

## **OVERVIEW**

In 1977, political scientist William Ker Muir concluded that the essence of police work is coercion. Muir's argument is summarized in Fyfe et al. (1997, pp. 43–44) as follows:

Like politicians . . . police are in the business of convincing people to do things they would not otherwise be inclined to do. . . . police face a major challenge in trying to avoid the use of force in their attempts to get others to behave in certain ways. . . . good police officers spend much of their time in skillful . . . manipulation of other people's behavior. The mere sight of a police car on the highway is a form of manipulation that slows would-be speeders. A blank stare from an officer in a pausing patrol car often can convince noisy corner groups of teenagers to take their parties elsewhere. . . . In some cases, like hostage negotiations or investigators' attempts to turn criminals against their colleagues, this coercion is very subtle and consists of leading suspects to recognize the decisions that they must make to serve their own interests. In other cases, as when officers make arrests or use deadly force, police coercion is far more overt and puts a quick and involuntary [for the perpetrator] end to wrongful behavior. . . . police coercion involves actual law enforcement. On most occasions . . . police change behavior merely by manipulating their subjects' knowledge that officers can always resort to law enforcement if inappropriate behavior is not changed immediately. Stated most simply, therefore, Muir's view is that good police officers are masters of legal coercion: the art and science of marshaling the authority of their office and their own personal powers to get other people to behave in ways the police define as appropriate.

Muir's view of police work was both insightful and prescient. It came at a time when the value of tactical communications was less formally appreciated than "hard" skills such as those involving weapons use or vehicle pursuit. His work foretold the broader expertise that many police officers would come to recognize as necessary to properly serve American society. Police officers today have to be expert both in hard skills of traditional policing and in communication skills. To communicate effectively is to be skilled in the overt and the subtle, to make one's intentions known whether the recipient is deaf, unable to understand English, mentally handicapped, enraged, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or simply unfamiliar with normal police procedure.

In the past, training in the "hard skills" of policing sought primarily to improve physical prowess. An emphasis on only these hard skills of policing causes the officer on the street to be ill-equipped to meet the demands of public service today. To be sure, police officers continue to need the traditional skills of policing. To be responsive to today's needs requires integrating community policing and diversity awareness throughout training and understanding that use of force, arrest procedures, and search and seizure require a skillful blend of communications and physical ability. The focus here is therefore how best to imbue today's police officer with the totality of the expertise needed to serve society well.

Expertise, one of the defining characteristics of a profession, is the ability to master particular skills and apply them in a human context.<sup>1</sup> The professional acquires expertise by "prolonged education and experience."<sup>2</sup> The specialized knowledge and acquired skill of a professional are what sets him apart from others; in turn, "the expertise of the officer imposes upon him a special social responsibility."<sup>3</sup>

Professionals understand the need to gain and maintain proficiency as the demands of their profession evolve. The officer who does not maintain his expertise can sacrifice his status as a professional. Maintaining that expertise is a responsibility both of the professional

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<sup>1</sup>Huntington, 1957, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

organization and of the individual himself. For their part, police department managers have a duty to provide continuing education and to encourage their personnel to consistently improve themselves.

The expertise of police professionalism, as has just been noted, includes both expertise in skills such as firearms proficiency, proper arrest procedures, and vehicle pursuit tactics as well as expertise in communication skills to help the officer persuade others without resorting to force. A good police officer is able to communicate effectively even under conditions of extraordinary pressure and stress. When such an alternative is feasible, the officer is a better servant of the people than one who is equipped only to employ overt force. The ability to combine physical adeptness and tactical communications proficiency allows an officer to accomplish tasks impossible with physical abilities alone.

A professional police officer has to adapt his skills to the ever-changing environment of his workplace. Law enforcement is a constantly evolving vocation the members of which must adapt to the dynamic conditions of the street. Comprehensive training that prepares the student to improvise in unpredictable situations is essential. As the New York City Police Department's deputy commissioner for training writes, "training for any endeavor should simulate as closely as possible the actual working conditions for which trainees are being prepared."<sup>4</sup> It is a statement with which virtually any educator would agree.

One way that training can best mimic the realities of the field is by integrating topic areas that are linked in real life. The officer who has been well trained and holds an integrated conception of the material he has learned is better able to recall and apply what he has learned during his service to the community. Being well prepared helps an individual improvise in resolving situations.

Such expertise is nowhere more important than in dealings with members of the public under circumstances that may threaten the lives of civilians or officers in an interaction. Use of force, search and seizure, and arrest procedures, the focal points of this study, are intricately related. Officers most expert in melding physical and com-

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<sup>4</sup>Geller and Toch, 1996, Chapter 8, p. 7.

munications skills are those most able to bring events involving these focal points to a successful resolution.

