, 'symmetry, conjunction, or meeting together' of powers which allow him or her 'to adequately deal with a situation.' (p. 124)

Referring to Chomsky's study of language development in young children, Doll states the real power of the person lies at the competence level: "this competence allows one to generate an infinite variety of sentences from a finite set of basic structures and rules. The educational task then, as Chomsky has been saying, is to get beyond performance to competence" (p. 126). Doll infers that Chomsky's view of competence goes well beyond the issue of language development in children; that competence allows one to generate an infinite variety of ideas or actions from a finite set of basic structures and rules. Chomsky calls this generative aspect of competence "the nature of mind" (Doll, 1984, p. 126). This important observation distinguishes performance from competence. Based on my experience, the nature of mind—creative ideas balanced with common sense and appropriate action—is what police officers revere.

Doll (1984) also draws on the work of Piaget, in particular his biological model of change theory which states:

A new species is from its beginnings, not characterized by its properties, its acquired characteristics, but by its tendencies ... specifically he asserts that development occurs when (1) an individual establishes an equilibrium with his environment, so that he is comfortable with his own ways of operation and can (at least tacitly) understand those operations. Then (2) a disturbance must be introduced to unbalance this equilibrium. Finally, (3) a new, higher level,

equilibrium must emerge, resolving the conflict or imbalance. This balance-disturbance-rebalance process is akin to John Dewey's transformation of experience, and even to Thomas Kuhn's paradigm change. (p. 130)

A third assertion by Doll (1984) concerns the holistic nature of the competency model; Doll (1984) recognizes that competencies "emerge from the interaction and reflection on past and immediate past experiences. The whole is not considered as merely an aggregation of parts, but is believed to have a structure and unity of its own" (p. 133). Doll (1984) states that "mind, equilibration, holism—form the foundational base of the competency model" (p. 134). Doll concludes that this competency-based model comes from a rationalist framework; providing:

a direct challenge to the behaviorist one which has dominated American schooling for the past century. ... (a framework in which) there is no need for mind, behaviors alone are adequate; ... the whole is always considered equal to the sum of the parts ... (and) performance becomes the goal, the product, and the process. (p. 133)

The rationalist framework described by Doll is a competency-based curriculum ideal that co-exists with the behaviourist framework; organizations can adopt a rationalist approach, a behaviourist approach, or achieve a balance of both. In describing an earlier version of the behaviourist competency-based curriculum ideal, Kasworm (1980) states that it has "both specific program components—prescribed outcomes, pre- and post-assessment, functional literacy content, and certification of mastery—and specific program orientation, variable instructional structures or processes, and an adult learner orientation"

(p. 4). From the same era, McAshan (1979) lists three essential ingredients for an education program to be considered competency-based: “the selection of appropriate competencies, the specification of appropriate evaluation indicators to determine success in competency achievement, and the development of a functional instructional delivery system” (p. 30).

More contemporary behaviourist approaches link competency-based curriculum to business objectives; whereby, “content specifications for learning are defined in competency terms regardless of format, innovative learning opportunities are provided, and a framework for linking learning to performance is created” (Shandler, 2000, p. 38). In its present state of evolution, competency-based training is one component in a more comprehensive competency-based approach to human resource management; where “competencies drive recruitment, selection, placement, orientation, training, performance management, and worker’s rewards” (Dubois & Rothwell, 2004, p. 34). The RCMP Competency-Based Management Framework that includes the *Bridging the Gap* training program is an example of the new human resource management paradigm that appears to have adopted a competency model that combines both the rationalist and behaviourist competency framework.

RCMP Philosophical Framework, Training Programs and Supporting Technologies

In 1996, approximately twelve percent of RCMP employees across Canada participated in the Shared Leadership Vision process. Taking nearly one year to complete, this process resulted in a declaration of the RCMP Vision, Mission, Values, Commitment to Communities, and Commitment to Employees. This statement is known in the RCMP

as *Shared Leadership Vision*. The Shared Leadership Vision statement together with the RCMP mandate, strategic goals, priorities and objectives create what might be called the *RCMP philosophical framework*. The RCMP philosophical framework permeates and informs every aspect of policing; simply put, it is what the RCMP does, why the RCMP does it, how the RCMP does it, and where the RCMP plans to go from here. A copy of the RCMP philosophical framework is attached as Appendix A.

The RCMP enjoys a worldwide reputation within the police community for the quality of its training programs. The learning policy of the RCMP states:

The RCMP fosters a continuous learning culture by promoting access of its employees to modern cost-effective professional development, consistent with the competencies required to deliver quality services to clients, adapt and respond to diverse and changing needs. The RCMP view learning and development as an essential investment in its people. They are a shared responsibility of the organization and of the employee. All forms of learning are valued to address organizational and individual needs. Employees are encouraged to share their learning with other employees. (Government of Canada, Canadian School of Public Service, <http://www.myschool-monecole.gc.ca/ldc/NLDI>, January 3, 2005)

The nature and scope of the RCMP training program is broad and comprehensive. The RCMP facilitates training, education, and employee development internationally, nationally, regionally, and in each division of the RCMP, as well as in partnership with other police and community-based agencies.

Internationally, the RCMP has managed the deployment of over one thousand five

hundred peace officers who volunteer from all Canadian police services to provide policing expertise in twenty-five missions around the world. The primary work of the police peacekeepers is to train, reform, professionalize, and democratize police organizations (RCMP, <http://www.rcmp.ca/news>, January, 3, 2005). The RCMP is part of the Canadian police service contingent currently on police peacekeeping assignments in Jordan training Iraqi police, and in Haiti—training the Haitian National Police.

Nationally, the RCMP Cadet Training Program at the Training Academy in Regina, Saskatchewan is acclaimed as a model of excellence for training future police officers. The RCMP Training Academy in Regina also hosts the Canadian Law Enforcement Training Centre which provides training in basic enforcement-related skills when requested by outside agencies, including Parks Canada and Fisheries and Oceans. On the national level, the Centralized Training Branch provides more than fifty-five courses annually to approximately thirteen hundred employees (including external policing partners), focusing on specialized operational, technical, and administrative training and development. The RCMP is also a full partner in the Canadian Police College, an institution that offers approximately one hundred and twenty training sessions in over forty different advanced and specialized law enforcement and management training courses to Canadian police officers and up to one hundred foreign police officers annually. The specialized courses at the Canadian Police College include: advanced forensic digital imaging, cybercrimes investigative techniques, executive development in police, incident commanders—hostage / barricaded persons, major case management and police explosives technicians (Canadian Police College, RCMP Infoweb, December 1,

2004).

In each Division, training branches are established to facilitate member training and development. Training branches within each Division administer the Field Coaching Programs that follow the Cadet Training Program. Cadets are assigned to a field coach, and together they further develop the competencies acquired in the Cadet Training Program under diminishing supervision until the new police officer can consistently approach policing situations safely, responsibly, confidently, and independently. The field coach provides, what Jerome Bruner might call, a *performance outlet*:

Not only should the teacher find a performance vehicle for the expression of competence; he should also help the individual transfer the competence-performance relation he has had from a task he knows and can do to one he does not know and cannot do. In this way competence will be developed by extending it from one social milieu (or performance framework) to another. (Doll, 1984, p. 132)

Division training branches also facilitate the delivery of in-service training, involving approximately four hundred different topic areas, including such courses as: traffic accident investigation, breathalyser operator, police leadership, and domestic violence. Training branch at the Division level also administers what is known as the A-250 program; a program that may reimburse employees who take university or college courses on their own time as part of their professional development and individual learning plan.

Members of the RCMP are exposed to other unique opportunities for personal and professional development afforded during secondments and special assignments to other

agencies or joint task force initiatives. Members also routinely collaborate with other police and community agencies to develop and deliver workshops. Workshops are intended to satisfy local training needs in a timely fashion. Local training may focus on new case law or legislation, policy changes, crime trends, or other emerging issues within the community.

In addition to providing training to approximately twenty-thousand employees annually in a traditional classroom environment, the RCMP continues to strengthen its technological capacity to provide training materials through a secure RCMP website called the Infoweb. Available only to RCMP employees, the RCMP Infoweb is host to a number of training programs and useful tools accessible to employees through computers at individual work stations. The learning and development component of Infoweb is a powerful resource to employees. With links to the Canadian Police College Library and several other resources, Infoweb features the RCMP On-Line University, the Investigator's Toolbox, and *Bridging the Gap* pilot training program. The RCMP Learning and Development Branch describes the RCMP On-Line University as:

An automated data base of learning opportunities including individualized instruction modules, exercises, reading materials; suggested on-the-job assignments, secondments and coaching opportunities; and information on formal training including courses and workshops. The site identifies how to locate materials not owned by the RCMP, and provides access to materials designed by the RCMP. (RCMP, RCMP Infoweb, December 1, 2004)

The RCMP On-Line University offers RCMP employees both tools and training courses.

Learning tools include: the RCMP Employee's Handbook–Developing Your Learning Strategy; the RCMP Supervisor's Handbook–Helping Your Employee Develop a Learning Strategy; a list of approximately three hundred on-line documents that are a resource to police with a hot link to the full text document; a list of titles, with hot links to full reference information, for approximately one hundred and fifty recently published books focusing on policing issues; a list of titles for training videotapes available from Canadian Police College; a list of six computer-based training courses offered on-line; a list of forty-two individualized instructional modules many of which are offered on-line; a list of seventeen online references and tutorials (RCMP, RCMP Infoweb, December 1, 2004).

The Investigator's Toolbox is a relatively new feature on Infoweb; it offers the investigator very practical public and police safety information, as well as investigation-specific information to assist police officers in their day-by-day work. The Investigator's Toolbox is a back-to-basics approach focusing on fundamental police competencies. There are currently sixteen different categories of information offered in such areas as: complaint / incident discovery, note taking, scene examination, search and seizure, exhibits, file management, preparation for court, and court testimony. Each category of information contains an introduction, the law and related case law, a learning area containing condensed information and course materials, and a list of references that pertain to the topic (RCMP, RCMP Infoweb, December 1, 2004).

Bridging the Gap is the training component of a larger competency-based management project that is explained on the Infoweb. The *Bridging the Gap* training

program is also featured on the RCMP Infoweb. *Bridging the Gap* is a competency-based curriculum program being pilot tested in select detachments and work groups / units across Canada. The *Bridging the Gap* presence on the RCMP Infoweb facilitates access to program information for all employees. The following reports and documents are available to all RCMP employees on the Infoweb: the RCMP Competency-Based Management Framework (2003); the RCMP Competency Dictionary (a listing of all the competencies, and proficiency levels, from which competency profiles for specific job functions are developed); and the RCMP Competency Profiling Methodology (RCMP Infoweb, Retrieved November 30, 2004). This site also provides the competency profiles for ten different policing domains, including: contract policing, federal and international operations, forensic laboratory services, economic crime investigation, and protective policing. The competency profile is a “set of organizational and functional competencies that are key to successful performance in a specific job / function in the RCMP. Each competency has assigned minimum and desired proficiency levels” (*RCMP Competency Profiling Methodology*, 2003). Before being integrated across the RCMP organization, competency-based training is being pilot tested, improved, and validated in several different detachments and other work groups in all four regions; Atlantic, Central, North West, and Pacific (RCMP Infoweb, November 30, 2004).

RCMP Bridging the Gap Training Program

According to Gutek (2001) “new challenges in different times create the need to revisit and study anew the shaping ideas of our educational heritage” (p. 4). The RCMP appear to be doing just this, by integrating their existing training philosophy, programs,

technologies, and attitude with the new competency-based management framework that includes the *Bridging the Gap* pilot training program. Given the highly specific application of competency-based curriculum in this instance, the *RCMP Competency Based Management Framework* (2003) report, the *RCMP Competency Profiling Methodology* (2003) report, and the *RCMP Competency Dictionary*, available to all RCMP employees on the Infoweb, are the foundation documents that afford a better understanding of the *Bridging the Gap* competency-based curriculum.

The *Competency-Based Management Framework* (2003) report states that *competency-based management*:

Provides the tools that will enable HR (human resources) to be more proactive in planning and responding to new, strategic job requirements and to improve day-to-day service delivery to clients. Competencies will provide the common language for all HR activities. Also, the competency profiles will profile excellence, thus supporting the RCMP philosophy of striving to become an ‘organization of excellence.’ (RCMP Infoweb, November 30, 2004)

In addition to the definition of *competency*, stated elsewhere in this study, the *Competency-Based Management Framework* (2003) report introduces the purpose of competency-based management, the *RCMP Competency Dictionary*, and the competency model (RCMP Infoweb, November 30, 2004). The competency model makes an important distinction between organizational core competencies and functional competencies. Organizational core competencies reflect personal characteristics, qualities or attributes grouped in four categories: commitment to learning and development,

thinking skills, client-centered service, and people skills. Functional competencies are typically the knowledge, skills and abilities that are required by an employee within a function—or a job within a function—at the level of the individual contributor, supervisor, manager, senior manager, and senior executive. There are presently twenty organizational competencies and thirty-one functional competencies. Each competency has between five and six different levels of progression from mere awareness to complete mastery. Examples of competence are provided for each level of progression. The definition of each competency, the different levels of progression, and examples of competence are contained within the *RCMP Competence Dictionary*.

Based on the competency model, competency profiles are developed by job experts who identify the organizational and functional competencies required for the function or job within a function and determine the minimum and desirable levels in each competency. The *RCMP Competency Profiling Methodology (2003)* report:

Provides a detailed description of the process for developing competency profiles within the RCMP. It is intended to serve as the framework or master template for the development of detailed work plans for competency profiling to the functional level within operational groups. (RCMP Infoweb, November 30, 2004)

The *Bridging the Gap* program is a work in progress. It is expected that pilot testing of this program will result in many recommendations for improvements before full implementation across Canada.

Peripheral Interests

Knowles (1990) and Kowalski (1988) lament that adult education is a neglected

discipline, lacking cumulative knowledge and theory building. This regrettable situation may be exacerbated by the explosion of inquiry into adult education and its relevance in the workplace. A plethora of adult-education-in-the-workplace related topics have been in vogue in the past two decades, dominating research interests in such fields as organizational change, leadership, learning organizations, life-long learning, and human capital accumulation. Private and public sector organizations, under pressure to raise shareholder profits or continuously improve customer service while keeping costs low, look to the experts to gain the competitive edge. In the past two decades the experts have included both business leaders and academics. Trends in research become the next imperative in the organization. As the volume of research and the pace of change within organizations increase, it may be appropriate to reflect on sage advice from another era; John Dewey (1929) cited by Callahan (1962) reminds us:

It is very easy for science to be regarded as a guarantee that goes with the sale of goods rather than as a light to the eyes and a lamp to the feet. It is prized for its prestige value rather than as an organ of personal illumination and liberation. (p. 246)

The topics of organizational change and learning organizations will be reviewed here for the purpose of demonstrating the type of influence and impact related adult education topics can have on this study.

Organizational change. The RCMP have experienced massive change in the past quarter century. A major disruption to the equilibrium of policing came in 1982 with the enactment of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter significantly changed the

way policing was done in Canada; it triggered a new and evolving accountability framework for policing through case law, and led to a form of police conduct being prescribed in law. Pursuant to Section 1 of the Charter, police investigative techniques had to be prescribed in law before they could be considered to be reasonable by the courts. For example, investigative techniques such as video surveillance had to be prescribed in law. Sometime in this era, as an agency of the Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada, the business model firmly took hold in the RCMP as it did in other police agencies and other professions such as in education and in health care. Callahan (1962) examined the application of the business model in the field of education. He concluded that in the pursuit of efficiency in education, the tragedy was fourfold:

That educational questions were subordinated to business considerations; that administrators were produced who were not, in any true sense, educators; that a scientific label was put on some very unscientific and dubious methods and practices; and that an anti-intellectual climate, already prevalent, was strengthened. ... The whole development produced men who did not understand education or scholarship. Thus they could and did approach education in a businesslike, mechanical, organizational way. (pp. 246-247)

Additional changes followed in rapid succession: a reequilibration of community policing (1989); *Project Renewal* (1993); *Shared Leadership - Mission, Vision, Values* (1995); *Regionalization* (1996); *Alignment Initiative* (1998); and the current *Call to Action* that includes a new strategic framework, new management structure, and new performance management approach (RCMP, 2001, p. 2).

