CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

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BY

EMILY L. GEDIG

DR. JAMES E. HENDRICKS – ADVISOR

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

MUNCIE, INDIANA

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Author Note

Emily L. Gedig, Criminal Justice and Criminology, Ball State University.

Abstract

Cultural competency training develops sensitivity to issues of social, geographic, economic, and language diversity and related challenges faced by historically marginalized populations.  Effective law enforcement can build positive relationships with community members more easily, which leads to a community that will appreciate and better understand officers' actions while interacting with them.  Law enforcement personnel and departments that find ways to improve community affairs tend to reduce civil confusion and potential conflicts.  Officers trained to work with and gain understanding of all ethnic, racial, cultural, and gender groups will result in better community and police relations.  The purpose of this paper is to show that police officers trained in cultural competency are better prepared, more confident and better equipped to meet the needs of the community, as well as their own personal and professional goals throughout their law enforcement career.

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Cultural Competency Training for Law Enforcement

Cultural competency training develops sensitivity to issues of social, geographic, economic, and language diversity and related challenges faced by historically marginalized populations.  Cultural competency training provides critical skills for law enforcement who may be working with a population whose backgrounds are different from their own.  Law enforcement personnel and departments that find ways to improve community affairs tend to reduce civil confusion and potential conflicts.  Officers trained to work with and understand all ethnic, racial, cultural, and gender groups will result in better community and police relations.

Effective law enforcement can build positive relationships with community members more easily, which leads to a community that will appreciate and better understand officers' actions while interacting with them. The purpose of this paper is to show that police officers trained in cultural competency are better prepared, more confident and better equipped to meet the needs of the community, as well as their own personal and professional goals throughout their law enforcement career.  Requiring cultural competency training for all police officers could increase community safety, officer confidence, and meet society's expectations of the modern day police officer.

## Literature Review

Police officers are the most visible elements of government in a civil society. Police officers have an extremely important job that requires personal commitment, direct involvement with the public and a focus on welfare and peace in communities.  One of the primary duties of the police force is to maintain safety and security in communities. Their work is dangerous and requires commitment and hard work.

For any police department good personnel is the key to a successful and effective department, but also the most expensive.  Personnel spending for police budgets are the highest, reaching as high as 85 % (Thibault, Lynch, & McBride, 2011).  Police officers are an imperative part of the criminal justice system.  Fraught with burn out rates, continual hiring freezes, unqualified candidates, and budget cuts, it is extremely important to ensure the most qualified and trained individuals are hired into these positions.

As agreement among researchers on what constitutes an effective police officer tends to be scarce, Goldstein's (1977) explanation of the make-up of a good police officer will be used in this paper. According to Goldstein:

"…effective police officers should possess these five qualities:

(1)     Intelligence;

(2)     Tolerance and understanding of cultural differences;

(3)     Values which support controls on police conduct;

(4)     Self-discipline; and

(5)     The ability to control one's emotions" (19).

Roberg (1978) reported that to be effective, an officer must understand the sociological and psychological make-up of the community in which he or she polices.  Lawrence Sherman (1980) addresses the four major aspects of police work:

1.     Detection activities, including style of uniformed patrol, decisions to take crime reports from a complainant, and decisions to stop and question someone;

2.      Decision to arrest;

3.      Police "service" behavior, a residual category that includes such

diverse items as the manner in which police settle disputes and

their demeanor in interacting with citizens; and

4.      Police violence, the justified and unjustified use of and physical

force against citizens" (69).

These aspects are still important roles within police work today.  It may seem that

policing hasn't changed much over the past 30 years; however, much has changed and

current police officers, as well as future police officers, must adjust and possess a wide

variety of skills to execute their jobs correctly, appropriately, and legally.

It is a severe liability for a department to hire an individual who is not the right fit

for the job.  The normal age for entry-level police officers ranges from 18-29; some

departments believe that accepting younger applicants results in a lack of mature

judgment.  Sherman (1980) suggests that younger officers are more aggressive and more

likely to make mistakes.  Research also suggests that younger officers were also assaulted

more often (Sherman, 1980).