Law enforcement agencies increasingly understand how complex those required communications talents are. The communications assets needed include far more than speaking eloquence. Verbal messages are influenced by nonverbal behaviors. The LAPD officer of today has to understand how to deal with the vast diversity that characterizes his city and to do so under the most demanding of circumstances: those involving use of force, search and seizure, and arrest procedures.

### **USE OF FORCE, ARREST PROCEDURES, AND SEARCH AND SEIZURE AS ISSUES OF EXPERTISE**

Officers use physical force in fewer than one in 2,500 calls for service, but the use of force remains a critical issue in preserving civilian rights and protecting the lives of public servants.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, because it is the rare instance when officers' employ *excessive force* that attracts media attention, justifiably ignites public debate over police abuse of authority, and impugns the professionalism of the department involved, police departments need to be especially concerned about how force is used and perceived.

How to properly exercise use of force, make an arrest, or conduct a legal search and seizure are fundamental to fulfilling an officer's responsibility to the public. They are also elements of police expertise used to enforce the law. The three are inextricably linked as an officer progresses through the course of his career. The responsibility bestowed on the officer necessitates specialized training to meet the demands of these areas without violating the rights of community residents.

To be sure, force can be required to safeguard the rights of civilians. As has been noted, "the very term *law enforcement* contains the word *force*." Because application of force is at times necessary for public safety, California law gives peace officers many carefully considered

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<sup>5</sup>International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2001.

legal options for using force in doing their jobs.<sup>6</sup> Among these are giving verbal commands; employing control holds; using batons, pepper spray, or a canine unit; and the threat or use of deadly force, including drawing and discharging a firearm.<sup>7</sup> Most police departments have some form of “reactive control model” to assist officers’ decisionmaking in this regard. This model is generally a part of a departmental use-of-force policy that outlines legal force options and instructs officers on behavior regarding use of force.

The LAPD and other departments nationwide have adapted their use-of-force policies and procedures to the changing demands of policing. During the 1960s and 1970s, for example, officers were required to modify their enforcement methods when “the drug culture produced hallucinogenic and mind-altering substances that confounded traditional force applications and resulted in significant increases in street level violence.”<sup>8</sup> Policies changed again when “the 80s produced tremendous increases in gun-related violence” and officers were faced with “urban terrorists, operating at will with quality assault firearms, enhanced mobility, and improved tactics.”<sup>9</sup> Today, as always, the police officer is best able to serve the community if he is able to adjust to situations and use his expertise to react appropriately under any circumstance.

Los Angeles has had its own unique incidents prompting concern over the use of force. The videotaped beating of motorist Rodney King by LAPD officers in 1992 caused a reexamination of legitimate applications of police authority across the country. The acquittal of the officers who were accused of the beating triggered rioting, looting, and other violence and chaos. Such crises reinforce public concern about preserving individual rights and raise vital questions about effective and legal policing, including those regarding variations in the treatment of different racial, socioeconomic, or gender groups. They also lead to demands for clear use-of-force guidance and call attention to the need for training that helps police officers

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<sup>6</sup>Callanan, 1992, p. 17. [Emphasis in original.]

<sup>7</sup>Gillespie, Hart, and Boren, 1998, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup>Callanan, 1992, p. 19.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

understand the rights of civilians and the duties of police to uphold those rights.

Search-and-seizure and arrest issues are no less critical to policing than are those pertaining to use of force. The former have their basis in the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution. This amendment holds that

the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

The limit placed on police power by the Fourth Amendment guarantees the right to privacy for American citizens and is the “bedrock of search and seizure law.”<sup>10</sup>

The laws and other legal guidance related to search and seizure and arrest procedures are constantly evolving. The changes highlight why police need refresher training in the practice of legal and ethical searches, seizures, and arrests. The tenet of professional expertise requires (1) that every officer understand the foundations underlying pertinent fundamental rights, (2) that he comprehend the laws and court decisions designed to protect those rights, and (3) that he be aware of changes to those laws and decisions that affect the execution of his duties in support of society. This understanding establishes only a foundation. Training has to help officers to build on this base by developing the communications skills and judgment that ready them to apply their knowledge in dealing with even the most unexpected of challenges on the streets.

*Primary Recommendation*

Develop training on use of force, search and seizure, and arrest procedures that meets current standards of excellence.

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<sup>10</sup>NOLO Law for All, 2002.