The following published works have been influential in helping me understand, appreciate, and actively participate in the many changes that have occurred during my service in the RCMP. The most influential has been Scott (1998) who helped me understand that organizational structures must change through selection and adaptation as their environments change (p. 217). This reinforced my rationale to participate in, and to support initiatives for organizational change in the RCMP. Scott also revealed to me that “to the extent possible, organizations attempt to seal off their technical core from environmental disturbances” (p. 228). I saw in this one sentence, the rationale for the RCMP to establish community policing as the organization’s police service delivery model in 1989. I saw, in a new light, community policing was the core activity of the RCMP; and it had to be locked down and protected from political, economic, and social pressures for change; community policing became an anchor in a sea of change. Scott helped me to better understand the RCMP as an *organization*, and at the same time realize that I did not fully understand the RCMP as an organization. I have a tendency to have a dialogue with myself and with the author in the margins of any book or article I read. Scott (1998) cites Mintzberg (1979):

Every organized human activity - from the making of pots to the placing of a man on the moon - gives rise to two fundamental and opposing requirements: the division of labour into various tasks to be performed, and the coordination of these tasks to accomplish the activity. The structure of an organization can be defined simply as the sum total of the ways in which it divides its labor into distinct tasks and then achieves coordination among them. (p. 227)

To which I added in the margin: *If it's so easy, why are we having so much trouble?*

Ghoshal and Bartlett (1996) helped me understand that organizational renewal or transformation was a three-step process of simplification (a term I have since replaced with *alignment*), integration and regeneration (p. 25), and that “transformation was as much a function of individual behaviors as it is of the strategies, structures, and systems that top management produces” (p. 23). In my view, the last say on the issue of organizational change is the need to practice what Kim and Mauborgne (1998) call procedural justice. They recognize that a “key challenge facing strategic management is obtaining the voluntary cooperation of individuals as firms formulate and implement their strategic decision” (p. 323). Kim and Mauborgne (1998) reveal that the bedrock principles leading to procedural justice are *engagement, explanation, and clarity of expectations* (p. 329), which I interpret to mean effective *internal communications*.

Organizational learning. Organizational learning is the term most often used to describe the creation of new knowledge and how existing knowledge is shared, used, and stored within organizations (Argyris, 1999; Dierkes, Berthoin, Antal, Child & Nonaka, 2001; Marquardt, 1999; Schwandt & Marquardt, 2000; Senge, Roberts, Ross, Smith & Kleiner, 1994). With a mass exodus of a greying front-line workforce due promotion to middle management or retirement on the horizon, organizational learning is an important issue for the RCMP. Senge et al. (1994) define learning as “mastery of the way of self-improvement” (p. 49), and suggest that “learning in organizations means the continuous testing of experience, and the transformation of that experience into knowledge – accessible to the whole organization, and relevant to its core purpose” (p. 49); a concept

of great relevance to the RCMP in both the current training model and the *Bridging the Gap* program.

Generating and transferring relevant knowledge in the RCMP is an important issue made urgent by the anticipated high volume of attrition of senior members in the next few years. One forecast predicts three thousand senior Canadian police officers, with fifteen to twenty-five years service—representing twenty-eight percent of the police population in this category of service—will leave their respective police agencies in the four-year period between 2002 and 2006.¹ Owing to the pension structure in most police agencies, it is expected that even a higher percentage of police officers with more than twenty-five years service will leave their respective police service in this same period of time. Police agencies face a disadvantage when senior police officers retire, are promoted or transferred to other duties without transferring their knowledge to those who remain on-the-job. Mass attrition of more senior front-line officers has historically resulted in a massive hiring of young, inexperienced police recruits. The compounding issues of the *leaving* (senior members) and the *left* (junior members) result in a short-term, urgent and important need to rapidly train new members and an attempt to retain senior members.

Dixon (2000) speaks to the issue of generating and transferring knowledge:

Organizations must continually reinvent and update their common knowledge.

This requires them to engage repeatedly in two kinds of knowledge activities.

First, they have to find effective ways to translate ongoing experience into

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Dr. David Sunahara, Estimated Decline in Experienced Police Officers Canada, 1987 - 2009, presentation at Canadian Police College, Ottawa, Ontario 2001.

knowledge—*create* common knowledge. Second, they have to transfer that knowledge across time and space—*leverage* common knowledge. (p. 17)

Dixon (2000) reports there are five categories of knowledge transfer: (1) *serial transfer*, (2) *near transfer*, (3) *far transfer*, (4) *strategic transfer*, and, (5) *expert transfer* (pp. 29-30). All five categories can be relevant in the transfer of knowledge from departing senior police officers to those officers remaining on-the-job.

The seminal work on learning organizations produced by Senge et al. (1994) is often quoted in the literature (Allee, 1997; Argyris, 1999; Huseman & Goodman, 1999; March, 1999; Marquardt, 1996; Schwandt & Marquardt, 2000), and builds “on the earlier work of Argyris and Schön” (Allee, 1997, p. 11). Senge et al. (1994) state:

the core of learning organization work is based upon five ‘learning disciplines’ – lifelong programs of study and practice:

- Personal Mastery – learning to expand our personal capacity to create the results we most desire, and creating an organizational environment which encourages all its members to develop themselves toward the goals and purposes they chose;
- Mental Models – reflecting upon, continually clarifying, and improving our internal pictures of the world, and seeing how they shape our actions and decisions;
- Shared Vision – building a sense of commitment in a group, by developing shared images of the future we seek to create, and the principles and guiding practices by which we hope to get there;

- Team Learning – transforming conversational and collective thinking skills, so that groups of people can reliably develop intelligence and ability greater than the sum of individual member’s talents;
- Systems Thinking – a way of thinking about, and a language for describing and understanding, the forces and interrelationships that shape the behavior of systems. (p. 6)

Senge et al. (1994) influenced the subsequent work of Allee (1997), Dixon (2000), Huseman and Goodman (1999), March (1999), Marquardt (1996) and Schwandt and Marquardt (2000) as they examine the importance of learning in organizations, the evolution of learning within organizations, the environmental pressures that necessitate building a learning organization, and guidelines for putting a learning organization into practice.

Drawing from established theoretical foundations, contemporary research, and best practices achieved by other organizations, the RCMP are pilot testing *Bridging the Gap*, a competency-based curriculum, as one component of a larger competency-based management system. Senge et al. (1994) declare “a system is a perceived whole whose elements ‘hang together’ because they continually affect each other over time and operate toward a common purpose” (p. 90). The systems approach to competency-based curriculum and the larger human resource management framework, about to be implemented in the RCMP, quietly foretells of massive change ahead.

Chapter 3: Research Design, Method, and Methodologies

Once I selected a topic of research, I had to decide what research design would satisfy the nature of the research to be conducted. Berg (1989) describes qualitative research as:

The what, how, when, and where of a thing – its essence and ambience.

Qualitative research thus refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and description of things. In contrast, quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things. (p. 3)

I selected the qualitative design because it is best suited to address the problem and research question in this study. This specific research is unique in the literature; the study focuses on the meaning of a particular phenomena (competency-based curriculum) on an organization (RCMP) and a recognizable group (RCMP members); requiring exploration and description of the phenomena; and the nature of the study is not suited to a quantitative design (Cresswell, 1994, p. 146). The qualitative research design is also better suited to my interests, training, experience, psychological attributes, and my own worldview (Cresswell, 1994, p. 9) which tends to be more generalist, holistic, strategic, and process-oriented than specialist, linear, tactical, and product-oriented.

Role and Influence of the Researcher

As the researcher in a qualitative design, I was the primary instrument of data collection and I greatly influenced the research process and outcomes (Cresswell, 1994, p. 145). Berg (1989) recognizes that “research is seldom, if ever, really value neutral ... (and) research is seldom undertaken for a neutral reason” (p. 126). From my perspective,

this research project was appropriate, authentic, and timely as I had genuine interests that motivated me to learn more about adult education and competency-based curriculum. The reasons to complete this study include: I chose a project as the culminating activity for the Master of Education program; this topic held the greatest appeal to me as it was both a current issue and relevant to the RCMP and my interest in RCMP training; as a sworn peace officer and member of the RCMP, I am an interested stakeholder in any proposed change to RCMP training and human resource management; as part of my personal and professional development, I have decided to make andragogy my second career, either within the RCMP, or in the private sector; I anticipated the knowledge I would gain during this study would help me prepare for a second career helping adults learn.

Research Method and Methodologies

This study generates three texts. The literature text is a narrative discussion focusing on major themes from my review of the literature. This review explores adult education and competency-based curriculum, the RCMP philosophical framework, existing RCMP training programs and the technologies that support them, the RCMP *Bridging the Gap* training program, and related peripheral interests concerning organizational change and learning. The autobiographical text focuses on how my education has been influenced by individuals in different contexts, and in different phases of my life. My family, peers, teachers, coaches and mentors, the community, the RCMP, and my experiences at the University of Lethbridge have all shaped my education. Finally, the philosophical text is a declaration of my personal mandate, vision, mission, values, goals, and priorities.

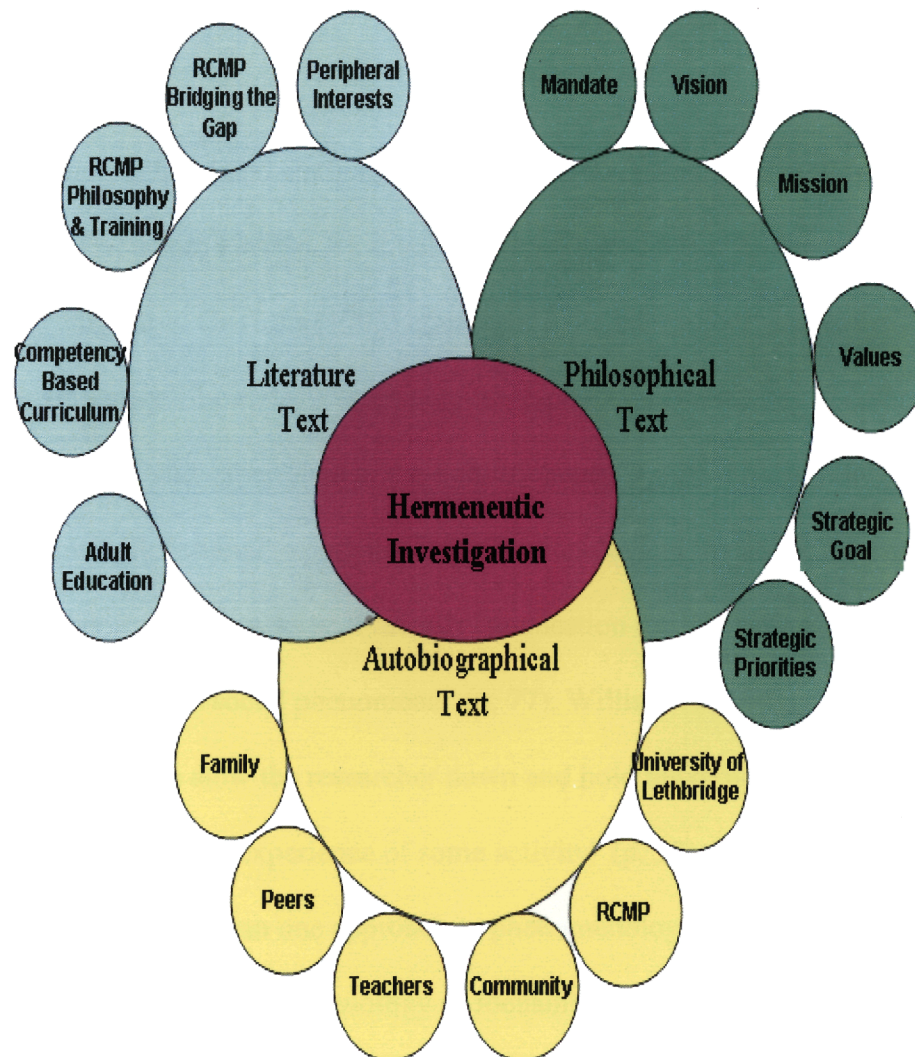


Figure 1: Research Method

The method of research I chose—reviewing the literature and relevant documents for the purpose of generating new understanding and knowledge—is known as *archival measures*. Palys (1992) states: “Archival measures comprise of any information that is contained in written records or documents” (p. 224). Palys links archival measures to the evidence of the past. He recognizes “historical information is a major source of data about

humanity and human behaviour ... (and) it reminds us that things were not always as they are now, and suggests, therefore, that things may not always remain as they are now” (p. 225).

The autobiographical text challenged me to recollect, reconstruct, and interpret past experiences (Friedman, 1990, p. 2), involving those who have been the greatest influence in my education. Griffiths (1995) emphasizes the interpretation phase of autobiographical inquiry. She states: “In an autobiography, theory may be reinterpreted in the light of experience, and experience in the light of theory” (p. 9). The autobiographical inquiry into my own educational experience is phenomenological in nature; according to Jones (1984) “phenomenology asks us, basically, to question the taken-for-granted, to investigate the nature of the social phenomena” (p. 77). Willis (1999) suggests “phenomenology wants to slow the researcher down and hold his or her gaze on the phenomenon itself – the lived experience of some activity” (p. 95). Van Der Mescht (2004) reveals there is more than one approach to phenomenological research, among them she describes empirical phenomenology as focusing on the meaning human beings make of their experience (p. 2). The literature and autobiographical text examines the present of things past.

Generating a declaration of a current personal philosophical text situates me firmly in the study, and it is intended to help me navigate my own transition and process of equilibration as a result of my participation in the study. Senge et al. (1994) focus on the importance of developing a shared vision, mission, values and goals within organizations (pp. 297-347). Through my own experience, I have come to value this

process for increasing self-awareness and to be used as part of a matrix when making important decisions in all the domains of my life. The philosophical text is an examination of the present of things present and the present of things future.

The culminating activity in this research method examines the three texts (literary, autobiographical, and philosophical) with hermeneutic purpose to explore what competency-based curriculum means for the RCMP and its members. Smith (1999) suggests that the goal of hermeneutic investigation is to “rescue the specificities of our lives from the burden of their everydayness to show how they reverberate within grander schemes of things” (p. 41). Hermeneutic investigation seeks to gain a deep understanding of what it is that is being investigated (Smith, 1999, p. 41). Smith (1999) further states:

Any study carried on in the name of hermeneutics should provide a report of the researcher’s own transformations undergone in the process of the inquiry, a showing of the dialogical journey, we might call it. Underscored here is a profoundly ethical aspect to hermeneutic inquiry in a life-world sense, namely, a requirement that a researcher be prepared to deepen her or his own self-understanding in the course of the research. (p. 38)

The hermeneutic method examines the present of things past, the present of things present, and the present of things future.

Chapter 4: The Findings in Three Texts: Reading the Lines

The literature text provides a narrative discussion refocusing on four major themes discovered during the literature review. The autobiographical text explores my ideas, emotions, values, feelings, and beliefs about my education and training and how these were influenced by significant individuals and events in my lived-experience. Finally, the declaration of a personal philosophical framework, which includes my mandate, vision, mission, values, strategic goal, and priorities, authenticates my purpose, as well as, revealing potential for bias in this study.