In a later article, *Changes in Hiring of Police Would Arrest Trouble,* (1987)

Sherman recalls the Nixon era when some police agencies instituted mass hiring, which

resulted in improper screening of officers, increased disciplinary actions against officers,

increased drug use and corruption among police officers.  Sherman cautions "youth and

police work do not mix well" (16).  He suggests departments hire individuals no younger

than 25 years of age, stating "research shows dramatic differences in behavior before and

after the age of 25" (16).

**A Good Officer.**  The criteria for good police performance must be established.

Problems arise when defining effective police performance because there is considerable

ambiguity in distinguishing what makes an effective police officer (Smith & Aamodt,

1995).  An example given by Carter and Sapp (1989) is that cynicism and

authoritarianism are generally considered to be poor traits for a person to possess, but

some critics believe that police officers need to be authoritarian and cynical so they will

not be viewed as gullible. Differing interpretations of whether traits are positive or

negative could be due to the wide range of duties of an officer.

In *Davis v. Dallas,* the United States Court of Appeals expressed the opinion that

police officers hold a "professional type" position.  This characterization was based on

several factors:

- Officers must be able to diagnose problems in confusing, variable
  situations;

- Based on their diagnosis, officers must make timely discretionary
  decisions;

- Their responsibilities and authority are broad and performed under
  minimal direct supervision;

- Officers must be highly adaptable to handle volatile emotions one
  moment, and, great interpersonal sensitivity the next;

- They must be able to make rapid critical decisions in circumstances of
  great stress; and

- They must be able to apply the law fairly and equitable, just as other criminal justice professionals such as prosecutors and judges (*Davis v. Dallas*, 1985).

The Court's opinion concluded that it was the college-educated officer who best fulfilled these roles.

Most officers must complete an academy curriculum that bears little similarity to higher education. Yet, we expect them to understand and apply the law evenly.  We expect them to grasp the nature of social problems and the psychology of people with different racial, cultural, and attitudes toward the law.  We expect officers to act professionally at all times.  We expect them to effectively handle disputes involving people from varying cultural, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds and make decisions according to their moral code without supervision at times.  Higher education helps sharpen these skills that we require of our officers to successfully accomplish all that we require of them (Bowman, 2004).

*Higher Education*.  Studies show that college educated police officers are calmer on duty, more professional, have fewer incidents with citizens, and communicate more effectively.  All of these factors lead to fewer complaints, which help lower the police department's liability. College educated officers have better problem solving skills, make better ethical decisions, and perform their roles more effectively than their fellow officers without college education.  Officers with college education are more confident with their career choice, which leads to fewer sick days and more cost savings for the police department (Bowman, 2004).  The recommendations of the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, established in 1967, was "that all

police personnel with general enforcement powers have baccalaureate degrees" (Travis, 1995, "Education in Law Enforcement," para. 1).  This was of course, presented as the "ultimate goal" rather than an immediate goal (para. 1).

Numerous studies since the 1970s have suggested that a college education enhances law enforcement.  Bowman (2004) suggests that "the benefits of employing officers with a higher education include:

- Better behavioral and performance characteristics;

- Fewer on-the-job injuries and assaults;

- Fewer disciplinary actions from accidents and force allegations;

- Less use of sick time;

- Greater acceptance of minorities;

- Decrease in authoritarianism, rigidity and conservatism;

- Fewer citizen complaints;

- Promotion of higher aspirations; and

- Enhancement of minority recruitment" (para. 4).

Despite these findings there has been little to no change in the last twenty years in the educational standards for police officers.  Most city and state law enforcement agencies require a minimum of a high school diploma, with a few exceptions.  The state of Minnesota requires all candidates statewide to have at least a two year degree (Hilal & Erickson, 2010) and some city agencies require four-year degrees, like Plano, Texas (Johnson, 2006).

Liability suits are a significant threat to any police department and they usually stem from a citizen complaint.  According to Carter and Sapp (1989):

When educated officers encountered conflict…the officers will be less

likely to resort to force, unlawful means, or disrespect in resolving the

conflict.  Rather, the officer will tolerate the differences and attempt to

medicate a resolution to the problem (155).

There is research that suggests that officers with higher education are more likely to

understand the role of police in a democratic society than the non-college officer.

