

THE BILL BLACKWOOD
LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

Assessing the Guidelines
for
Training the Trainer

A Policy Research Project
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Professional Designation
Graduate, Management Institute

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Wichita Falls, Texas
April, 1996

#379

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ABSTRACT

Even before the first state imposed minimum standards of training for police officers, police managers traditionally recognized the need for trainers of police officers. Today these needs are even greater. Police systems require a full range of teaching techniques, styles, coaches with experience, and the ability to communicate ideas and the results of police science research. State law requires police trainers applying for state certification as a licensed police trainer to comply with minimum state standards. Unfortunately, non-licensed police trainers are allowed to instruct at schools, licensed academies as staff instructors and in-service training at law enforcement agencies.

Research through communication with schools, academies, and law enforcement agencies, along with reviews of state laws pertaining to law enforcement training, and interviews with training coordinators assigned to that responsibility, have yielded results which indicate a need for assigned controls. These controls need to have specified qualifications and considerations for non-licensed police trainers. The first recommendation is to require non-licensed law enforcement instructors by mandate to state imposed minimum standards of training for law enforcement instructors. The second recommendation is to insure that agencies adhere to standards greater than the minimum standards imposed by the state for both licensed and non-licensed law enforcement instructors.

Introduction

The primary purpose of this project is to emphasize the need for written standards for all law enforcement instructors. One might wonder, with all the past, present, and future lawsuits, who is responsible for the training of the trainer. Information concerning police training flows copiously throughout the criminal justice system. Flyers, bulletins, LETN, teletypes, colleges, and word-of-mouth recruit coaches to attend law enforcement training nationwide. Training in law enforcement methodologies is easily located, and, in most cases, sanctioned in the form of substantial fees upon enrollment.

When administrators review the available training throughout the range of opportunities in law enforcement coach training, do they know, want to know, or just assume each topic will be taught by a professional qualified to train the trainers? Should the assumption be made that, because a topic is being offered at an accredited college, police academy, or civilian training institution, quality coaches are assigned to train the trainers? Maybe not.

Coaches who are training at agency in-service level may possibly be individuals who were thrust into training situations and who may lack the skills and experience needed to coach their peers in law enforcement topics. A pre-written lesson plan and in many cases, a lesson plan written by a licensed law enforcement instructor, is often the vehicle used to assist an employee-turned-trainer with an unfamiliar assignment (TCLEOSE:1995)

Historical, Legal, or Theoretical Context

The significance of this project to the Wichita County Sheriff's Office is in the form of a guide used in the selection of potential law enforcement trainers. This employee, with new responsibilities and standards of conduct, is now part of management. Policies, procedures, rules and regulations must become part of the new coach's daily routine as the employee works toward the department's goals and daily missions.

This is not to say the new coach must be an expert, or even right, about everything, but the new trainer should be knowledgeable in teaching techniques, including the Survival Reaction Time Model and the Adult Learning Theory. The administrator must give special consideration to the behavior and performance of an individual prior to making a decision on trainer assignments. According to Nowicki all new candidates considered for assignment as law enforcement instructors should complete a law enforcement instructors skills or instructors development course before guiding a formal training program (Nowicki:1993).

When administrators assign a new coach to a management-level position, what qualities must this new coach possess? Experience, communication skills, personality, and appearance could be a good start, but maybe a trainer needs more. What else does this new trainer need? The boy scout law might come to mind when considering a new trainer. He must be trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent (Birkby:1990).

Even the above personal behaviors may not necessarily make a good trainer, coach, or teacher; but together they will remind us of people who may have expertise in a particular skill but who are also capable of shaping minds and building character. Scout masters, camp fire leaders, drill instructors, athletic coaches and police trainers use one or more of these personal behaviors daily as a training tool to accomplish their mission, which is to create a learning environment. According to Gary M. Post the 1990's will reflect an accelerating rate of change for law enforcement. To keep up with this rapid change we can no longer train tomorrow's law enforcement officers with yesterday's police training models (Post:1992).

According to an article in the Police Marksman in September 1993:

"The Rodney King decision will cause a drastic change and that if there (are) any positives at all, they may be that police trainers and administrators are going to (have to) take a hard look at the way we conduct training" (Rossi:1993).