Literature Text

The literature review examined six categories of related information: (1) adult education; (2) competency-based curriculum; (3) the RCMP philosophical framework, existing training programs, and supporting technologies; (4) the RCMP *Bridging the Gap* training program; and peripheral interests, including: (5) organizational change and (6) organizational learning.² In addition to the routine objectives of a literature review, the review of the literature in this study explored the question: “what can I learn from the literature and other relevant documents, in regard to these six topics?” The literature review also inquired into implied connections between the several categories of information, in the context of the research question; what does competency-based

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The six categories are not an exhaustive list; other categories of related information that were considered to be peripheral and not selected for further discussion include: curriculum design and development, lifelong learning; human capital accumulation, personal and professional development, human resource management, and employee training and corporate renewal.

curriculum mean for the RCMP and its members? The literature text refocuses on the review of the literature for the purpose of entering into a discussion on the most significant themes emerging from and / or discovered during the review of the literature.

Refocusing on major themes. A review of the literature identified four major themes: (1) competency-based curriculum is a hybrid framework of educational principles and ideals that have been adopted by the RCMP, (2) the ideal of competence from a *rationalist* perspective is different than the ideal of competence from a *behaviorist* perspective, (3) achieving a balance between the rationalist and behaviorist perspectives is important, and (4) the competency-based curriculum is one component of a larger competency-based management framework. Merriam and Caffarella (1991) makes a claim that:

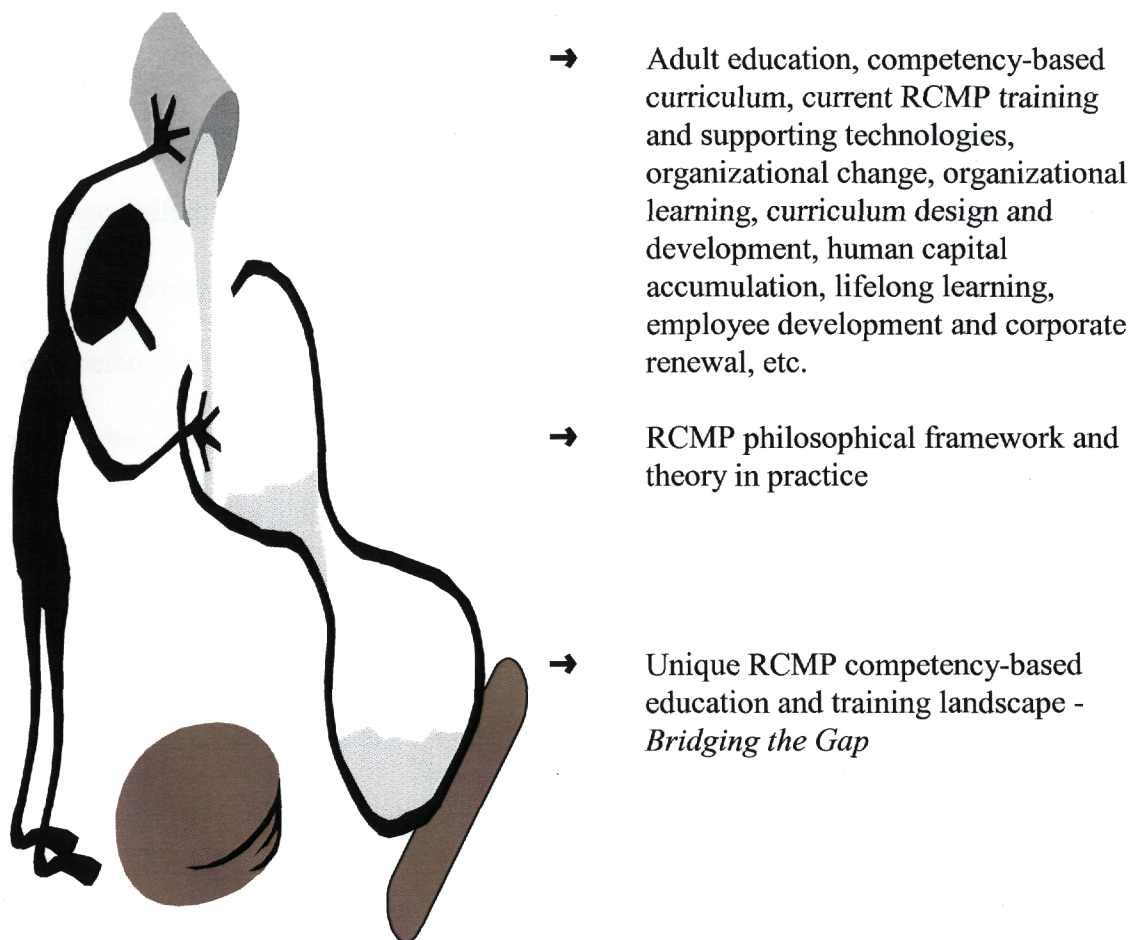
The accumulation of facts about a particular field of practice usually leads to thinking about how bits and pieces of information can be pieced together to explain some aspect of practice – the process is known as theorizing. ...

Theorizing about a phenomenon often results in a conceptual scheme in the form of a ‘framework,’ ‘model,’ or ‘theory.’ ... A theory is a set of interrelated concepts that explain some aspect of the field in a parsimonious manner. (p. 203)

Merriam and Caffarella (1991) might suggest that discussing the findings in three texts involves a kind of theorizing.

Bridging the Gap: A granular and unique landscape. The hour glass image in Figure 2 (p. 43) represents the various qualities of competency-based curriculum and the *Bridging the Gap* training program. This image was influenced by the granular nature of

competency-based curriculum, drawing from a broad base of research in the field of education to create a custom designed training program; the notion that the RCMP was born of the Canadian landscape (physical, social, political, legal), and continues to be influenced by a changing landscape; and the fact I had previously adopted the hourglass as a symbol of my personal and professional development.



- Adult education, competency-based curriculum, current RCMP training and supporting technologies, organizational change, organizational learning, curriculum design and development, human capital accumulation, lifelong learning, employee development and corporate renewal, etc.
- RCMP philosophical framework and theory in practice
- Unique RCMP competency-based education and training landscape - *Bridging the Gap*

Figure 2: *Bridging the Gap's* Unique Landscape³

3

Clip Art retrieved from the World Wide Web February 26, 2005 from <http://office.microsoft.com/clipart>.

In this image, each of the six categories of information discussed in the literature review are represented by small buckets of differently colored sand. The venturi, at the centre of the hour glass, represents the RCMP philosophical framework and theory in practice. The sand that has fallen to the bottom of the hour glass forms a landscape that is both unique and irreplicable. In the hourglass image, buckets of sand continue to pour as new information in the broad field of adult education becomes available: new technology is developed, crime trends change, case law evolves, new legislation is passed, and a host of other factors generate new grains or buckets of sand. The result is a continuously fresh landscape built on the present of things past.

The competence ideals. The literature review identified both advocates and critics of competency-based curriculum. The many issues, on both sides of the argument are better understood, addressed, and resolved during the pilot testing period. A major issue is the fact there are two divergent perspectives regarding the competence ideal: the rationalist perspective, and the behaviorist perspective. The real issue is whether the RCMP *Bridging the Gap* training program can achieve a balance between the rationalist and behaviorist perspectives and establish a middle ground.

The behaviorist perspective represents the historical foundations of competency-based learning. Initially, competency-based curriculum was performance oriented, only the skill or ability that was absolutely required to perform the specific job function was taught to the worker. According to Doll (1984) the behaviorist model of competency-based curriculum was dominant in the past century: "There was no need for mind, behaviors alone are adequate; ... the whole is always considered equal to the sum of the

parts ... (and) performance becomes the goal, the product, and the process” (p. 133). The behaviorist approach can be alluring to management; in the short-term and from a “dollar-and-cents” point of view, it is more efficient and effective to train rather than educate a worker. *Training* has been defined elsewhere as a short-term learning intervention to meet work requirements, whereas *education* and *employee development* prepare the individual for life and work (Dubois & Rothwell, 2000, p. 126). From a behaviorist perspective, competency-based training is linked to business objectives and a framework for linking learning to performance is created (Shandler, 2000, p. 38).

From the rationalist perspective, modern-day competence entails the nature of mind, equilibration, and holism as described so eloquently by Doll (1984, pp. 124-134). The nature of mind, equilibration and holism is not facilitated by a strict behaviorist approach to training; it can only be achieved through education, being a generative process that creates a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. According to Doll (1984), competence from the rationalist perspective creates a confluence of powers that allow a person to take a finite set of rules and structures to generate an infinite variety of appropriate responses to adequately deal with a situation (pp. 124-126), and solve problems. Competence involves transition from a balance or equilibrium, through an imbalance or disequilibrium, to a rebalance or reequilibration at a higher level of functioning (Doll, 1984, p. 130). From a rationalist perspective, competence equals education and employee development. It prepares the individual for life and work.

In the past decade, training in the RCMP slowly shifted from a behaviorist to more of a rationalist model. Recently, arguments have been made that the pendulum has

swung too far toward training members in the philosophy of policing and alternative policing models to the point that members are no longer able to perform basic policing functions. Critics suggest police training must refocus on priorities that are essential to the policing function: ability to conduct investigations, crime scene management, knowledge of investigative interviewing techniques, ability to obtain judicial authorizations, and ability to prepare and present testimony in court (RCMP Competency Dictionary, p. 33). The back-to-basics approach may be justified as the need to maintain and, in some cases, improve upon the quality of investigations has become topical. Current demographics influence high attrition rates due to retirement, and an influx of inexperienced and untrained members starting their policing careers further justifies this back-to-basics training approach. These factors have influenced a growing support for a return to a behaviorist training approach to deliver essential training in the most expedient way possible.

The *Bridging the Gap* training program is designed to facilitate rapid training in functional competencies (essential learning for police officers). *Bridging the Gap* brings the pendulum back toward the behaviorist perspective. The ideal of competence from a rationalist perspective is different than the ideal of competence from a behaviorist perspective, and achieving a balance between the two divergent philosophies generates a third approach.

Establishing the middle ground. Organizations can adopt a definition of competence either from the rationalist or the behaviorist perspective, or they can achieve a balance between the two divergent positions. The RCMP *Bridging the Gap* documents,

including policy statements, appear to use language that is predominately behaviorist in orientation: “a competency is any observable and measurable knowledge, skill, ability, or personal characteristic defined in terms of the *behaviors required by an employee to achieve the needs of the RCMP* [emphasis mine]” (C.M.M.12.D.1.a., RCMP Infoweb, February 28, 2005). This apparent orientation toward behaviorism has been balanced in at least three ways: (1) the RCMP have adopted both organizational and functional competencies, (2) integrating *Bridging the Gap* with existing training suggests that the A-250 program will continue to be available for eligible members, and (3) other forms of employee development, made possible through special assignments and secondments are still available to members.

While the second and third point made above are self-evident, the issue of organizational competency deserves further discussion. It can be argued that functional competencies are behaviorist oriented, however the organizational competencies are clearly more rationalist. Organizational competencies, defined elsewhere, are considered to be personal characteristics that represent individual qualities and attributes. They are therefore, less trainable (RCMP Competency Dictionary, RCMP Infoweb, November 30, 2004), suggesting they are developed with experience over time. RCMP organizational competencies are grouped in four categories: (1) *commitment to learning and development group*, (2) *thinking skills group*, (3) *client centered service group*, and (4) *people skills group* (RCMP Competency Dictionary, RCMP Infoweb, November 30, 2004). According to the RCMP Competency Dictionary, each group is made up of several competencies. The competencies in the commitment to learning and development group

include: developing self, developing others, flexibility, and change leadership. The competencies in the thinking skills group include: innovative thinking, planning and organizing, problem solving, strategic thinking, and decisiveness. In the client centered services group competencies include: conscientiousness and reliability, meeting client needs, results oriented, and stewardship. Finally, in the people skills group the competencies include: communication, persuasiveness, courage of convictions, teamwork, team leadership, networking and relationship building, and self-control and composure.

Since each competency profile for each position in the RCMP is made up of a combination of specifically selected organizational competencies and functional competencies, each profile has a certain balance of rationalist and behaviorist perspectives. Retaining programs such as the A-250 program for eligible members, and facilitating employee development through special assignments, secondments, and other creative performance outlets will also contribute to achieving a balance and establishing a middle ground between the rationalist and behaviorist perspectives on competence.

Competency-based curriculum: One component in a larger system. Competency-based curriculum, in the form of the RCMP *Bridging the Gap* training program, is one component in a larger competency-based human resource management system; a system that is about to be implemented in the RCMP. My awareness of this fact arrived in an unusually roundabout way. The story, I believe, is worth telling.

I began gathering information on *Bridging the Gap* on October 27, 2004, including documents from the RCMP Infoweb, a website available to employees of the

RCMP. These documents included the RCMP *Competency-Based Management Framework* report revised September 2003. The RCMP Competency-Based Management Framework report states:

The most basic objective of Competency Based Management (CBM) is to provide the tools that will enable HR to be more proactive in planning and responding to new, strategic job requirements and improve day-to-day service delivery to clients. CBM provides the road map to accomplish this objective by acting as a common language for all HR activities. The focus of CBM is on worker qualifications and the identification of knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics (competencies) necessary for job success. CBM includes two components: a business planning component that allows managers to assess their resources and needs, and to link employees' competencies and training needs with organizational objectives; and, a career management component that provides employees with information they need to progress in the organization and their careers. (RCMP Infoweb, November 30, 2004)

The RCMP *Career Management Manual, Competency Based Management* policy was also obtained October 27, 2004, scanned, and filed with other relevant documents gathered to complete the literature review. This is where the path to understanding the connection between *Bridging the Gap* and implementing an entire competency-based human resource management system took a detour; the RCMP policy was not further studied at this time.

Over the course of the next few months, the chapter entitled "Strategies for

Systems Thinking” in Senge et al. (1994), was reviewed. Senge et al. (1994) describes a *system* as a “whole whose elements ‘hang together’ because they continually affect each other over time and operate toward a common purpose” (p. 90). I began to think about the alignment of competency-based training in the current RCMP human resource system and imagine how it would be integrated with the existing RCMP philosophical framework, training components, and supporting technologies. At about this time, I recalled attending a town-hall style meeting which took place on July 28, 2004 when a senior executive officer in the RCMP stated the RCMP human resources system was going to be overhauled.

Toward the end of the literature review process I read the first few chapters of a book titled, *Competency-Based Human Resource Management*, by Dubois and Rothwell (2004). Dubois and Rothwell (2004) report:

Competency-based human resource management concentrates first on the person and then on his or her outputs or results. Competencies are enduring, while work activities and specific work tasks are transitory. Competency models can supplement traditional job descriptions and become the foundation for an entire HR system. When that happens, an organization is using competency-based HR management. Competency-based HR management views the needed outputs and the organization’s work roles or requirements from a person-oriented rather than job-oriented perspective. This approach makes competencies the foundation for the entire HR management function. Competencies drive recruitment, selection, placement, orientation, training, performance management, and workers’ rewards.

With all aspects of HR management integrated through competencies, rather than through traditional notions of jobs or work activities, the organization has a competency-based HR system. (p. 34)

These four activities (bit-by-bit and piece-by-piece) eventually led to my growing awareness that the *Competency-Based Management Framework* (2003) report may represent the method and the means to overhaul the current human resource system in the RCMP. This growing awareness became a discovery when I revisited the RCMP *Bridging the Gap* Infoweb site on February 28, 2005 to see if there had been something I missed, some declaration that the RCMP were adopting competency-based human resource management. That is when I *rediscovered* the RCMP *Career Management Manual* policy that was now posted on the *Bridging the Gap* webpage. This policy, approved on 2004-08-11, states: “The RCMP has adopted Competency Based Management (CBM) to support all human resource (HR) activities. Job related competencies will be phased into various HR programs and activities and the affected directives revised accordingly” (C.M.M.12.C.1, RCMP Infoweb, February 28, 2005). The policy further states:

A competency profile consists of one set of common criteria (job related competencies) to support HR activities. Competency profiles may be used as the basis for recruitment, staffing, learning and development, performance management, career development and streaming, HR planning, succession planning, classification, and compensation. ... Eventually, all RCMP employees will be selected, evaluated, developed and promoted based on competencies that

support operational and organizational objectives and goals. ... Competencies will be integrated into various HR programs starting with staffing and learning and development. (C.M.M.12.D.2.a/b/c, RCMP Infoweb, February 28, 2005).