College educated officers tend to have an understanding of the role of citizen's

constitutional rights and are more likely to adhere to constitutional mandates, even in

circumstances where the officer is certain of an individual's guilt (Carter & Sapp, 1989).

Many police liability problems stem from officers who do not understand, know,

or appreciate the constitutional framework of legal restrictions imposed by court

decisions.  The most violated rights are searches, seizures, interrogations, and the use of

force.  Carter and Sapp (1989) report, "College educated officers understand the rationale

for such legal decisions better than non-college educated officers" (155).   They also note

that educated officers have greater knowledge of organizational rules and values.   Most

rules and regulations are prepared to protect the department from liability-related

problems.  Thus, officers who understand rules are more apt to follow them and pose a

lower liability risk.

According to Viverette and Mayo (2003), college education encourages ethical

and aesthetic development and positively effects student values.  To educate officers

adequately in the ethical sense they must create a "moral code".  This code is one they

rely on when decisions must be made without superior guidance.  Viverette and Mayo

believe liberal education helps to define and foster an officer's moral code.  Education

teaches them to communicate effectively with people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, to understand their viewpoints, and although they may not agree-- they can accept and communicate with them.  Officers with college education have developed critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, the ability to communicate effectively with people, they have been exposed to life experiences, which allows them to be comfortable with personal authority when supervisors are unavailable, which may have taken an additional five to ten years of just street experience for them to acquire (Viverette & Mayo, 2003).

Crucial skills that are generally not taught at the police academy include independent and critical thinking. Worden (1985) found "educated officers are…more discretion oriented, perhaps because college encourages independent and critical thought" (n.p.).  According to Worden, the police academy trains officers in what to wear, when to eat, how long to run, what will be learned, etc.  College allows potential officers to independently decide their program of study, their classes, and whether or not to attend classes.

Worden (1985) adds that the types of studies to which students are exposed such as philosophy, psychology, criminal justice, accounting, and others, make a student think critically.  Traits such as intelligence, dependability, common sense, interpersonal skills, good communication, sensitivity, empathy, flexibility, maturity, and comfort with personal authority have been identified as characteristics of a good police officer.  Most, if not all, of these characteristics can be learned through a college education and though the life experiences one will have while gaining that education.

Education alone cannot determine whether or not an officer is going to be effective.  According to Carter and Sapp (1989), "The most fundamental issue in any aspect of police misconduct is the officer's behavior.  Included in this behavior are officer motivation, intent, decision-making or judgment, and application of both law and departmental procedures" (155).  Tyre and Braustein (1992) state, "The nature of policing dictates that officers must consistently make immediate and demanding decisions.  These decisions call into play ethical and moral, as well as procedural and legal, questions that are most often made without specific directions from superiors or specific policy directives" (6).

Burns (2010) believes that arrests, searches and the use of force are the "big three" decision-making points for police officers and the base for citizen complaints and disciplinary action.  In an analysis of disciplinary action against Florida police officers from 1997 to 2002, the International Association of Chiefs of Police found officers with only high school educations were the subjects of 75 % of all disciplinary actions.  However, officers with four year degrees accounted for 11 % of such actions (Burns, 2010, n.p.).  It appears that college education significantly reduces the likelihood of disciplinary action occurring.  College educated officers are more professional; thus, there are fewer deviations from proper behavior, resulting in appropriate adherence to professional standards and responsibility.  When one acts appropriately, he/she receives fewer, if any, disciplinary actions (Carter & Sapp, 1989).

William Scott (1986) states, in his article regarding college education, that police officers are performing different roles "…from pure enforcement of the law to one of dealing with people and their problems.  Police…are taking a more holistic approach to

the community" (16-17).  This role requires police officers to decide between criminal

justice or community service solutions when responding to a call.  Police officers today

are faced with ethical, cultural, racial, and judicial issues on a daily basis.  Traditionally,

the objective of police recruitment and selection is to find qualified candidates for law

enforcement positions in terms of talents, ethics, drive and emotional stability.  However,

computer skills, human relation skills, and the ability to deal with diverse cultures and

perhaps speak a foreign language have become important (Thibault, et al., 2011).

