

## **ABSTRACT**

**DISSERTATION:** Developing Criminal Law Knowledge and Application in Police Recruits:

An Application of Instructional Design and Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning.

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**DEGREE:** Doctorate of Philosophy

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**DATE:** July 2021

To improve police recruit's retention for criminal law, an instructional aid was created utilizing instructional design principles derived from Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML; Mayer, 2010). Informal and formal data has suggested police recruits struggle to apply the information learned in the police academy to their field training (Caro, 2010). In addition, informal interviews that suggested some police academies curve their criminal law exam almost a full letter grade made the exploration into police academy instruction needed. Research has demonstrated individuals in a traditional educational setting learn in ways that are consistent with CTML (Moreno, Reisslein, & Ozogul, 2009; Mayer, 2014; Richter, Scheiter, & Eitel, 2018; Moreno, 2006; Majeski, Slover, & Ronch, 2016) and has extended these findings to nontraditional educational settings and nontraditional settings and populations (Artino, 2009; Starr-Glass, 2011; Young, Van Merrienboer, Durning, & Cate, 2014).

Participants (N=90), referred to as recruits, were recruited from consecutive midwestern police academy cohorts. One recruit class was used as the control while the other received an educational intervention for their criminal law course. Recruits assigned to the experimental group were given a pre-test and questionnaire inquiring about their learning strategies and motivation. In addition, the experimental group used an online platform instructional aid

composed of various instructional design principle over the length of their criminal law course. The purpose of the study was to determine if the instructional aid was effective in increasing recruits criminal law score. The instructional aid was an online platform that incorporated various instructional design principles and learning strategies. An independent t-test were conducted to determine there were no significant difference on criminal law exam scores between the experimental and archival group. Correlations indicated there was a significant positive relationship between recruits use of the instructional aid and their criminal law scores. The lack of observed differences between groups required a thorough evaluation of the criminal law exam itself. Results indicated potential that validity issues exist on the criminal law exam that could have impacted the effectiveness of the instructional aid. Results were discussed in terms of application of instructional design principles for police academies.