In the high volume of literature, I failed to recognize the importance of the policy the first time I encountered the information. As it turned out, my investigation into competency-based curriculum led to mounting evidence that the competency-based management framework would be implemented to overhaul the previous system; and now, the new RCMP policy statement, recently rediscovered, confirmed my suspicion. Having made this discovery, I found the question of what competency-based curriculum means for the RCMP and its members took on new meaning significance. *Bridging the Gap* is the first phase in a broader goal to replace the current human resource system with a competency-based human resource management system. The *Bridging the Gap* training program lays the foundation for the implementation of the competency-based human resource management system.

Autobiographical Text

While I share a common bond with my police colleagues we are, each one of us, different. This bond stems from the fact that we have all sworn an oath of office.

Members of the RCMP swear the following oath:

I,solemnly swear that I will faithfully, diligently and impartially execute and perform the duties required of me as a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and will well and truly obey and perform all lawful orders and instructions that I receive as such, without fear, favour or affection of or toward

any person. So help me God. (The RCMP Act, R.S., 1985, c. 8 (2nd Supp.), s. 23.)

This bond is strengthened by basic training and the experiences that are common to front-line policing. The bond is made solemn by *dangers shared*.⁴

Patterns of uniformity present within policing give way to police careers that become unique to the individual. Individuals begin their police career with a different volume and quality of education, experience, and knowledge. The police officer then receives basic training and throughout his or her career, a unique array of specialized training. The officer is then assigned to various general duties, specialized duties, unique investigations, and routine transfers to different districts, towns, cities, provinces or regions in Canada. A police officer's aggregate education and knowledge contributes to the creation of a personal landscape, one lived experience at a time and ultimately, to his or her ability to complete assigned duties effectively.

My educational experience—my personal landscape—is unique. This autobiographical text will challenge me to recollect, reconstruct, and interpret past experiences (Friedman, 1990, p. 2), involving the individuals and circumstances that have been the greatest influence in my education. Gutek (2001) recognizes the importance of reflecting on one's own educational autobiography:

The primary source of this autobiography are the formative influence of parents,

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On March 3, 2005, four Members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were shot and killed in the line of duty. On March 10, 2005, in Edmonton, Alberta, the Governor General of Canada, Her Excellency Adrienne Clarkson, was among several dignitaries to speak at the memorial ceremony held in tribute to the fallen officers. Her Excellency described the bond between police officers as "*a bond in danger shared*."

siblings, friends, adversaries, peers, teachers, politicians, clergy, and others on what we have become and how we view the world. The curriculum—formal courses—we studied in school, and how our teachers taught these courses are also important sources for us. Our involvement with and participation in informal educational agencies, such as churches and the clergy, media and news commentators, libraries and librarians, workplaces, and employers and employees, are important in forming us and our attitudes. ... From the interaction of context and biography comes the development of educational ideas. (p. 5)

The autobiographical text acknowledges that I bring a complex matrix of skill, ability, experience, knowledge, and motivation to my police duties and the RCMP *Bridging the Gap* training program.

Birth family and family of choice. I have two families; the family I was born into, which includes my parents and two sisters, Diane and Kathy, their respective families and our extended family; and the family I chose, which includes my spouse, Robin, and our two children, Carissa and Scott. My education has been deeply affected by both families.

My parents encouraged and supported my formal and informal education. They expected me to complete grade twelve and this became my goal as well. I was not the best or the worst of students, I was a satisfactory student and with only a few exceptions my letter grades were most often in the “C” range. Approximately six years ago, when I mentioned to my mother that I thought one of our children could be working harder at school, my mother—in her own quiet way—mailed my grade two to grade five report cards to me without any note. Some of the Teachers’ Comments on the report cards include:

“James shows average achievement, but is not working up to his capacity” (February, 1968); “James could apply himself more to his work” (April, 1968); “Jim is concerning himself too much with what is going on around him and not applying himself to his school work” (February, 1969). I believe this was my mother’s way of reminding me that my own education wasn’t perfect.

My parents encouraged and supported a multitude of informal extracurricular interests. They gave me gifts of learning: guitar and piano lessons, organized minor hockey and little league baseball, speed skating, wrestling, six-man football, Navy League and Sea Cadets, junior rifle and hunter safety instruction, Tae Kwon Do, and cooking and flying lessons. Through these activities I learned about having fun but I also learned about discipline, the importance and rewards of practice and patience, team work, sportsmanship, competition, citizenship, persistence, and living a hectic lifestyle.

Our house had a small indoor porch. Our family called it a den. This is where I practiced my guitar lessons. Because I knew the lessons were expensive, and because I really did want to learn how to play the guitar, I didn’t balk at the thirty minutes of daily practice required by my parents. I took music lessons for approximately three years and the discipline of daily practice paid off; I became proficient enough to learn how to play popular songs from song books or *by ear*. I don’t think anyone in the world has played *House of the Rising Sun* more times than me but, my family never complained. In fact, my sisters occasionally would join in the singing of songs they liked. As my playing and singing abilities developed, I began to enjoy playing for friends and other audiences. In grade 8 and 9, I shared my passion for playing guitar with my classmates, offering basic

guitar lessons before classes in the morning. From the time I was twelve until I was sixteen, I played approximately two hours each day and gave serious thought to going to university to obtain a degree in music and teaching so I could become a junior high school music teacher. While this plan was never implemented, I did continue to teach guitar lessons and I played professionally in a band for almost three years while stationed with the RCMP in Brooks, Alberta.

Music enriched my life and taught me the values of discipline, patience, and persistence. Organized sports taught me the values of sportsmanship, team work, and the competitive spirit. My many other extracurricular interests and activities taught me to continuously search out new learning experiences.

My parents also shared their passion for travel with my two sisters and me. Every summer our family vacationed at a different destination: Banff; Victoria; Niagara Falls; Ottawa; Toronto; Montreal; Deadwood, South Dakota; Nashville, Tennessee; or a cabin at one of the many lakes in Manitoba. When I first saw the Rocky Mountains, I was mesmerized by the majestic landscape and felt immensely privileged for this vacation experience. This feeling continues, even today, as I see the Rockies from my Calgary home, as I hike with my spouse and friends in the Kananaskis, or ski with my family of choice and a community of friends from our modest trailer home at Castle Mountain Resort. Through all our travels, our time together during these journeys is a most precious memory. My parents, my two sisters, and paternal grandmother taught me life's most important lesson and gift to a child: growing up in a loving, stable, and supportive family.

Both of my parents worked full-time. My mother was a nurse, and my father was a

long-haul truck driver. Frequently, on weekends my parents took our family to the farming communities of south western Manitoba to visit with a large extended family. On these trips by car my parents would often shut off the radio and the whole family would sing popular country and western songs together. My parents also loved to dance; at one dance my parents attended, a large fight broke out. My mother lost sight of my father as the melee continued; my mother became worried so she yelled out, "Andy, where are you?" My father called back to my mother, "I'm over here Mother, holding the coats." My father taught me that it is important for a man to protect what he loves; and sometimes it is wise to simply hold the coats.

My character and values started to develop under my parents' guidance. I always knew that they loved and trusted me; they gave me ample freedom to find my own way in life and, for the most part, supported my choices.

My father died of lung cancer in January 1991. His passing taught me the meaning of grieving and loss. His death gave me the resolve to quit smoking and pay greater attention to my own health and well being. My mother is seventy-five years old and she still loves to dance; she dances with three of her sisters and a group of other friends two or three evenings each week.

The family that I chose includes my spouse, Robin, and our two children, Carissa and Scott. Robin and I met the first day of grade seven at Earl Grey Junior High School. We started dating in grade eleven. We were married in Winnipeg, Manitoba at age twenty, began our family in Brooks, Alberta at age twenty-two, and have raised our two children while living in four different Alberta communities: Brooks, Grande Prairie,

Lethbridge and Calgary.

I am a husband and father before I am anything else in my life: son, brother, grandson, uncle, friend, peace officer, or student. These two roles define who I am and have provided me with the most challenge and joy. My learning as a husband and father continues to be a work in progress and my education still isn't perfect. Most recently I have learned to respect my daughter's decision to live and work abroad. I have also learned from her absence to appreciate my son's presence.

For our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, Robin's mother gave us a framed copy of our wedding ceremony, which reads in part:

Today is very much like any other wedding day, but it is like no wedding day known before, because it is Robin and Jim's wedding day. To this moment they bring the dreams which bind them together. They bring that particular personality and spirit which is uniquely their own, and out of which will grow the reality of their corporate life. ... Your marriage joins you for life in a relationship so intimate and personal that it will profoundly affect all that you are now and all that you will become. Your future, with its hopes and disappointments, its successes and failures, its pleasures and pains, its joys and sorrows, is hidden from your eyes. You know that these elements are mingled in every life and are to be expected in your own. Thus, not knowing what is before you, you commit yourselves to each other freely and without reserve in the hope of a richer and deeper life together.

As I read and reflect on the most the important text in my life, it occurs to me that as our

family lives life together, I learn what I didn't and couldn't know when I was first married. Day-by-day, month-by-month and year-by-year my life has been revealed to me; I have learned what our hopes and disappointments have been until this point: our successes and failures, our pleasures and pains, and our joys and sorrows. I have learned to change and grow with Robin and our children; to take the good with the bad; and to love our sometimes chaotic-messy-life.

Peers. When I was five years old my family moved to a two storey, three-bedroom home built in 1907 on the corner of Lilac and Warsaw in Winnipeg. For the sixteen years I lived in this home (and for the twenty-seven years since) it had always been painted blue and white, and a weak foundation caused the house to tilt decidedly to the north. The greatest thing about our home was its location. It was right across the street from La Verendrye Elementary School. There was a skating rink with a non-stop shinny hockey game in the winter; baseball diamonds, soccer, and football fields in the summer; and a year-round meeting place for me and my friends. I learned a lot on the playground at La Verendrye. I learned: how to play with other kids, to play by the rules (which occasionally were made up as we went along), about justice which is really about fair play and equality, how to build friendships and lose them. I learned I preferred to have a small group of close friends; that as much as I wanted to fit in with the crowd, I was different, and each of my friends was different, too. Not all families were like mine. Decisions made early in your life affect your life chances.

I moved from Winnipeg when I was twenty; first to Regina, Saskatchewan to attend the RCMP Training Academy, then to work as a peace officer in four different

communities in Alberta. With each move, I developed new friendships, many of which have been maintained through the years. Some have not. While in Brooks, many of our friends and colleagues were also starting their families and getting a start in the housing market. I learned from my peers about their parenting experiences and how to build fences, decks, and develop basements. I learned that when living so far away from relatives, good friends become very important, and it is easier to raise your children if you are friends with the parents of their friends.

I have worked closely with approximately one hundred different police colleagues, and have learned something from each one of them; often times—what to do, and occasionally—what not to do. Gord Tomlinson was my recruit field trainer for the first six months of my on-the-job training. He was the most influential in the development of my attitude, enthusiasm and approach to community policing.

Gord started where the RCMP Training Academy left off. With his passion for police work and as my coach, his policing philosophy, and his policing practice, became a model that I attempted to integrate with my own developing approach to policing. He supervised, coached, and supported my learning through most of my first experiences as a peace officer: serving my first summons, issuing my first traffic ticket, investigating my first criminal offence, making my first arrest, gathering evidence, preparing a case for court, giving testimony, and attending my first sudden death. Gord helped me re-examine and honor the values that I brought to my policing career. I have always admired his attitude and enthusiasm, and consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn from Gord.

Jerry Jantz and Lloyd Hickman helped me develop as a writer and apprentice researcher. Jerry Jantz was one of my supervisors in Brooks. He read through all of my files and written reports. Jerry insisted that I apply myself and write reports that were of high quality. He would make corrections in green and red felt pen to the reports I submitted, and would not approve the report until it met his standards. As a result, I became a competent report writer, and took an interest in learning how to write more complex reports. I worked for Lloyd Hickman in Lethbridge. He recognized that I had an interest and enthusiasm for completing research and writing papers while I was attending courses at the University of Lethbridge on my off-duty hours. Lloyd began assigning various research and writing projects to me. This provided a unique performance outlet for the writing and research skills I was developing at the university which gave me the opportunity to put those emerging skills into practice.

I worked with Bob Pike while we were stationed together in the Customs & Excise Section in Lethbridge. He encouraged my passion for life long-learning. Bob completed a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Great Falls, in Montana while he was stationed in Milk River. Then while stationed in Lethbridge, he completed a Master of Education degree from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. Bob began teaching on a sessional basis at the Lethbridge Community College (LCC) and then retired from the RCMP to teach full time in the Criminal Justice Program at LCC. I admired what Bob had accomplished and in 1998, I set out to develop my own education and career plan toward achieving a similar goal.

Teachers. Pedagogy is a calling; you have to be wired a certain way in order excel

in this profession. While the basic skills are important, I believe the ability of the teacher to make a connection and create a learning relationship with the student is what sets a good teacher apart from the crowd. Over time, I have developed strong feelings and beliefs in regard to the values of education and life-long learning; it may even be called a passion, but that might be taking it too far. What surprises me, given my “near passion” for education is the limited number of real positive relationships I have developed with my teachers. Of all the teachers I had through public school K - 12, only three stand out. My grade three teacher, my grade eleven and twelve biology teacher, and my high school English teacher.

I cannot provide a detailed description of what makes these three teachers stand out in my memory; I suspect they made efforts to provide a safe learning environment for everyone in class and managed to stimulate my interest to actively participate in my own learning. I do remember how enthusiastic my English teacher became when he read passages from *Hamlet* or *MacBeth*. I was surprised by his enthusiasm and by how much he really seemed to enjoy his work. He knew the subject matter inside and out, and I was impressed with his indepth analysis of the different works of William Shakespeare (*Hamlet* and *Macbeth*), Thomas Hardy (*Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*), Henrik Ibsen (*A Doll's House*), or Fyodor Dostoevsky (*Crime and Punishment*). I remember being both amazed and impressed by the amount of meaning that could be embedded, then deconstructed, from a single line or paragraph of text.

My experience with teachers in college and university, as an adult learner, has been very different than my experience in public school. Approximately ninety-five

percent of all the classes I completed were of real interest and relevance to me; the remaining five percent were completed to meet the liberal arts program requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree. Even in mandatory courses, once I became involved in the course material and made a connection with the professor, I enjoyed the course. Of the fifty courses I have completed at college and university, there has only been one that I did not enjoy.

Part of the reason I am engaged in life-long learning is the quality of the professors at the University of Lethbridge, where I feel part of a learning community, especially in the Master of Education program where I have been so inspired by so many. Three of my professors stand out. I made efforts to take as many classes as I could from Dr. Cynthia Chambers (Education - Graduate Studies), Dr. Leroy Little Bear (Native American Studies), and Dr. David Brown (Sociology). I was attracted to each professor for their intellect, their positive and almost serene outlook, and for the learning relationship that formed so naturally between us.

The community. The first time I was exposed to the notion that I could make a contribution to my country or to my community was in a citizenship class I completed while in Navy League, a junior Sea Cadet program. Then, when I was approximately thirteen years old, I met Tommy Thompson and his wife Betty; they were parents of a friend. Mr. Thompson was an avid sportsman and tireless volunteer. He was president of the La Verendrye Junior Rifle Club; a Manitoba hunter safety instructor; a conservationist; and an advocate for Operation Respect, a program that aimed to improve relations between landowners and hunters. Mr. Thompson became my small-bore

shooting coach; he had a house painting business and gave me a summer job painting houses. He also took me on fishing trips with his own sons, and he facilitated my first volunteer efforts (planting willows in a marshland, and cleaning up the rifle range after a flood). Mr. Thompson was the first person I had met who truly had a community spirit; he also had a uniquely positive outlook on life even through great adversity. Mr. Thompson has been an important influence in my life. He taught me that community service is important.