Radelet and Carter (1993) also cite reasons why higher education provides a

number of benefits for law enforcement officers:

In addition to learning more about history, law, and ethics, which contributes to

an officer's information base, higher education benefits may include the

following:

1.  Developing greater empathy and tolerance for people with different

lifestyles and ideologies, this in turn helps with communication skills;

2.  Helping officers make decisions and use discretion while handling

individual cases without direct supervision;

3.  Permitting officers to be innovative and flexible while dealing with

complex policing strategies, such as problem-oriented or community

policing;

4.  Enabling officers to cope better with stress, resulting in more stable and

reliable employees; and

5.  Helping officers communicate and respond to situations and to the service

needs of the public in a civil manner (152).

College education exposes individuals to people with different backgrounds, languages, ideas, beliefs, attitudes and goals.  College education is the foundation for cultural literacy and cultural values.  This is where one learns to respect other's ways of life and opinions.

College imparts academic knowledge as well as real-life experience to help officers deal with the community.  According to Sapp and Carter (1989), "College educated officers accept change easier, which contributes to a reduced probability for conflict" (157).  Also, conflict between officers and citizens is a source of liability problems; therefore, acceptance of change by college educated officers may reduce a liability risk.

**Diversit**y.  Cultural and ethnic diversity has changed modern policing. Representation of the community is seen as a way of increasing the legitimacy of the police in the eyes of the public, especially among minority residents. Minority officers are seen as more knowledgeable about minority communities and minority cultures, and they may be more empathetic to minority concerns (Decker & Smith, 1980).

Kenney and McNamara (1999) believe, "With the advent of community and problem-solving oriented policing, personnel management issues have become increasingly complex as earlier homogeneous departments have given way to more modern departments reflective of the community population" (15).  The understanding of minority, ethnic or cultural concerns should not extend just to minority police officers, this should be knowledge held by all law enforcement officers.  For many agencies, particularly those serving large immigrant communities, the need for racial and ethnic minorities extends far beyond traditional groups.  Greene (2000) argues that in virtually

all discussions of policing, it is asserted that the police must partner with the community and other public and private agencies that serve a local community and that have some impact on community quality-of-life issues.  If we are to meet the growing demands of community and problem-oriented policing, we must increase the education of our officers.

**Multicultural Training.**  Training law enforcement officers on cultural diversity and the changing demographics in society has been going on since the early 1960s.  Early trainings were prompted by the recent changes with the civil rights movement and focused on making law enforcement officers aware of minority issues and more sensitive to those issues (Hennessy, Hendricks & Hendricks, 2001).  Historically, the relationship between law enforcement and the minority public has been strained.  This strenuous relationship led to the creation of alternative training models.  Early cultural trainings from the 1960s to the 1990s were focused on racial relations and primarily were conducted by minority law enforcement officers.

Since 1990 to the present, current trends in law enforcement training have left much to be desired and very little information.  While most departments have a component of cultural training in their academy training for new officers, the amount of time devoted to these trainings depends on each department.  According to Hendricks and Brown (1995), "the average amount of time spent on cultural trainings are just 13.5 hours during basic law enforcement training, and only 6.2 hours devoted during in service trainings" (45).  Cultural training runs secondary to topics like Criminal Law, Firearms, and Physical Fitness.  Trainings are currently referred to as "Cultural Awareness Programs" and stress the changing demographics of communities and how they affect the

law enforcement profession, which have shown to be more effective than earlier "Race

Relations" programs (Hennessy, et al., 2001, 16).

According to El Nasser (2010), over the past 10 years, the population in the

United States has increased 9.7 %.  The 2010 U.S. Census shows that the nation's

Hispanic communities have the fast growing population in the United States.  This may

be explained by a USA TODAY analysis of the 2010 Census data which stated that

Hispanics or Latinos from states with large and established Hispanic/Latino populations

increasingly identified themselves by race, however, most chose white rather than the

"Some Other Race" that many picked a decade before (El Nasser, 2010).