In this article Guy A. Rossi interviewed four prominent law enforcement trainers - Andrew Casavant, Steven Bunting, Mark Dunston, and Edward Nowicki. The responses are as follows:

" To me the Rodney King issue has been a training and supervision issue from the start." Andrew Casvant, Director of Midwest Tactical Training Institute

"This decision is going to be the basis in this country for freeing up budgets for training." Steven Bunting, Director of the American Society of Law Enforcement Training.

"I see the biggest change in training is that if an agency develops their own program, they will have to start paying attention to researching competency based training." Mark S. Dunston, director of the North Mississippi Law Enforcement Training Center.

"We don't do training for just training sake. The King case points out that law enforcement better have training that is realistic and secondly, training that can handle virtually any circumstance that an officer may encounter" Edward Nowicki, former Executive Director of ASLET.

Consider training as a profession in law enforcement. The lack of attention to the definition of profession has produced endless and futile debates as to whether policing is in fact a profession (Swanson:1988). Webster's dictionary defines **instruction** as the action, practice or profession of teaching. **Instructor/instructress** is defined as one that instructs. **Trainer** is defined as one that trains. **Coach** is defined as one that instructs or trains, and **teacher** is defined as one that teaches and one whose occupation is to instruct (Webster's:1991). Therefore, according to the above definitions, training is not just an occupation; it's a profession.

The word profession is derived from the Latin pro (forth) and fateri (confess), meaning to announce a belief; at its early use, the work referred to public or open avowals of faith. Morris L. Cogan in Towards a Definition of Profession, notes that the earliest recorded use of the word profession as a learned vocation was in 1541 and that by 1576 the meaning had been generalized to mean any calling or occupation by which a person habitually earned his or her living (Swanson:1988).

Review of Literature or Practice

A review of the literature specified the importance and specifications in the selection of candidates for law enforcement trainers. According to an article in Law and Order Magazine in February 1995, police departments are already adjusting to make ready for the twenty-first century. Planning and training are the two elements law enforcement departments will have to meet head on. One statement agreed upon by law enforcement administrators is that

in the twenty-first century the role of the police officer will change dramatically. In 1994 the Assistant Attorney General of Virginia explained to an assembly of administrators that law enforcement officers could no longer get by with just a badge, baton and gun. The Attorney General went on to say that today's law enforcement officers must be part time lawyers, scientist, social workers, psychologist and full time heroes (Sharp:1995).

The same problems facing the law enforcement officer will double for the law enforcement trainer. Developing people skills, management skills and technical skills is only a beginning for the law enforcement instructor. According to an article in Law and Order Magazine in March 1995:

Professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, seek continued training to remain on the forefront of their respective careers. What is different for law enforcement (Rossi:1995)?

This question has been kicked around for many years. Is law enforcement a profession? Does the law enforcement officer with a college education make policing a profession? Some people feel that this level of education for law enforcement officers will qualify policing as a profession in the eyes of the community. Some individuals will cite higher education as a cure all and agree with studies that show the need for law enforcement officers to have a college education (Tyre:1992).

Terri Kobel and Alice Faron describe a scenario in the article, Poof-you're a Trainer. This situation, unfortunately, takes place everyday, somewhere and some how in law enforcement training. The story unfolds with the star sales assistant about to

speaking to the new sales force. The sales assistant has never instructed before but she is known for her dynamite presentations and for her effectiveness as a speaker. The training session ends, leaving the new sales force confused and bored, and the sales assistant turned-trainer discouraged. What happened? The problem often stems from the false assumption that any professional, which is defined as having a particular profession as a permanent career, is qualified to be a trainer (Kobel:1985).

Discussion of Relevant Issues

The key issues involved in this project suggest the necessity of mandatory specifications for the selection and training of law enforcement instructors. The above sales scenario can be explained by using a Survival Reaction Time Model, consisting of Perception, Evaluation, Formulation of Strategies and Initiation of Motor Action. According to Bruce K. Siddle, Executive Director, P.P.C.T. Management Systems, Inc., from the perceptual senses, sight, sound, smell, taste and touch, information is thought to be processed through the short term sensory store (STSS) compartment of the brain. The short term sensory store (STSS) will hold a perceptual image anywhere from a few milliseconds up to fifteen seconds, depending upon the intensity of the perceptual image. The perceptual image will then be analyzed by the working consciousness, referred to as the short term memory (STM). As perceptual information is held in the short term sensory store (STSS), the short term memory (STM) will first analyze or examine the material for identification (Siddle:1989)