While in Brooks I volunteered to be the director of the Southern Alberta Summer Games small bore rifle competition. Then while stationed in Grande Prairie, I became very involved as a community volunteer. I had taken a professional interest in the prevention of family violence and was one of the first members in Alberta to receive family violence prevention training through the RCMP. As a result of my interest and training, I was asked to sit on a board of directors for the local women's shelter; there I met Jacquie Aitken. Jacquie was an active volunteer in the community and the director of PACE, a sexual assault crisis centre in Grande Prairie. Jacquie's mission was to prevent family violence, and provide services to victims of family violence; and she did everything in her power to achieve her mission. I became Jacquie's student and I learned more and more about the related issues of preventing and responding to incidents of family violence, sexual assault, and suicide. In addition to sitting on the board of directors for the women's shelter, I also sat on the board of directors for PACE. I then worked with a handful of interested community members, including Jacquie, to form the Grande Prairie RCMP Victims' Assistance Program Association. This Victims' Assistance

Program was committed to providing information, support, and referral services to victims of crime and it is in its fourteenth year of operation.

In Lethbridge I sat on the board of directors for the John Howard Society and the Lethbridge Family Services. I also volunteered as an assistant coach with minor hockey, the Lethbridge Collegiate Institute Girls Rugby team; and I continue to volunteer as an instructor the disabled ski program at Castle Mountain.

Volunteering in the community has contributed significantly to my personal development. I have learned how non-profit organizations operate effectively and not-so-effectively, and how to chair a productive meeting. I have also learned the important contributions that non-profit organizations make in providing valuable services in the community. I enjoy working for a cause within my community. I also enjoyed developing a coach's perspective on hockey, rugby, and skiing. Moreover, I have learned the experience I gain while volunteering is its own reward. The most enjoyable and rewarding volunteer experience I have had is helping people with disabilities learn to ski. My wife and I each volunteer approximately one hundred hours yearly toward the West Castle Alpine disabled ski program at Castle Mountain, near Pincher Creek, Alberta. For the past four years I have experienced the joy of sharing my enthusiasm for skiing with approximately twenty different students. One of the students I ski with frequently uses a sit ski (a fiberglass chair with a ski on the bottom). I ski behind the student while holding onto a tether that is attached to the sit ski. Last year after a particularly enjoyable day of skiing, this little boy told me, "This is the best day of my life." There is no greater reward than being able to help people have the best day of their lives.

The RCMP. The RCMP have facilitated my adult learning through training, education, and providing performance outlets (an opportunity to put theory into practice). I decided to pursue a career in the RCMP when I was fifteen years old. My interest in the RCMP started when one of my cousins applied. I had a close relationship with my cousin and because he took an interest in the RCMP, I took an interest as well. From that point on, I had a purpose for learning. Getting into the RCMP became my goal and I began to work toward achieving that goal. I finished grade twelve, I began martial arts training, I started private pilot lessons, I tried to keep my driving record clear of demerit points, and I stopped associating with my high-risk acquaintances. I applied to the RCMP on March 31, 1977. I was sworn in and began training August 8, 1978, one month after my twentieth birthday. The RCMP Training Academy at Depot Division in Regina, Saskatchewan became my home for the next six months as I lived with thirty-one other recruits in a one-room dormitory, on the second floor of “B” Block. In 1978, the RCMP training program was an education unto itself; I had joined the police culture and adopted the RCMP lifestyle. As my instructors at the academy would often say, “There is the right way, the wrong way and the RCMP way.” For me and others like me, the RCMP has never been just a job. It is a way of life.

The regimen at the academy involved physical, academic, and training in other police skills. Physical training included: self-defense, swimming, physical education, and drill. Self-defense consisted of wrestling, ground fighting and karate. The physical education emphasized jogging and resistance training. The drill program stressed deportment, discipline, marching, and how to care for and properly wear the uniform.

Other skills taught at the academy included police driver training and firearms training. Academic training included human relations, law, an introduction to the collection and safeguarding of evidence, policy and procedures, and typing. In addition to the official curriculum there was a very large dose of regimentation. Times have changed since 1978 and so has RCMP training. On the whole, cadets today arrive at the academy with a college diploma or university degree instead of the minimum grade twelve and their training is less focused on discipline and uniformity. It is now more focused on acquiring the community policing and problem solving skills that are needed in the field. Of course society has also changed in the past quarter century. The expectation to remain in one career for twenty-five to thirty-five years is a concept foreign to many recruits. Today, many recruits join the RCMP with considerable life and work experience and they frequently will have professional credentials or designations. I have worked with nurses, lawyers, accountants, teachers, bankers, and mechanics. The education and work experience of many recruits today creates employment options that were not available to the younger, lower educated, and less experienced recruit twenty-five years ago. Police officers starting out today are able to resign from policing and return to another professional career if they are not satisfied with their policing career.

In addition to the six-month intensive training I received at the RCMP Training Academy and the six-month recruit field training I completed under Gord Tomlinson's guidance, I have completed more than thirty different RCMP training courses in the past twenty-five years. These courses have included: Community Problem Analysis / Program Management (Ottawa, Ontario 1989), Effective Presentation (Edmonton, Alberta 1989),

Customs & Excise (Ottawa, Ontario 1992), Community Policing Train the Trainers (Lethbridge, Alberta 1994), VIP Security (St. John's, Newfoundland 2001), Commercial Crime Investigation Level One (Regina, Saskatchewan 2002), and Commercial Crime Investigation Level Two (Calgary, Alberta 2003). I have also frequently attended workshops, seminars, and conferences that typically provide specific information or techniques intended to improve my investigative skills and abilities. These include: Statement Validity Analysis (Grande Prairie, Alberta. 1989), Canadian Organization for Victims' Assistance (Calgary, Alberta 1999), Sharing Common Ground—Policing With First Nations (Edmonton, Alberta. 1990), Internet Crime Investigators (Ottawa, Ontario 1998), Preventing the Sexual Exploitation of Children (Vancouver, British Columbia 1999), Toronto Police Fraud Conference (Toronto, Ontario 2004), and Telemarketing Fraud Investigations (Chicago, Illinois 2004).

I joined the RCMP with the minimum education requirement: a grade twelve diploma. The Force has facilitated all of my post-secondary education. In 1990, the RCMP transferred me to the University of Lethbridge for a one-year education leave with pay. The RCMP paid for my family to relocate from Grande Prairie to Lethbridge and they paid my salary and tuition as I attended the University of Lethbridge for two semesters. Since that time, the RCMP has supported my efforts to take additional university courses during off-duty hours through the *A-250 Program*; which pays a percentage of the tuition costs for a course successfully completed at a recognized post-secondary institution. I have taken advantage of this program to obtain a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Education degrees at the University of Lethbridge.

In addition to training and education through formal courses, workshops, and the A-250 program, I have been engaged in other learning opportunities made possible through transfers from one duty to another and from one location to another. In twenty-six years I have been transferred into fifteen different job functions in four different Alberta communities. I have also been fortunate to have been given the opportunity to participate in several short term (one or two month) special assignments. In many instances these special assignments have allowed me to put the knowledge and experience I have gained through training and education into practice. In 1992, I conducted research and wrote the position paper: *Impact of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms on Law Enforcement* for RCMP senior management. This paper was used as a model in a presentation to the Minister of Justice. In 1994, I wrote the course training standards for *Community Policing: Train the Trainers*, then participated as a facilitator in the training of all members of Lethbridge Sub-Division. In 1995, I was a member of the “K” Division Shared Leadership Vision team, and a facilitator in the workshops that contributed to the development of the RCMP vision, mission and values statements. In 1998, I was a member of the “K” Division Alignment team, and was the lead writer on the “K” *Division Alignment: Strategic Plan for Implementation of the North / South District Concept* that resulted in the elimination of seven RCMP sub-divisions within Alberta into a two districts. In 1998, at the request of RCMP senior management, I conducted research and was lead writer on a position paper that was presented at the International Executive Policing Symposium at the Hague, Netherlands (1998), and was subsequently published (Laing & Hickman, 2003). In August 2001, I was seconded to the transition team for G8

Summit Security, Kananaskis–2002. Subsequently assigned as second in charge of the Public Affairs Communication Team, I was responsible for Internal Communications for G8 Security. I led a talented team that: developed the Joint Philosophical Framework that was a focal point for all internal and external training and communications; produced and presented a three hour orientation to approximately four thousand RCMP members assigned to G8 Summit Security; and approximately twenty-five other internal communications products.

Insofar as an autobiographical research creates a dialogue to reveal deeper understanding, at this moment I am compelled to write in my own margin:

I feel like I have made an important discovery that has been right in front of my nose all this time. I believe the RCMP has done a very good job facilitating my training and education, and giving me unique opportunities to put that training, education, and collection of experiences and knowledge into practice.

As the RCMP begins the process of implementing a competency-based curriculum as a component of the larger competency-based management framework, it will be important not to throw the baby out with the bath water.

The University of Lethbridge. The first post-secondary university transfer course I enrolled in was *An Introduction to Psychology*, offered at the Brooks Campus of the Medicine Hat College in 1981. From that point onward, I was hooked on adult education. I always seemed to be able to make connections between some aspect of a course I was taking to my work, career, or personal life, and attribute value to this connection. I completed three university transfer courses at the Brooks Campus of the Medicine Hat

College. I then completed two more university transfer courses at the Grande Prairie Regional College.

During the two semesters I attended the University of Lethbridge while on RCMP education assignment 1990-1991, I completed ten courses with an emphasis in Native American Studies and Sociology. I qualified for and won the Louise MacKinney Scholarship, but in order to accept the scholarship I had to enroll in three classes for the fall semester, 1991. With the cooperation and support of my family and my new unit commander at the Lethbridge RCMP Customs & Excise Section, I completed the three courses during off-duty hours and began a long journey toward completing the remaining courses to fulfill a Bachelor of Arts degree (With Great Distinction) in the fall semester of 2000, with a double major in Native American Studies and Sociology.

I began the Master of Education program in the fall semester of 2000. A secondment to the G8 Summit Security Planning Team from August 2001 to August 2002, and a subsequent transfer to the Commercial Crime Section in Calgary, Alberta, extended the timeline to complete the Master of Education program from three to five years.

While I was taking courses at the University of Lethbridge, remarkable coincidences began to happen. On a number of occasions I would complete a course, then be given an opportunity to put that new knowledge into practice. I completed three courses in Native American Studies in 1990-1991: *Native Rights in Canada*; *Native Law and Economic Development*; and *Aboriginal Title: A Case Law Analysis*; and I learned from Professor Emeritus Dr. Leroy Little Bear how to complete briefings of Supreme

Court Decisions. This education was put into practice when senior management in the RCMP assigned me to complete a position paper on the *Impact of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms on Law Enforcement*. An important component of the research I completed for this position paper was the briefing of approximately ten different Supreme Court decisions focusing on the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. In the fall semester of 1998, I completed Dr. David Brown's class: *Sociology of Complex Organizations*. During the same semester, two members in senior management within "K" Division (Alberta) RCMP seconded me to take the information they generated and write the *RCMP "K" Division Alignment: Strategic Plan for Implementation*. This plan eliminated seven RCMP sub-divisions in the province of Alberta and created two district command centres. The course I was taking at the time helped me understand why and how complex organizations change. In the fall semester of 2001 I completed an independent study, *Sociology 5990: Restorative Justice Needs Assessment* in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Education program. In the spring of 2002, as the member responsible for Internal Communications for G8 Summit Security, Kananaskis-2002, I identified the need to provide an orientation to deliver mandatory information common to all members assigned duties for G8 Summit Security. I completed a needs assessment, putting the education I acquired only a few months earlier, into practice. I, then, presented the findings to the G8 Summit Security management team and was later assigned the responsibility of creating, developing, and delivering a mass orientation to approximately 4,000 RCMP officers. These are only three of several examples where connections have been made between the education I obtained from the University of Lethbridge and its

application in my work.

As an adult learner, I have been able to access courses that were of interest to me and relevant to my work, career, and personal needs. I experienced learning at university, not just acquired credentials. Students who focus only on the credentials may not fully appreciate the importance of the education. In the work world, credentials are your passport, while your education and competencies are your ticket. The University of Lethbridge, in many ways, has facilitated both my passport and my ticket.

Philosophical Text

From a young age, I was aware of the importance of establishing personal values and setting goals. The process became organic to me as I entered adulthood and began my policing career in the RCMP. The already familiar process was given structure when in 1996, I was asked to participate as a facilitator in the *Shared Leadership Vision* process that developed the RCMP Vision, Mission, Values, Commitment to Employees and Communities. I was then responsible for developing the Joint Philosophical Framework for the Kananaskis 2002 G8 Summit Security. These two experiences convinced me that creating my own philosophical framework was important, to act as both an anchor and a beacon, as I continue to navigate my professional and personal life. I prepared my first philosophical framework in the summer of 2002. Similar to the template I developed for the Kananaskis 2002 G8 Summit Security Joint Philosophical Framework, my personal philosophical framework included statements in regard to my mandate, vision, mission, values, and goals. I have completed a new philosophical statement as part of this project with a focus on the second half of my life.

I use my philosophical framework as a tool when faced with important decisions. Recently I used it to prioritize four career options. I constructed a simple grid with the four career options across the top then listed by philosophical framework, and a few additional priorities down the left side. I assigned a number value to each category within my philosophical framework between 0 - 2 (0 representing no value and 2 representing the most value). I then asked myself the question: “What career option is most consistent with my philosophical framework and other priorities?” The whole process—making the grid, writing the question, answering the question and tabulating the answers— took approximately thirty minutes. I prioritized my career options and was able to quickly determine either option 1 or 4 would be acceptable ahead of option 2 or 3.

My philosophical framework can also be used as a guide to ethical problem solving. In addition to using a familiar problem solving format, reflecting on my philosophical framework ensures that my response to a given situation is authentic and appropriate to my beliefs.

Table 1: Philosophical Framework Decision Matrix

Factors to Consider	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Impact on Family	2	.5	.5	1.5
Job Satisfaction	1.5	.5	1	2
Personal / Professional Development	1.5	.5	1	2
Financial Impact	1.5	.5	1	1
Mandate	2	2	2	2
Vision	2	.5	.5	2
Mission	2	.5	1	2

Values	2	.5	.5	1.5
Goal	1.5	.5	1	2
Priorities	2	.5	1	1.5
Total	18	6.5	9.5	17.5

Personal philosophical framework.

- Mandate: Love and support my family.
- Vision: I am content as a whole person, gratefully living each day to the fullest in the close company of family and good friends.
- Mission: Continuously grow as a person and help others achieve their aspirations for growth.
- Values: Relationships, which subsumes: integrity, honesty, respect, courage, compassion, and action;
 A balanced life, including: the emotional, intellectual, physical, spiritual, and financial domains;
 Joy, a deep, almost spiritual feeling of happiness;
 Peace, an inner and outward calm and serenity;
 Social responsibility⁵ including: expedience, prudence, wisdom, justice, and courage to use these values appropriate to the

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Social responsibility is a concept I first encountered reading Milne (1968) where he states that principles are policies rather than particular actions; “the man who acts on principles has to exercise discretion in the face of the current situation. ... Rational activity may be regarded as acting on principles of the highest order of generality” (p. 134). Milne (1968) provides a hierarchy of six rational activities: expedience, efficiency, prudence, wisdom, justice, and social responsibility (p. 110).

circumstance;

Nature, including: the physical environment and the nature of things in it;

Education and knowledge and putting both to good use.