The need for multicultural training or cultural awareness programs are highlighted

daily by reports of fast changing populations, increased immigration, as well as police

and public issues.  Many issues between law enforcement and the public stem from

miscommunication, both verbal and nonverbal.  Communication is one of the most

important aspects to working in law enforcement.  Hennessy, et al. (2001) state,

"Research in the United States has shown that 93 percent of police work is one-on-one

communication" (15).  The ability to communicate with other cultures is learned, due to

different cultures having different communication styles.

The benefits of having cultural competency training are best spoken from law

enforcement personnel themselves.  In a 2006 study of random police training institutes,

Brown and Hendricks report:

> Many respondents contended that, with prolonged exposure to cultural
>
> diversity issues, police officers will have fewer prejudicial beliefs, employ
>
> stereotypes less often in the course of their work and reduce considerably

the discriminatory policing practices that often result in excessive use of

force.  Of course, such training benefits not only individual officers, but

police agencies as well.  Police agencies have a vested interest in

continuing to promote cultural awareness training (58).

By understanding the influences of culture and ethnicity on an individual's

behavior, encounters with individuals can improve and become less complicated (Shusta,

Levine, Wong, Olson & Harris, 2008).  While the concept sounds simple, the actual

process of becoming culturally competent is not so easy.  According to Dr. James E.

Hendricks (personal communication, March 30, 2011), "Cultural competency is a

process--

- Step 1: Cultural Tolerance:

  Understanding that all individuals come from different backgrounds, and

  as individuals, citizens, and law enforcement officers, we have to work

  with each other in order to better serve and protect our communities.

- Step 2: Cultural Acceptance:

  Accepting that cultural differences exist and that they have an effect on the

  way we interact with other individuals from different backgrounds and

  cultures in serving and protecting our communities.

- Step 3: Cultural Competency:

  The process of learning various cultural value systems that others have

  and using that knowledge and competency to better interact with them in

  order to better serve and protect the community".

As law enforcement officers find themselves working with cultures and peoples who are unfamiliar to them, the need for more training and continual training in cultural competency gains more and more importance.  As Black and Kari (2010) suggest, "Multiculturalism is not simply an issue of race and/or ethnicity.  Criminal Justice professionals deal with a wide variety of cultures, including but not limited to women, religious minorities, gay and lesbians, the elderly, and the disabled" (217).  According to Hennessy, et al. (2001), the following topics have been identified as necessary topics for all cultural awareness training programs:

- Effect demographic changes have on the profession of law enforcement;

- Stereotypes;

- Prejudices;

- Cultures;

- Ethnicity;

- Religion; and

- Communication (17-19).

**Program Delivery.**  With any training, an important aspect to consider is the audience.  Trainings for law enforcement and the private sector are inherently different.  Law enforcement officers deal with criminals and place themselves in danger on a daily basis; a job that many individuals could not imagine themselves doing.  Thus, trainings for law enforcement should be designed for law enforcement.

Research has been conducted on the cognitive styles of police officers.  A book written by Stephen Hennessy (1999) *Thinking Cop, Feeling Cop*, has the most comprehensive break down of police cognitive styles.  The book focuses on the

Psychological Personality Type Reader, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Test, and the writings of Carl G. Jung, *Psychological Types* (1921).  It looks at how each cognitive style relates to the law enforcement field; training, work, communication, management, learning styles.

Hennessy's (1999) position is that "people are usually attracted to occupations that appeal to their strongest preferences for doing things" (13).  According to Hennessy, there are four functioning pairs of personality types (ST, SF, NF, and NT).  Sensing-Thinking (ST) types prefer to take in and process information through their five senses.  These officers generally like structure and taking things one step at a time.  They are naturally brief and business like; they do not like too many details or "drama"; they get to the point and get out.  "Seventy percent of all law enforcement personnel are STs, while in the general population they represent only 32-42 %" (Hennessy, 14).  According to Hennessy, they are called the 'true-north of law enforcement officers', since the majority of the field is comprised of this type of personality.  This personality's flaw is the "failure to take personal issues of those individuals around them into consideration" (15).