The sales assistant failed to use teaching techniques with enough intensity to make the new sales force want to learn. The learner looks to the instructor for solutions. Infact, the entire responsibility for the success or failure of the course is in this case, placed on the instructor's shoulders, and many instructors actually see their role as being responsible for, and in charge of, the learner's learning (Seminar:1989). The instructor and the learner are in a special type of temporary helping relationship. The learner comes because he feels a need to grow, discover, increase skills and knowledge, and has decided that a school setting would be the best place to do so. The learner feels that the instructor will be knowledgeable and skillful in providing the service. The instructor is there because he feels that he possesses the subject knowledge and teaching skills required to fulfil the needs of the learner. Traditionally, this situation then forms the basis for a dependency relationship, with the instructor doing the telling and the learner doing the listening (Renner:1983). Afterward, the short term memory (STM) will evaluate the perceptual information as to the relevance of the information to the present circumstances. The speed in which this information is processed will be determined by how familiar the learner is with the information.

The next step in the Survival Reaction Time Model is the formulation of strategies. The short term memory (STM) has the capability to develop and formulate strategies quickly if the response is visualized often or used on a regular basis (a red

light means stop). The long term memory (LTM) is thought to have recorded every second of life which was perceived by the short term memory (STM).

The last phase of reaction time is initiating motor action. It is in this step that the brain will tell the body to perform in a certain manner, including the development of manipulative skills involving tools, machinery, procedures and techniques (Siddle:1989).

The primary goal of the above reaction time model is to instruct officers to enhance their reaction time. People perceive threats and negotiate reaction response in different ways. For some, a threat is a simple recognition of assault cues. For others, a threat may be in a class room environment, anticipating a test or interpreting information given by an instructor. In either situation the learning components are the same, with learner-centered and instructor-centered communication being on a two-way street (Siddle:1989).

Adult learners have needs for instructional information to relate to a specific task or occupational skill (NCI:1992). Perception for adults is to seek learning, to cope with everyday life changes in social, martial or business situations. This information is perceived and the content analyzed for individual learner use. Old knowledge and new knowledge are then intergrated for learner sorting and formulating of strategies. The outcome of the learning process, or motor initiation, is dependent on the basic values, abilities and attitude of the adult learner

(Siddle:1989). Most teachers of adults are selected because they have displayed a sufficient mastery of the subject they are to teach. This applies equally to company training programs, community agencies, recreation centers, and continuing education classes at high schools or colleges. However, even though mastering the subject matter is a prerequisite to good teaching, it is no guarantee of learner learning (Renner:1983).

Learning and staying alive is the subject of an article in Police Magazine in April 1996:

Despite increased training and high tech equipment in police work, law officers are still making the same fatal errors. If so much is known, written about, taped and taught about why and how officers die, why are so many continuing to perish in 1996? What's going on here? (Garner:1996).

The challenge of change for some is difficult. An article in FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin in November 1993 indicates the following:

Changing organizations and the views individuals hold is neither simple nor easy. People tend to cling to old views and habits. It requires considerable effort (both for organizations and individuals) to develop a set routine. In other words, to make or break a habit takes great commitment (Corentino:1993).

Most law enforcement officers are sent to the streets with the most up to date training available. The best of equipment in technical, tactical and transportation. But what happens? If it is true that behaviors are learned through training, then training must require commitment (Bowman:1996). "Training is a bane for some, salvation for others, but for most it is misunderstood and misused" (Renner:1983).

Conclusion/Recommendation

Hopefully law enforcement administrators and departments are finally realizing that just meeting state minimum standards in the training of law enforcement instructors is just not enough. The twenty-first century is approaching fast and with it brings new technology. Most articles on law enforcement training expand on the efforts of more efficient and more effective training. This project has expanded on the more efficient and more effective individuals as future trainers in law enforcement.

The purpose of this project has been to emphasize the need for mandatory requirements in the selection of law enforcement instructors. The recommendation of this project is to adopt a departmental policy which will help promote high qualifying standards in the selection of trainers in law enforcement.

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