Strategic Goal: Live life to the fullest.

Strategic Priorities: Live a lifestyle that is guided by my philosophical framework;

Strengthen family and social relationships;

Complete Master of Education and move into second career– in the field of research and / or helping adults learn;

Live the second half of my life enjoying the fruits of my labor,

seeking out new, rich and rewarding experiences in the company of family and friends.

A Summary of the Findings

The literature text explored three major themes that emerged and / or were discovered during the literature review: *Bridging the Gap* is a hybrid, custom designed, competency-based curriculum, based on principles and ideals found in a plethora of adult education related research; the competence ideal from the rationalist perspective is different from the behaviorist perspective; and achieving a balance between the two perspectives creates a third approach; *Bridging the Gap* is the training component and first phase of a comprehensive competency-based management system being implemented as a systems approach to overhauling human resource management in the RCMP. The autobiographical text revealed to me just how unique my informal and

formal education has been and how it has been influenced by many individual relationships in several important domains of my life: family, peers, teachers, community, the RCMP, and the University of Lethbridge. The philosophical text reveals my personal mandate, vision, mission, values, strategic goal, and priorities as I begin the second half of my life.

Chapter 5: Hermeneutic Interpretation of Three Texts: Reading Between the Lines

“Hermeneutics is about creating meaning, not simply reporting on it” (Smith, 1999, p. 42). Since the purpose of this project is to explore what competency-based curriculum means to the RCMP and its members this will be explored through an examination of three texts with hermeneutic purpose; the literary text, the autobiographical text, and the philosophical text. Speaking further on the issue of hermeneutic interpretation as a research method, Smith (1999) reports:

The mark of good interpretive research is not in the degree to which it follows a specified methodological agenda, but in the degree to which it can show understanding of what it is that is being investigated. And ‘understanding’ here is itself not a fixable category but rather *it stands for a deep sense that something has been profoundly heard in our present circumstances* [emphasis mine]. (p. 41)

The hermeneutic interpretation of the three texts generated in Chapter 4 will examine what might be taken for granted in these texts. The hermeneutic interpretation will attempt to read between the lines and expose meaning that is often embedded in the written word; focusing on the meaning of competency-based curriculum for the RCMP and its members. My purpose in using this method is to provoke thought and initiate dialogue and a dialectic on important emerging issues involving competency-based training in the RCMP. As Smith (1999) suggests, there is a certain quality of impudence at work in hermeneutic inquiry; hermeneutics can challenge authority (p. 27).

Competency-Based Curriculum and its Meaning for the RCMP and its Members

In an effort to be transparent and authentic in the process of completing this

hermeneutic interpretation of the three texts, I need to acknowledge my limitations. The RCMP is a large organization and my understanding of the organization and its inner workings, interrelationships, sensitivities, intricacies, and minutiae is limited. That is not to say that my perspective is not of value; I believe it is. I draw a parallel to the value of lay interpretation in the field of law:

The interpretation of the Charter should not be left to lawyers and judges, although both professions will undoubtedly continue to dominate the field. The Charter's meaning can and should be examined by people from other disciplines and backgrounds, whose unique expertise may shed new light on its contents.

(Beaudoin & Ratushny, 1989, p. 62)

Just as lawyers and judges should not be allowed to be the only group in society to interpret the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, I believe it is important for front-line operational members of the RCMP to engage in an open dialogue and dialectic, in regard to the creation of policy that results in significant organizational change deeply affecting them. The vast majority of RCMP personnel work in front-line operations; I am among that vast majority. The reader is likely to recognize both a personal, and at times, a collective voice in the narrative that follows. It will be virtually impossible to separate the researcher from the member, as I explore the three texts with hermeneutic purpose, to answer the question: *what does competency-based curriculum mean for members of the RCMP?* I don't intend to try.

The literature text: Granularity. The literature text describes the granularity of competency-based curriculum in regard to its alignment with an array of educational

concepts and principles from several other related fields of educational research, in particular: adult education, organizational learning, and organizational change. Building on the work of Tyler, Bloom, and others, Verduin (1980) provides a basic adult curriculum model with five major components: educational goals, instruction and content organization, evaluation, rationale, and outside political forces (pp. 1-15). According to Verduin, the first three components are the curriculum design (educational goals, instruction and content organization, and evaluation), while the rationale and outside political forces influence the particular direction adult education curriculum will take; either “a vocationally oriented curriculum or a society oriented curriculum or a competency-based curriculum” (p. 9). Curriculum has been previously defined elsewhere by Taylor and Richards (1986) as the “content of education, course of study, educational experiences, subjects to be studied, subject matter (and) educational activities” (p. 3). On the issue of competency-based curriculum, Shandler (2000) reports:

A curriculum is a carefully designed and developed plan for learning, but competency-based learning takes the concept of curriculum a critical next step further, that is, using it as ‘the platform of choice’ for results-driven performance. Unlike training, which is often separated in time, place, and application from workplace performance. CBL is linked to business objectives. ... A competency-based curriculum meets the needs of the learning and performance driven organization in several ways: content specifications for learning are defined in competency terms regardless of format; innovative learning opportunities are provided; a framework for linking learning to performance is created. (p. 38)

The *Bridging the Gap* training program has only begun to be pilot tested; it appears that it is consistent with Shandler's definition of curriculum, insofar as it is a 'platform of choice' for results-driven performance. The components of curriculum identified by Verduin (1980) are recognizable in the *Bridging the Gap* model, except for the *instruction and content organization* component, that "focuses on such areas as instructional processes, the content to be taught, and the materials to be used" (p. 5). Similarly, the only curriculum component that appears to be absent in *Bridging the Gap* in regard to the Taylor and Richards (1986) definition is the *subject matter* requirement (p. 3).

To create an entirely new subject matter component in support of the *Bridging the Gap* competency-based curriculum would be a massive an undertaking and, the subject matter is to be integrated from existing courses, and supported by learning tools available on the RCMP Infoweb. It is further expected that existing courses will be evaluated from the competency-based perspective and modified to identify, then focus on functional and organizational competencies. Each course will also require an evaluation mechanism to verify or validate the functional and / or organizational competency achieved; there are many existing courses in the RCMP that do not have this learner evaluation / validation mechanism. Each course will have to be assessed for its timeliness (Bers, 2001, p. 34), to determine the expiry date of the competency; similar to the one year time limit for handgun certification and the three year time limit for first aid certification that currently apply. The more informal training experiences and training activities that are part of the member's learning plan to achieve a desired competency will also have to be evaluated

for competence and validated by a qualified person. Competencies achieved through formal courses or informal learning activities will have to be recorded in a record that is available to the member, the supervisor, the unit commander, and human resource management. A personal competency portfolio can be created in an electronic format to satisfy the record keeping requirements of competency-based curriculum and human resource management. The competency portfolio can be completed by the member and submitted to the member's supervisor for validation, similar to the process already in use for requesting and approving annual leave (Bers, 2001, pp. 36-37).

The RCMP will have to invest heavily in communications and training for front-line members, their supervisors, and other middle level managers, who represent more than ninety percent of the RCMP population. Developing and delivering timely, accurate, and appropriate communications regarding competency-based curriculum and the competency-based human resource management system that will follow is the most critical step in the overall implementation plan. Based on my own personal experience, there does not seem to be an awareness among the members, at least in Alberta, regarding the competency-based curriculum and certainly regarding the competency-based human resource management system. The more time and effort spent on effective communications and member training will pay future dividends during actual implementation. It is particularly important to focus on the important role of supervisors and middle management, who have considerable influence at the front-line. The priority have to involve middle management, but not in a contrived way. These members must be engaged in the transition process to make the new curriculum and human resource

management systems work. Involving and gaining the support and initiative of middle management is key to successful implementation of competency-based curriculum and human resource management.

In a nut shell, competency-based curriculum will require a large investment in human resources. As with most investments, there is a potential for future rewards. Timely, accurate, appropriate, two-way communications and training, with a focus on the important role middle management have in influencing front-line support for organizational change, are critical to the success of implementing the new competency-based curriculum and human resource management system. Middle management have a wealth of cultural and organizational knowledge that must be tapped into at this time of significant change; it is not a ploy to get them on board, the RCMP need to mobilize the collective wisdom and *esprit de corps* of this very influential but often neglected group; they can make this transition smooth.

Competency-based curriculum is a hybrid framework of educational ideals; it can be said to be granular for the way it draws from many fields of educational study. Competency-based curriculum can also be described as granular for the way it engages each member differently. It is a departure from the one-size-fits-all approach to adult education; competency-based curriculum is like a boutique; it provides a custom designed curriculum for each member. RCMP training prior to *Bridging the Gap* had no mechanism to assess individual members for the volume or quality of experience and knowledge they had. Therefore, regardless of prior learning, each member was treated the same in each training situation. In competency-based training, the member's prior

learning is assessed and validated; only the training that is necessary to fill a competency gap is required.

In the RCMP, the competency-based curriculum involves eight steps for members. The first three steps require members to: obtain the competency profile for the position they occupy; review all the organizational and functional competencies and job requirements to determine the minimum level of proficiency and the desired level of proficiency in each competency; and develop a self-assessment of their proficiency level using the RCMP Competency Dictionary. The last five steps involve both the members and the members' supervisors: supervisors develop an assessment of the members' proficiency in each competency using the RCMP Competency Dictionary; the members and the supervisors finalize the members' competency assessment and provide verification for all competencies at the desired level and identify all competencies for which training is required to increase the competency to the desired level; members complete their learning plans in consultation with their supervisors to ensure appropriate learning opportunities are selected to achieve the desired competency outcomes; in a specified time period supervisors meet with the members they supervise, to verify and validate the desired level of competency has been achieved; if the desired level has not been achieved the members' learning plans are modified to include new learning strategies.

Many learning strategies may be available within the members' own workplace. Members can participate in a mentor program or access learning tools available on the RCMP Infoweb. Other options include enrolling in distance learning, applying for special

work assignments or secondments to other duties. Members may also take formal training offered with the RCMP, or register in university or college courses and apply for A-250 funding.

More than ever before, the competency-based curriculum places the responsibility for achieving the desired level of functional and organizational competency directly on the members and their supervisors. It is expected that members and supervisors will be held accountable if they do not comply with the new program requirements. Members must realize that competency-based training is now integrated with every aspect of human resources. If they do not make this process a priority and refuse to comply with the policy, they will be held accountable by the competency-based human resource management system. Being held accountable means their careers will not move forward; the members will not be eligible for preferred duty assignments, preferred duty locations, or promotions. The Career Management Manual states clearly “all RCMP employees will be selected, evaluated, developed and promoted based on competencies that support operational and organizational objectives and goals” (C.M.M.12.D.2.b., RCMP Infoweb, February 28, 2005). Competency-based training has become the pathway for the members’ career within the Force; if members comply with the new policy they will be able to achieve the personal transition quickly and easily function within the new system. For those members who do not, policy clearly states they will not be developed or promoted; their careers will not move forward and their individual performance is likely to be scrutinized. The competency-based human resource management may provide new tools and mechanisms long needed by management to deal more effectively with poor

performance. In the new system, participation is not an option.

The literature text: The competency ideals and the middle ground. The competency-based curriculum the RCMP has developed is unique it combines both organizational and functional competencies. With only one exception, the various competency-based curriculum models examined in the literature either focus on functional competencies (Bers, 2001; Brownell & Chung, 2001; Cornford, 2000; Demetrian, 1999; Fletcher, 1992; Hill & Houghton, 2001; McClelland & Boyatzis, 1980; Paulson, 2001; Smith & Forbes, 2001; Voorhees, A., 2001; Voorhees, R., 2001), or on organizational competencies (Rausch, Sherman & Washbush, 2002; Spee & Tompkins, 2001; Wooten & Elden, 2001), but not both. Hayes (1999), in an article entitled *Opportunities and Obstacles in the Competency-Based Training of Primary Teachers in England*, is the only author to recognize the appropriateness of integrating the rationalist and behaviorist perspectives in competency-based curriculum. On the issue of functional and organizational competence, in relationship to student teachers, Hayes (1999) states:

It is necessary to consider the standards as a whole to appreciate the creativity, commitment, energy, and enthusiasm which teaching demands, and the intellectual and managerial skills of the effective professional. ... training providers should take care in structuring programs that are based on the premise that a competence approach to development and assessment is trouble free. The assumption that effective teaching can be assured simply by isolating particular skills for training purposes, structuring them in a systematic way, and then assessing them using the same schedule of competence statements, must be

evaluated in light of the complex, value-laden nature of teaching. The assumption that 'ticking off' a list of competences necessarily confirms that a student is an effective teacher does not allow for the many influences and constraints the task of teaching and interpreting its effectiveness. (pp. 115-116)

Consider for a moment, replacing the teacher with police officer, in the above quotation. The same argument that Hayes (1999) makes on behalf of student teachers holds true for police officers: (1) a balance of the behaviorist and the rationalist perspectives in the approach to competence is necessary; and (2) simply ticking off the eight to ten boxes on a competency profile sheet is not enough to validate a member's competence in a specific policing job. Policing is far too complex for this approach alone.

The RCMP competency-based curriculum design establishes middle ground between the rationalist and behaviorist perspectives by incorporating both functional and organizational competencies in each competency profile. It integrates competency-based curriculum with existing programs including: the A-250 program for eligible members, the RCMP University On-Line and other supporting technologies, developmental duty assignments, secondments, and physical transfers to facilitate new learning and to provide appropriate performance outlets. In establishing the middle ground, *Bridging the Gap* moves well beyond the expedience of a strictly behaviorist approach to training; it is an exceptional training model in the hierarchy of rationality. Milne (1968) points out:

Efficiency is a better standard of rationality than mere expediency alone because it embodies a better understanding of utility. Wisdom is a better standard of rationality than mere prudence because it embodies a better understanding of

personal well-being. Social responsibility is a better standard of rationality than mere justice because it embodies a better understanding of social morality. (p.110).

In certain police training circumstances expedience may be an appropriate response: instructing an inexperienced police officer on his or her specific duties in response to a unique, short-term emergency event such as protecting evidence from contamination at a crime scene. In other police training circumstances a higher level of rationality is required. It is prudent for the RCMP to provide individualized training on-line or through distance learning in certain subject matter areas, and provide more traditional formal training in other subject areas. Owing to the potential long-term benefits, it is wise for the RCMP to facilitate employee development through special duty assignments, secondments, transfers, and formal education in a broad course of studies at college and university. It is socially responsible of the RCMP to coordinate and provide police training internationally in countries such as Haiti, Iraq, Sierra Leone, and Bosnia.

The *Bridging the Gap* training model employs expedience in facilitating rapid, cost effective training for members to become functionally competent in their assigned duties. The *Bridging the Gap* training model employs prudence in adopting both functional and organizational competencies, achieving a middle ground between the behaviorist and rationalist perspectives on the competence ideal. The *Bridging the Gap* training model employs wisdom in facilitating employee development through the A-250 and other programs, in accord with the member's own initiative.

What does it mean to be competent as police officers?⁶ Competent police officers work in what might be called a *state of grace*: they are a valued resource to their first-line supervisor and unit commander, police colleagues, and the community; they may enjoy some degree of influence among their colleagues; they are considered reliable and are subject to only minimum supervision; they are at the pinnacle of their career to date.

Being competent as a police officer is not only having the capacity to handle any situation that demands a police response, it is also being pro-active in resolving issues before they become police problems or taking action to solve problems when they are identified. A competent police officer has mastered the functional and organizational competencies and has achieved the nature of mind, reequilibration – holism trilogy described by Doll (1984, p. 134). This type of competence requires a combination of appropriate training, experience, knowledge, education, common sense, confidence, and personal initiative. In the driving component of the RCMP VIP course (a course to train members to protect Internationally Protected Persons—heads of state) I was taught to look ahead to where I want the car to go and drive to where I am looking. I know it sounds simple, but it required practice and a certain confidence to master the technique. Once I trusted the process and mastered the technique the obstacles on the driving course were still present but of little consequence. Simply put, I knew how to drive around the obstacles and I did. Competent police officers have the knowledge and confidence to drive around the obstacles in all situations they encounter.