Hennessy (1999) suggests that Intuitive Thinking (NT officers usually dislike routine and detail and are future looking.  NTs communicate using truth over tact preferably, and constantly develop new ideas how to get things done.  According to Hennessy, "this type of personality appears to talk in circles, reaches conclusions easily, and is challenged by complex problems.  NTs comprise 14 % of law enforcement creating the second most common personality; however in the general population they are represented higher at 15-22 % " (16).  Hennessy believes this personality's major flaw

lies in their communication, because they "prefer making decisions with logic, they can appear to be blunt and insensitive" (17).

Hennessy's (1999) Sensing Feeling (SF) personalities are uncommon in law enforcement. This personality also prefers to take in information through their five senses; however, when they make decisions their concern is for the people involved. These officers are more sensitive to people and their feelings. This personality type does well in community relations, media, and conflict resolution. This type of personality thrives where people are involved. Hennessy believes "SFs make excellent people-oriented police representatives because they can relate to the community well. SFs comprise only 11 % of law enforcement population while in the general population are represented much higher at 31 to 41 %" (18-21). The flaw of this personality is the tendency to not be true to their natural feelings and they may do things to try and "fit in" with the other officers; they will act more like the STs and NTs to feel more comfortable.

Intuitive Feeling (NF) personalities (Hennessy, 1999) are even rarer within the law enforcement community. These individuals process information through intuition and make decisions based on their feelings. This personality type generally does not work well with the majority of other law enforcement officers who are NTs and STs, who prefer concrete facts to base decisions and judgments. Hennessy believes NFs "excel at long range issues and conceptual projects. They enjoy working with people. Professions that work well for this type of personality are chaplains, psychologists, and employee relations. NFs comprise 5 % of the law enforcement personnel; however are represented 15 to 21 % in the general population" (28). The downfall to this personality is that they

are not very "tough minded" and will overcompensate for this difference by becoming insensitive and appearing to lack all concern for people.

Regardless of the Hollywood portrayal of police work, a majority of police calls have little to do with major crime.  Most calls are regarding medical emergencies, family quarrels, barking dogs, and neighborhood disputes.  Many times law enforcement officers refer to themselves as "Dial a Dad".  Charles Saunders (1970), a police researcher, compiled a list of attributes and skills an officer must have to perform the job, the following are just a few:

- Endure long hours of boredom during routine patrol;

- Make quick decisions, sometimes dealing with life and death;

- Mature judgment;

- Critical awareness of surroundings at all times;

- Professionalism, self-assurance, and confidence;

- Never appear to judge other individuals in the face of exposure to the worst of human nature. (10-11)

Saunders believes most officers seem to fall into the occupation without a lot of forethought.  However, a theory on why the strong representation for STs within the profession is the assumption that when a different personality type (NT, SF, NF) begins to feel uncomfortable, he/she moves on to another career.  Hennessy and several colleagues (as cited in Hennessy, 1999) conducted a study at a technical college in Minnesota with students who were involved in the police training class.  The following was gleaned from this assessment:

Rookie cops to not necessarily become socialized into being less

compassionate cops after being on the job for a period of time.  It would

appear that the occupations' tasks attract those who strengths are matter-

of-fact, practical, logical, direct and rational, fair, structured and just, in a

logical sort of way.  This would seem to explain why cops, who generally

appear to be cold, condescending, serious and authoritarian, could appear

to be that way as a result of preferences which Jung felt were present at

birth or shortly thereafter (59-60).

This finding was different from the earlier belief that law enforcement officers grew cold

and distance because of the nature of the job and conditioning from veterans on the

department (Hennessy, 1999).  It is interesting to note also, that half of the students who

had tested as Feeling types dropped out of the classes before their training program was

completed.

Hennessy (1999) reports it is easy to identify communication patterns between the

personality types.  Feeling types talk about people more often than not, and the Thinking

types discuss topics in terms of tasks rather than people.  Women possess better

communication skills than men do on a whole.  From a study performed by Hennessy in

1990 at the International Association of Women Police conference in St. Paul,

Minnesota, it was found "over 37 % of the women surveyed were STs" (64).  Never the

less, women police officers do as well on the streets as males do.