6

A question Dr. Cynthia Chambers asked early in the writing of this project, that I haven't attempted to answer until now.

Members will benefit from a competency-based curriculum that focuses on both functional and organizational competencies, life-long education, and performance outlet opportunities. The competency-based curriculum developed by the RCMP is unique; it combines the behaviorist and rationalist perspectives of competence. In doing so, the RCMP has focused on the member rather than the job the member does. Fletcher (1992) reports on the different approach to *competence* in the United Kingdom and in the United States. “In the UK, *competence* reflects the *expectations of employment*, and focuses on *work roles* rather than *jobs*. In the USA, *competence* is an *underlying characteristic* of a person which results in *effective and / or superior performance* in a job” (p. 14). The RCMP draws from the behaviorist approach, prevalent in the United Kingdom, in establishing functional competencies that are focused on technical performance. The RCMP organizational competencies, and commitment to employee development, focus on the member rather than the job the member does; this draws from the rationalist perspective of the competence ideal prevalent in the United States. Establishing a middle ground between a strictly behaviorist approach and a strictly rationalist approach allows the RCMP to draw from the best of both. It allows the focus to be on developing the member’s technical skills and abilities to perform a specific job, and it develops the member’s underlying characteristics to enable them to respond appropriately in any circumstance.

The literature text: Competency-based curriculum and management systems. Doll (1984) uses Piaget’s theory of change as one of three components that contribute to an ideal of competence from a rationalist perspective. Piaget’s theory of change, as described

by Doll (1984), is a three-stage process that begins with a state of equilibrium followed by a disturbance that disrupts the equilibrium, and concludes with a state of reequilibration or a higher level of equilibrium (p. 131). Competency-based curriculum being pilot tested now as *Bridging the Gap*, and the competency-based human resource management system being phased in over the next few years together represent a significant and long-term disruption. This is not a short, sharp, acute event that is conducive to a speedy recovery; this process represents change over a longer period. The disruption, or middle stage, can also be thought of as the transition period. Once engaged in the transition phase there are three possible outcomes: success, which equals equilibrium at a higher level; failure, a higher level of equilibrium is not achieved; or the organization may be stuck in transition.

Member attribution toward the change process, whether they support the change or resist it, may have significant impact on the duration and outcome of the transition phase. While I have made an informed decision to support the RCMP to adopt a competency-based human resource management system that includes competency-based curriculum, I do not believe there are many other members who know what I know about this important policy change. Notice of the change is available on the RCMP Infoweb *Bridging the Gap* web page and in the Career Management Manual. Members, who are busy in their day-by-day work, do not spend a great deal of time searching through the RCMP Infoweb or the Career Management Manual. Simply put, this information is technically available to members but is not being actively communicated.

What does competency-based curriculum and competency-based human resource

management mean for members of the RCMP? It means the member will have to change with the policy. The competency-based curriculum requires members to become much more involved in their own training and career development. As self-directed adult learners, members will be more involved in “(1) diagnosing learning needs, (2) formulating learning goals, (3) identifying human and material resources for learning, (4) choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and (5) evaluating learning outcomes” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 46); a process the majority of members will adapt to quickly. The competency-based curriculum and human resource management system are both highly rational systems; quite linear in design, which may be more familiar to younger members.

Members will have to learn about the new training system because it is the basis for the entire human resource management system. Competency-based training is completely aligned and integrated with human resource management. The member’s competence portfolio will be considered in all human resource management decisions: recruitment, hiring, training, personal development, duty assignments, transfers, secondments, promotions, and possibly even dismissal.

An issue of significant importance to members is fairness in the promotional system. There have been several changes made to the promotion system in the past fifteen years, but phasing in a new promotion system can mean that members who were eligible and competitive for promotion in the old system may not be as eligible or competitive in the new system. It will be interesting to learn whether some mechanism for transition on this particular issue could address inevitable concerns. Since the members’ competency

profiles will be used in the promotion system, and to promote fairness in the system, all members who are designated to validate members' competencies will have to be well trained and accountable. Because the members' competency portfolio affects all their relations with human resource management, members will have to make their transitions to the new program a priority. This will require an investment of their time and effort. There are members who will resist the change. It is possible there will even be members who decide to retire rather than go through another transition period. The vast majority of members, however, will adapt to the change and participate.

The autobiographical text. The autobiographical text emphasized that my training, education, and personal development has been a life-long process, influenced by significant people and events. As a member of the RCMP, I am also a whole person; I bring my total educational experience to work each day.

In the writing of the autobiographical text I recognized that I was not exploring the research question as much as I was inquiring into a different question. The autobiographical text examined the question, *what role have relationships had in my education?* I learned through the autobiographical text that relationships have been central to my learning; my body told me that. Writing the autobiographical text churned up powerful emotions about the relationships that are important to me and the reverence I have for the learning that takes place in the context of those relationships. Reading the text out loud, first to my project supervisor, then to my spouse, brought those powerful emotions into my awareness and consciousness. I learned the strongest emotional connection I have to my education is within my family relationships; with Robin, Carissa,

Scott, and my parents. The learning relationships formed with work partners who are also personal friends are also very important.

Having discovered the importance of learning relationships in my education, I found the autobiographical text begged the question: *what is the significance of learning relationships in the RCMP?* I consider the RCMP a partner in my education and personal development, and the opportunities to build personal learning relationships among RCMP colleagues and outside partner agencies are unlimited.

The RCMP has facilitated my personal development through informal and formal training, special duty assignments, secondments; transfers, and promotion. I contribute to the partnership by doing my work to the best of my ability, by being actively involved in continuous learning, and taking advantage of opportunities for personal development. The RCMP has done an exceptional job in facilitating my personal development but much of that came as a result of my own initiative and passion for life-long learning. When I decided to complete my undergraduate degree, my unit commander supported this initiative and allowed me to reschedule my shifts to facilitate my attending classes that were only offered during work hours. The RCMP also reimbursed the tuition fees for many of the courses I completed in both the undergraduate and graduate programs. I have accepted several special assignments to complete research and prepare position papers on behalf of the Force; I accepted and participated in a one-year secondment to the G8 Summit Security planning team; I have accepted approximately fifteen different duty assignments and four different physical transfers. In regard to my training, education, and personal development, both the RCMP and I have honored the partnership arrangement.

Outside of the RCMP partnership, I have established many different learning relationships with my colleagues, and with individuals working in other community agencies who work in partnership with the RCMP. Gord Tomlinson and Jerry Jantz were instrumental to the development of my policing skills and abilities in the early years. Lloyd Hickman provided performance outlet opportunities for my emerging research and writing skills. Bob Pike and many others support my continuing education and aspirations to pursue a second career, within or outside the Force; with a focus on research, writing and helping adults learn.

Completing my educational autobiographical text led to my understanding that learning relationships are very important in my training, education, and personal development. This process also helped me understand that real learning wasn't just given to me, I had to take the initiative and engage the process of learning. This exercise also made me realize that every member in the RCMP can have or does have the same type of partnership with the RCMP that I do, and the opportunities to build learning relationships with other members and individuals outside the RCMP are as unlimited as they are intensely valuable.

In addition to the important discovery that relationships facilitate my education, I also discovered that while my educational autobiography is as unique as a fingerprint, there are recognizable patterns in this autobiography that are common to all of my police colleagues, especially members of the RCMP. We all arrived at the RCMP training academy with different life and educational experiences and our pre-RCMP educational autobiography was already written. Since leaving the academy, we have all received

different postings, a different combination of duty assignments, a different combination of experiences, training, and education. At the end of the day we are—each one of us—unique, yet we are not so different.

Writing my educational autobiography was a valuable process for recognizing patterns in my life that I had never really considered, much less examined. My life has been hectic since I was six years old, which tells me I haven't learned the importance of relaxation. I am always involved in some sort of learning activity. My birth family and chosen family have been the primary instruments of the learning I most value. My learning is facilitated through relationships, and my passion for learning can lead to an imbalance in other domains of my life. Many times I have had to leave my family when I attended training courses in other cities: Vancouver, Regina, Edmonton, Ottawa, Toronto, St. John's, and Chicago. Although most of these courses were one or two weeks in duration, the VIP Training course in St. John's, Newfoundland was three weeks long. For each of the more than thirty courses I have completed in the RCMP, I had to be away from my family, leaving my spouse and children to manage the busy family schedule without me. Taking fifty university classes and writing one project also takes time away from other personal and family activities. All of which is to say, even with something as noble as education, it is important to balance this activity with other priorities in your life.

Every member has an educational autobiography waiting to be explored; the process generates a deeper awareness and appreciation for the educational themes in his or her life. I have always felt privileged to have been accepted into the RCMP, and honored to serve my community and my country. Having truly immersed myself in my

educational autobiography, I can now say I am grateful for the degree to which the RCMP facilitated my ongoing education. The RCMP supported my curiosity, initiative and passion for learning. Continuous learning or life-long learning is something all members do to one degree or another. The RCMP competency-based curriculum and human resource management system will introduce a new approach to learning and development, but I am satisfied the RCMP will continue to facilitate timely and appropriate training to achieve skills and abilities essential to policing, as well as provide opportunities for education and personal development for those who are eligible and who take the initiative to pursue those opportunities.

The philosophical text. The RCMP philosophical text, attached as Appendix A, is an unofficial text; it represents an amalgamation of the RCMP mandate, vision, mission, values, commitment to employees, commitment to communities, strategic goal and priorities. With respect to the issue of pilot testing *Bridging the Gap* and adopting the competency-based human resource management system, it is important the RCMP use the philosophical statements that make up the framework as both an anchor and a beacon during this long-term organizational change process. The RCMP philosophical framework can act as an ethical foundation for decision making and it can ensure competency-based curriculum is developed with the goals and priorities of the Force in mind. The RCMP philosophical framework is made up of two separate components. The mission, vision, values and commitment to employees and the community represents the ethical foundation; whereas, the strategic goal and priorities represent the direction the RCMP is moving toward. Both the ethical foundation and the direction of the Force must

be considered and infused into the *Bridging the Gap* planning process, in particular, in developing the communications and implementation plan. Involving both components ensures the RCMP will honor its ethical obligations through potentially turbulent times, while moving toward satisfying the goals and priorities of the organization. Through great care and considerable effort the RCMP developed a shared vision, mission, and values. The RCMP expects members to adopt these philosophical statements in their professional behavior, and to use them as tools to make difficult decisions and to help achieve goals. The RCMP, as an organization, can also use the shared philosophical statements as tools to guide their deliberations, and difficult decision making processes while implementing competency-based curriculum and the larger human resource management system. By doing so, the RCMP are putting into practice their theoretical ideals. Sergiovanni and Starratt (1988) cite Argyris and Schön (1974) in their explanation of stated theories of action and theories in use:

When someone is asked how he would behave under certain circumstances, the answer he usually gives is his espoused theory of action for that situation. This is the theory of action to which he gives allegiance, and which, upon request, he communicates to others. However, the theory that actually governs his action is his theory in use. This theory may or may not be compatible with his espoused theory; furthermore, the individual may or may not be aware of the incompatibility of the two theories. (p. 41)

Using modern-day vernacular, when an individual's espoused theory and theory in use are the same, this is known as being able to *walk the talk*. Through the organizational

change that is about to be implemented, the RCMP and its employees, must seek congruence between their espoused theory and theory in action and be able to *walk the talk*.

Members join the RCMP with their philosophical framework already developed although rarely articulated in a structured format. Elements of this framework are even used to assess an RCMP applicant's suitability for a career in the Force: personal values, character, and lifestyle choices. Articulating a personal philosophical framework is a new but at the same time familiar process. The member answers the questions: what is my mandate (what must I do in life)? what is my vision (who do I want to become)? what is my mission (what activities are most authentic to me)? what are my values (what values really guide my life)? what are my goals (what are the short-term and long-term goals)? what are my priorities (what do I have to do to achieve my goals)? Each question requires the member to reflect deeply on their personal circumstances and make decisions that are appropriate and authentic. The process results in an increased level of self-awareness and an available framework or template that can be used to guide day-by-day and more difficult ethical decisions; it becomes an anchor. The framework also establishes a structure to plan for the future, it can be used to periodically check on the member's progress toward achieving stated goals. In this way it becomes a beacon.

Whether members articulate their personal philosophical frameworks or not, they are expected to adopt the RCMP philosophical frameworks as a standard for their professional behavior. As members try to navigate their way through the competency-based curriculum and human resource management transitional landscape, they may find

it useful to rely on the navigational tools available in their personal and professional philosophical framework.

Chapter 6: Imagining the Future: Reading Beyond the Lines

This project generated the research findings in three texts (literature, autobiographical, and philosophical) a process in which the *lines were read* to explore the question: *what does competency-based curriculum mean to the RCMP and its members?* This project then examined the three texts with hermeneutic purpose, essentially trying to *read between the lines*. This final chapter will attempt to *read beyond the lines* and imagine the future of the RCMP with competency-based curriculum. Here, I have both an opportunity and an obligation to reflect on the journey of discovery, learning, and awareness I have experienced as a result of this research project and declare my perspective on the issue of competency-based curriculum and police training.

My Journey of Discovery, Learning, and Awareness

Completing the research into what competency-based curriculum means to the RCMP and its members led to discovery, learning, and awareness. As a result of conducting this research, I discovered: competency-based curriculum represents a significant and fundamental change in the way members will be trained in the RCMP; competency-based curriculum is the foundation for, and the first phase in, a competency-based human resource management system which was adopted by the RCMP into policy August 11, 2004; the learning I value most occurs in the context of personal relationships with family members, peers, and colleagues; the RCMP has become a partner in my continuous adult education; and a personal philosophical framework can be used as both an anchor and beacon as I navigate the last half of my life. In carrying out this research I learned: adult education is the theoretical foundation for competency-based curriculum,

which is a hybrid framework of educational ideals drawn from several fields of study; competence is defined from either the behaviorist or the rationalist perspective, but the RCMP have combined both perspectives to establish a more robust middle ground; that according to Doll (1984) the competence ideal from the rationalist perspective involves a nature of mind-reequilibration-holism (p. 134); learning in relationships is a primary theme in my educational autobiography; what I get out of each learning relationship depends entirely on what I put in; my philosophical framework already in place; and my education has been unique and I am unique because of my education. Through the research I became aware that the RCMP and its members are about to become involved in a significant organizational change; the RCMP recruiting, hiring, training, duty assignment, transfer, promotion, and employee termination will be done entirely through the competency-based human resource management system; there has been only minimal internal communications on the issue of competency-based curriculum or the competency-based human resource management system adopted by the RCMP.

Imagining What Competency-Based Curriculum Will Mean to the RCMP

The RCMP and its members are about to become involved in a significant process of organizational change; the RCMP will phase out the existing human resource management system and replace it with a competency-based human resource management system. The change is intended to support present and future operational requirements. Competency-based curriculum is the foundation and first phase of the transition; this curriculum is embodied in the *Bridging the Gap* training program currently being pilot tested in select detachments across Canada. The competency-based curriculum focuses on

the member as an individual in a job function rather than the job function itself; the commitment to employee development has not changed, however, the curriculum establishes new priorities and support systems that enables members to become competent in their assigned duties more effectively.

The transition to a competency-based management system is intended to better position the RCMP and its members to achieve the organization's strategic goals and priorities for policing in the twenty-first century and to maintain and improve the quality of policing for the diverse communities served by the RCMP. The transition will not be without growing pains and frustration; there will be problems to overcome and adjustments to be made. The RCMP and its members will continue to be "guided through changing times by unchanging values" (RCMP Directional Statement 2005, RCMP Infoweb, November 30, 2004). The RCMP philosophical framework provides an effective tool to guide the RCMP and its members as they engage in this process of organizational change.