According to Hennessy, et al. (2001), one of the challenges in constructing

courses for police is that most designers of training programs in private industry are

Intuitive Feelers, just the opposite cognitive style as that of police.  When designing the

training course, the favored cognitive learning style of police is the first consideration in the process.  Hennessy et al. (2001) also stress the selection of live trainers to be from the law enforcement department.  They explain "When outside consultants are used, especially those with no law enforcement background, the "buy-in" from the officers can be tenuous at best" (17).  Trainers should be credible, committed and respected within the community and within the departments.  It can also be understood that having departmental trainers helps reinforce community values and the culture within the department.

**Training Program Delivery Methods.**  There are common types of training delivery; face to face, teleconference, online, and blended.  Historically, the majority of training delivered to law enforcement personnel has been during academy training or during in service trainings (Hennessy, et al., 2001).  In-service trainings, also known as refreshers, are common in many professions.

There is much disagreement on the most successful training method.  Hennessy et al. (2001) report "Training sessions that do not include active participation and meaningful context are unlikely to be successful" (19).  The authors also think class sizes should be no more than 35 participants, and the room should be set up where up to five participants share a table for group discussion.  An effective training includes goals, objectives and relevant material (Hennessey, et al., 2001).

A study by Delfino and Persico (2007) examined the different types of training within the educational setting.  This study examined face-to-face, online, and teleconference training over five years.  In year three of the study, participants were required to use online or face-to-face training methods.  The participants who chose the

online method expressed concern that the training was more demanding and time consuming.  Other key issues with online training are both availability of suitable technology and the participants having the sufficient skills to use the technology.

According to Geiman (2011), many fields including law enforcement have adopted a blended approach to training their personnel.  Blended learning is a combination of live and online delivery.  Geiman recognizes three pitfalls that departments can experience with the development or implementation of online training courses.  First, one person cannot develop or design the program.  The subject expert should be paired up with an electronic learning expert to ensure that the delivery and content of the training are conducive for a learning environment.

Second, new technology does not imply faster learning (Geiman, 2011).  There are three forces at play with learning; quality, time and cost.  Reducing the amount of time to develop and design a training course means that something has to be sacrificed.  With budgetary concerns and constraints, the quality of the course usually suffers.  According to Jimenez (as cited in Geiman, 2011, 16)  "If we understand and practice the fundamentals of electronic learning, we can develop it rapidly."  Experienced course developers and designers both understand those fundamentals and apply them to optimize trainings.

The third pitfall involves the issues of what constitutes an online training.  Examples given by Geiman and Black-Dennis (2007) include:

- No matter how well the content is written, it is not an online course.  Scrolling down and reading paragraph after paragraph of text is not a learning experience.

- A PowerPoint presentation is not an online training program.  A PowerPoint presentation is a flat form of learning, not an interactive form of learning within an online course.  The same is true of print distance learning courses (17).

An effective online training is carefully planned and designed.  The content is based on measurable objectives, creates an interactive environment, provides small units of learning at a time, and includes a summative evaluation.

Jaschik (2009) reports online and blended trainings are comparable in terms of their effectiveness; however, participants of the blended method of training showed significantly better learning outcomes than did purely online or face-to-face participants.  Blended trainings and online trainings are comparable in effectiveness, if they are designed correctly.  Gieman (2011) establishes the following requirements for successful e-learning courses:

1. Interactive exercises;

2. Breaks for reflection;

3. Video vignettes;

4. An avatar instructor; and

5. Chunking information in the courses into smaller pieces to optimize learning and retention (16).

Written text from various types of documents, media and PowerPoint presentations are sources of content for online courses.  To have the most impact, cultural awareness courses should be logically structured reality based, and relevant to the job of policing.  The officers must know why understanding the changing demographics of their cities are

important to their professionalism and the image of the department (Hennessy, et al., 2001).

Not all training is conducted in a traditional manner.  Burghardt (2007) reports that in Glen Cove, New York, the new training recruits are being taught lessons in tolerance at the Holocaust museum.  The chairman of the museum, Howard S. Maier, stated "We are in the character-building business" (6).  The training shows recruit officers how the Holocaust started with name calling and bullying and ultimately resulted in mass murder.  The training is a half-day program which teaches how dangerous it is when a law enforcement officer or anyone of authority harbors prejudices and how it affects their work.  One deputy chief commented that she has never seen any other training quite as forceful in teaching officers that they are entrusted with great power and to always keep themselves "in check" (6).