Imagining What Competency-Based Curriculum Will Mean to Members

Competency-based curriculum is organic to the adult learner. I don't think it is a great curriculum model just because it puts into practice each and every educational ideal for adult learning as described by Knowles (1990, pp. 55-63); I think it is a great curriculum model because I recognize that each of the principles of adult learning described by Knowles applies to my adult educational experience. Based on my personal experience as an adult learner, I believe competency-based curriculum will be an effective training model in the RCMP because this model can be used to custom design a learning

plan for all members based on their individual learning needs. Competency-based learning recognizes that adult learners (members of the RCMP) need to know why they need to learn something before they undertake to learn it, and want their learning experience to be self-directed; that members come to the educational activity each with a different volume and quality of experience, and come to the learning activity ready to learn those things they need to know; that members have a life-centred, or task-centred, or problem centred orientation to learning; and that members are motivated to learn through internal forces including increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, and quality of life. Members are also motivated to learn by external factors such as being transferred to preferred duties, promotions, and higher salaries (Knowles, 1990, pp. 55-63). These principles are put into practice by the competency-based curriculum, and they are organic to adult learners who are accustomed to setting educational goals and going about achieving them. As learners, members will be more involved in “(1) diagnosing learning needs, (2) formulating learning goals, (3) identifying human and material resources for learning, (4) choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and (5) evaluating learning outcomes” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 46); a process I have followed for almost my entire service in the RCMP.

Because members come to the learning activity with a different volume and quality of experience and because members are expected to become self-directed learners, the first step in the competency-based curriculum is for the members to examine the eight to ten competencies required in their duty assignment and complete a self-assessment of their current level of competence in each area. Members, in consultation with their

supervisors, then verify their competence levels and develop a learning strategies to fill the competency gaps. What I really like about this process is the involvement of the supervisor; it formalizes a learning relationship between the supervisor and the member that can lead to future mentor or coaching relationships to the benefit of both. Shandler (2000) identifies five critical contributions that the supervisor can make within this learning relationship:

- (1) Help the employee align learning and performance goals with business goals.
- (2) Discuss learning and performance expectations before, during, and after the CBL (competency-based learning) event.
- (3) Provide learners with adequate time during the workday to complete self-directed and group learning programs.
- (4) Use structured on-the-job methods of coaching and mentoring to support learning and performance initiatives.
- (5) Assist the employee in integrating what they learn into the workplace, performance-driven applications. (p. 66)

Another real strength and advantage of competency-based curriculum, over the previous training program, is that it gives members a clear road map for navigating their entire careers within the RCMP. Members are able to determine quickly what they need to know to do their jobs, they can assess their own levels of competency and take the initiatives to fill the competency gaps. Once they have filled all the competency gaps for their present duty assignments, the competency is validated and recorded in their personal portfolio that accompanies the members to their next duty assignments, transfers or promotions. The beauty of this system is that it not only allows, but encourages the members to quickly become competent in their current duty assignments. There is

inherent value for members who are able to rapidly gain competence in their assigned duties; the members gain the skills and abilities they require to do the jobs which may reduce work related stress, frustration, or burnout. There is also inherent value for the RCMP and the community when members are able to become competent in the assigned duties more quickly. Once they have become competent in their own jobs, they become eligible for additional training, education, or other forms of personal development. The world is their oyster. On their own time, but with support from the RCMP, they could improve their competency in other areas of policing to become more competitive for preferred duty assignments, transfers, and promotions. They could enter into a professional course of study (for example, accounting or human resource management); or enter into a diploma or degree program at a college or university. The members' personal development, over and above achieving the desired level of competency for their assigned duties, adds to the members' own human capital; it is a personal investment in their own future—it is education in the bank. The RCMP is a large and diverse organization and is often able to transfer members into job functions where their unique education, interests, and initiatives are best suited and utilized by the Force. For example, a member with a professional designation as a chartered accountant, a commerce degree, or law degree could be assigned duties as a commercial crime investigator. A member with a Master of Education degree could be assigned duties in the learning and development branch. A member's personal development initiative benefits the Force, but it also benefits members who are often able to work in a duty within the organization they are most interested in and where they can make the greatest contribution (which translates

into job satisfaction). Lifelong self-directed learning also prepares members for a second career in retirement if they choose.

The RCMP competency-based curriculum is unique. Not only has the curriculum been custom designed to meet the needs of the RCMP, the Force has done an excellent job in achieving a middle ground between a strictly behaviorist approach to the definition of competence that is only concerned that the work is performed, and the strictly rationalist approach to the definition of competence described by Doll (1984) that includes the nature of mind-equilibration-holism trilogy (p. 134). In achieving the middle ground between the two perspectives, the RCMP has done something I have not encountered anywhere else in the literature. By establishing a middle ground, the RCMP competency-based curriculum doesn't just focus *on* the job, it focuses on the member *in* the job. I imagine this middle ground will establish a priority for member learning; the first priority could be for the member to become competent in the assigned duties. Once the member has achieved the desired level of competence, his or her personal development may only be limited by his or her own initiative.

Imagining Some of the Difficulties in Transition

As a result of participating in this research, I am able to declare my support for competency-based curriculum within the RCMP. I believe the RCMP has made a bold decision to adopt competency-based curriculum and competency-based human resource management, to be in a better position for human resource management to support police operations in the future. Just as I am sure the new training program will provide future benefits for both the organization and the majority of its members, I am also sure that

there will be many problems to overcome through the transition period.

My imaginings of some of the future difficulties in transition are based on my experience with organizational change that has already occurred within the RCMP. My experience is informed by my direct involvement in attempting to implement the community policing philosophy in 1988 as a Community Policing / Victim Services Coordinator in Grande Prairie, Alberta; writing a position paper for RCMP executive management on the “Impact of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms on Law Enforcement” in 1992; writing the course training standards for “Community Policing Train the Trainers” in 1994; as a workshop facilitator for the “K” Division “Shared Leadership - Mission, Vision, Values” initiative in 1995; as a member of the “K” Division regionalization committee in 1996; as a member of the “K” Division alignment committee in 1998; as a technical writer for the “K” Division Alignment: Strategic Plan for Implementation of the North / South District Concept in 1998; and as a member of the G8 Summit Security Transition Team, where I was later made second in command of the G8 Summit Security Public Affairs Communications Team, personally responsible for Internal Communications in 2001.

Based on my experience with organizational change, I can imagine some difficulties in the transition from the existing training program to the competency-based curriculum, and even greater problems as the competency-based human resource management policy is implemented.

I predict the majority of members, approximately sixty percent, will adapt quickly to the competency-based curriculum. I predict that a smaller number, approximately

twenty percent will do more than adapt, they will embrace the new change and thrive. However, there will be those members, approximately twenty percent, who will have difficulties in adapting to the new training program and the competency-based human resource management system. The RCMP has a rich culture that is resistant to change, and there is a certain population within the Force who have a jaded view of any management innovation coming out of the RCMP Headquarters in Ottawa. For these members the concept of competency-based curriculum and self-directed learning will be foreign. There are members who do not take an active role in their own training, education, personal development, or career planning. For these members, the transition to competency-based curriculum and competency-based human resource management may be more of a challenge and they may generate resistance to the change. These members may require more support and assistance.

A smooth transition from the previous RCMP training and human resource management system to the new competency-based system could be influenced by the degree to which the RCMP prepares members for the change through effective communications. In an effort to identify what I perceive to be a significant potential problem it is important to offer constructive criticism in the area of communications. I am surprised that such a significant organizational change within the RCMP—adopting competency-based curriculum and competency-based human resource management into policy on August 11, 2004—has not resulted in any information or communications to the members. In the six months since the RCMP adopted the competency-based human resource management system into policy, I am not aware of any communications being

directed to the members advising them of: the decision, the reasons for the decision, what the decision will mean to the members, and what the next steps will be for the RCMP and its members. I am aware, from my experience in G8 Summit Security Internal Communications, that there are excellent communications plan templates available to the RCMP National Communications Service that could be adapted to develop timely, accurate and appropriate communications with the members on this important emerging issues, an issue that is likely to have a significant impact on all members. I anticipate members may perceive the lack of communications as a sign of disrespect; they may claim the RCMP has not honored their commitment to employees for “open, honest and bilateral communication” as articulated in the “Shared Leadership, Mission, Vision, Values” philosophical statement (Appendix A).

Imagining the Next Steps and Recommendations to Aid in the Journey

Without the benefit of a crystal ball that can tell the future, I am left with predictions based on what I came to understand through this project, combined with my lived-experience. I imagine the RCMP will continue to pilot test competency-based curriculum in select detachments across Canada, through the *Bridging the Gap* training program. I believe it is important that members and employees at all levels of the organization, especially middle management, are engaged and encouraged to give their input on the first phase of this very important organizational change process. Based on my experience as a contributor to the communications plan for G8 Summit Security, and the success of that communications plan – especially the effectiveness of the Community Group Engagement component – I believe broad consultation with all member

stakeholders at this early stage of curriculum development has the potential to improve the curriculum and contribute to its overall relevance for the RCMP and its members. Broad consultation with members also has an added benefit of increasing awareness throughout the organization, making members tacitly aware of the curriculum development and the relationship between the new curriculum and the competency-based human resource management system soon to be implemented.

I believe it is important for the RCMP to develop and deliver timely, accurate, and appropriate two-way communications with all members and employees to report on the reasons for adopting competency-based curriculum and human resource management systems, and what this change means for the RCMP and its members. Two-way communications involves the RCMP providing information to its members, then building a system that will encourage member feedback, dialogue, and dialectic around the most important issues. Two-way communication provides a mechanism to gather and utilize employee input and insight to make improvements to the organizational change process and outcome. A communications plan, guided by the RCMP philosophical framework, can facilitate member understanding of the need for change, and how the change will effect them. Promoting and facilitating effective two-way communications with all employees can lead to greater support for the organizational change. To get the message out to the members, several communications initiatives could be considered: a national broadcast on *Bridging the Gap* and its connection to the imminent change to a competency-based human resource management system; a one-page brochure in the pay envelop; a monthly newsletter posted to the RCMP Infoweb; and presentations to the

members in training courses and other gatherings. In their efforts to receive member feedback and engage the member in dialogue and a dialectic on the issue of competency-based curriculum and human resource management, the RCMP could provide a “frequently asked questions” (FAQ’s) section on the RCMP Infoweb; organize a series of town hall meetings; establish a call centre toll-free line to answer members’ questions and receive their input; establish competency coach / career advisor positions in each district command to provide adequate support and assistance to members in transition and identify issues as they develop.

In addition to a comprehensive communications plan, it is expected the RCMP will create a complete implementation plan for the new competency-based curriculum and the forthcoming change to competency-based human resource management. Shandler (2000) reminds us that “implementing a successful competency-based learning program is not done accidentally” (p. 63); it requires a carefully developed plan that is strategically put into action. Shandler (2000) provides seven guidelines for implementing a competency-based learning program: (1) align organizational learning with business and personal success; (2) build learning into all operations and activities; (3) recognize and reward learning; (4) generate many learning opportunities; (5) set aside time for learning; (6) create a physical environment and space for learning; and, (7) maximize learning on the job (p. 64-66).

The final steps might include developing a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of competency-based curriculum, the competency-based human resource management system, the communications plan, and the implementation plan. The evaluation of all four

of these organizational change support processes will identify the problems in each area that must be resolved; it will also identify program strengths. Encouraging two-way communication and feedback from employee stakeholders can be a component of the evaluation. Evaluation or assessment is already a familiar process in the RCMP; it is the last stage of an iterative problem solving tool known in the RCMP by the acronym C.A.P.R.A (Clients, Acquire and analyze, Partnerships, Response, Assess). In the C.A.P.R.A problem solving method, clients are identified as stakeholders in the problem at hand, more information about the problem is acquired and analyzed, partnerships may be formed to respond more effectively to the problem, a response is developed and put into action, and finally an assessment is done to assess whether the response resolved the problem.

Conclusion

The research into competency-based curriculum and police training explored the question: *what does competency-based curriculum mean to the RCMP and its members?* The research revealed that competency-based curriculum is the foundation, and the first phase, in a systems approach to significant organizational change within the RCMP. The competency-based human resource management system has been adopted into policy by the RCMP and is about to be implemented. The research has attempted to predict what this organizational change means, and will mean, for the RCMP and its members, and ultimately the communities they serve. This research facilitated a personal journey that involved discovery, learning, and awareness; and an opportunity to share this knowledge.

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Appendix A

RCMP Philosophical Framework

Mandate

To enforce laws, prevent crime and maintain peace, order and security.

Mission

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police is Canada's national police service. Proud of our traditions and confident in meeting future challenges, we commit to preserve the peace, uphold the law and provide a quality service in partnership with our communities.

Vision

We will:

- Be a progressive, pro-active and innovative organization
- Provide the highest quality service through dynamic leadership, education and technology in partnership with the diverse communities we serve
- Be accountable and efficient through shared decision-making
- Ensure a healthy work environment that encourages team building, open communication and mutual respect
- Promote safe communities
- Demonstrate leadership in the pursuit of excellence

Core Values of the RCMP

Recognizing the dedication of all employees we will create and maintain an environment of individual safety, well-being and development. We are guided by:

- Integrity

- Honesty
- Professionalism
- Compassion
- Respect
- Accountability

Commitment to Communities

The employees of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police are committed to our communities through:

- Unbiased and respectful treatment of all people
- Accountability
- Mutual problem solving
- Cultural sensitivity
- Enhancement of public safety
- Open and honest communication
- Effective and efficient use of resources
- Quality and timely service

Commitment to Employees

In the spirit of shared leadership and recognizing all employees as our greatest asset, we commit to:

- Open, honest and bilateral communication
- Demonstrating leadership through accountability and responsibility at all levels
- Treating all employees with equal respect and consideration

- Ensuring the safety of our employees by developing and enforcing minimum resourcing standards
- Training that is timely, specific to the needs and relevant to job requirements
- Effective and efficient management of human resources through consultation, teamwork and empowerment at all levels
- Ensuring a safe and harassment-free work environment
- Encouraging and recognizing innovation and creativity
- Fair and equitable systems to deal with:
 - recognition for good performers
 - compensation and entitlements
 - financial hardship caused by employees work site
 - consistently poor performers
 - discipline and discharge
- Promoting health, safety and well-being
- Ensuring adequate human, financial and material resources
- Enhancing job security through aggressive marketing of our services

Strategic Goal

The RCMP's strategic goal is to work towards safe homes and safe communities for Canadians.

Strategic Priorities

Our strategic priorities are the areas of focus to achieve our goal. They do not reflect everything that the organization does - only those things most important to

achieving its strategic goal. The timeframe for these priorities is three to five years.

Our strategic priorities include:

- **Organized crime:** the challenges of globalization and technology call for a response based on intelligence, investigation, collaboration with domestic and international partners and an enhanced technological capacity.
- **Youth:** includes addressing the root causes of youth crime, establishing community partnerships, taking pro-active education and prevention measures and promoting restorative justice.
- **International Police Services (peacekeeping):** includes assisting countries to rebuild policing capacities, preventing importation of criminal activities, collaborating with foreign civilian police forces and studying foreign cultures to better understand Canadian cultural communities.
- **Terrorism:** to support a multi-government response and commitment to border integrity, and continental security.
- **Aboriginal communities:** to invest in the long-term wellness and safety of Aboriginal communities by being involved in initiatives surrounding education, employment, health and cultural development. At the same time, finding ways to prevent/resolve conflict by focusing on crime prevention partnership, restorative justice processes and a holistic and culturally sensitive approach to problem solving.