According to Leal (2009), "by 2005, more than 3.2 million students were participating in online learning.  This number is estimated to grow by 54 % each year. As older generations leave the workforce, the conventional (face-to-face, in-service) trainings will begin to die out" (22).  Law enforcement agencies are not completely out of the loop; the progress is slow but it is continuing.  It is suggested that police departments could use gaming technology (video games) for various training scenarios such as tactical, driving and decision-making situations, which would be more appealing to the new generation of recruits.  The newer techniques of training will be hard to sell to current officers and/or officers who have been working in the field for many years and are not accustomed to training with computers or video games (Leal, 2009).

**Participant Assessment.**  Assessment systems used for training programs vary depending on the trainer or program set up.  Typically any program that includes group participation has an evaluation of each participant's participation within the group and the final product.  Other programs incorporate the use of oral examinations, short essays, written examinations, and a summative evaluation (Leal, 2009).

According to Delfino and Persicso (2007), the ideal setting for online training is small, manageable groups.  Online activities are best when broken up into smaller units or modules that allow for creativity, collaboration, participation and integration between theory and practice.  Assessment for online trainings is suggested to be more accurate when each smaller activity or modules are graded separately and the final assessment made on the basis of the grades obtained on each activity (Delfino & Persicso, 2007).

**Best Practices for Cultural Training Programs.**  A study by Black and Kari (2010) suggests "police academies cannot rely on academy training alone to provide the foundation for multiculturalism" (227).  Agencies looking for a rapid increase in personnel who are open and able to work in a multicultural environment should recruit those who have completed an academic degree.  As previously mentioned, research has shown that educated individuals approach training more comfortable and confident about working with multicultural clientele.  Best practices for cultural training have been established by very few regarding law enforcement.  Nonetheless, the facilitation of training for law enforcement have been given certain and specific advice.

The *Cultural Awareness Training Manual for Law Enforcement* was developed by Hennessy, et al. (2000).  The goals of the exercises in the training are as follows:

- Understanding the rationale for stereotypes and prejudices;

- Communication styles of various cultures;

- Understanding the nature and importance of power used by law enforcement;

- Racism, sexism, and other biases;

- Differences in various cultural groups and how attitudes are formed about them;

- Why we behave the ways we do and clarifying new ways of acting and doing things; and

- Change theories and strategies (8).

Hennessy et al. (2001) add additional advice for the trainers of the programs:

Trainers should be credible and respected members of the department.  Trainers should not be solely minority officers, as this may cause tension with the participants.  Trainers should have the desire to teach sensitive topics and should also be trained in the basics of teaching and discussion facilitation (16).

## Conclusion

Training officers to work with and gain understanding regarding ethnic, racial, cultural, and gender groups will lead to better community and police relations. Effective law enforcement can build positive relationships with community members more easily, which leads to a community that will appreciate and better understand officers' actions while interacting with them.

Incidents involving law enforcement and the public have a profound impact and this impact is long lasting.  Racial and cultural discrimination lawsuits are very costly to cities and law enforcement units.  Civil disorder is expensive and, at times, can result in

death, personal injury, and/or property loss.  Multicultural training can reduce the number of lawsuits, and can assist in the professional and effective handling of civil disorder situations.

Face-to-face trainings still have merit; however, with state and local governments cutting their spending, paying outside companies for training or taking officers off the street for training is becoming undesirable.  Law enforcement units should consider training as an investment for their present and their future.  Leaders can safeguard their communities not only for the short term but for future generations by recruiting and hiring law enforcement officers who work productive careers.  In tight budgetary situations, leaders should question the content, method, and benefits of their trainings; however, halting the trainings all together are dangerous.

Online and even blended trainings are cost effective and just as effective in information retention as face-to-face trainings.  However, these trainings must be designed appropriately and delivered in ways that achieve the learning objectives.  The use of effective training methods with the coupling of higher educated officers will prove to be a welcoming relief for law enforcement departments and their budgets.  The development of online training programs may be the answer and the future of training law enforcement officers.

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