Educator Benjamin Bloom wrote that “learning content is not enough. Learning how to use that knowledge, compare and integrate it with other pieces of knowledge, and evaluate its usefulness is the individual’s responsibility.”<sup>11</sup> Such is the task of the LAPD Training Group. Observations regarding adult learning and police education as described in Chapter Three offer some ways in which its accomplishment can be more effectively approached. Chapter Four discussed in detail two critical components of the educational context for virtually all instruction regarding use of force, search and seizure, and arrest procedures: community policing and diversity awareness. The discussion that follows builds on these earlier commentaries by addressing how those observations apply specifically to the three areas of expertise under consideration here. We present, in turn, four elements fundamental to successful training and consider how each influences the development of professional expertise:

- Contextualize the learning.
- Integrate key topics throughout the curriculum.
- Build the scenario.
- Conduct a thorough debriefing.

Unsurprisingly, many of the characteristics of good training necessary to better prepare police instructors presented in our earlier chapters also pertain to the educating of their students. Similarly, these four elements will greatly enhance the development of student expertise during academy instruction, in-service classes, and when the students are themselves prospective instructors.

### **Contextualize the Learning**

Training and teaching that frame new information in the context of what is already known is called contextualization. Contextualization is a style of adult learning that seeks to tie new information to existing knowledge and real-life situations. It builds on students’ experience and education in connecting the existing understanding and

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<sup>11</sup>Evers, Rush, and Berdrow, 1998, p. 60.

new material. It recognizes that skills and knowledge are integrated in field application and therefore can be taught in a like manner.<sup>12</sup>

Contextualization is based on the premise that training should mimic real life or simulate “as closely as possible the actual environment in which the application of foundation skills occurs.”<sup>13</sup> That is, the officer is trained in the same way that he will do his job. Using a contextualized or integrated approach in training recruits prepares them for the realities of policing better than providing techniques without an understanding of how to mix them in the field. The LAPD recognizes the importance of contextualized scenario-based learning; its *Arrest and Control Instructor’s Manual*, for example, notes that, “when an officer becomes familiar with the common patterns of combative resistance and learns simple effective techniques in realistic scenarios based on these patterns, that officer’s experience and training are substantially enhanced.”<sup>14</sup>

*Supporting Recommendation*

Use contextualization to enhance realism in training and enrich learning processes.

The scenario training for the “Law Enforcement Tactical Application Course” (LETAC) provides an outstanding example of effective contextualized situational learning in continuing education. Our seven hours of observation of LETAC training at Elysian Park Police Academy in November and December 2002 found scenario training to be conducted in a problem-oriented fashion in which students attempt to appropriately deal with situations presented by their instructors. The scenario training was well structured and implemented. Scenarios incorporated diversity and special-needs issues. The instructors presented real-life, challenging situations; and each scenario was complemented by a thorough debriefing session. This method of teaching integrates new learning material into an officer’s

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<sup>12</sup>Penn State College of Education, 2003.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>14</sup>Dossey, 1997, p. 3.

existing knowledge and provides officers the opportunity to discuss information as they learn it.

One LETAC scenario dealt with a possible suicide in progress at a park. The officers in training were expected to approach this situation as if they had just received a radio call and arrived on the scene. To contribute to the realism of the situation, officers were given inert weapons and the scenario took place in a portion of the Elysian Park campus that resembled city park lands. After the officers and the suicidal subject (a role-playing officer) had resolved the scenario, another LETAC officer assisted in a debriefing to discuss what the officers did well and how they could improve. The lengthy and comprehensive debriefing session following each scenario reexamined ways that the officers could have communicated more effectively with the subject. This often led to a discussion of communication techniques. Most scenarios, like most police incidents, did not involve the use of force.

Officers participating in this training took the exercise very seriously and applied themselves in trying to resolve the situation. Students took advantage of the opportunity to reconsider their performance, including their integrated use of all police tactics. They recognized it would have been unnatural to isolate each topic and discuss it without acknowledging interrelationships. The student who gains a contextualized conception of how topics are related understands how he will be expected to use them in his job. Such training better prepares the officer to improvise and resolve any situation, both those practiced and others never previously experienced.

### **Integrate Key Topics Throughout the Curriculum**

Contextualizing knowledge for the learner is closely related to the idea of integrating topic areas, which “recognizes that skills and knowledge are integrated (used together) in real life and should be developed and practiced in an integrated manner.”<sup>15</sup>

Topic integration is strongly supported in the field of educational theory. The higher levels of learning—synthesis and evaluation—are

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<sup>15</sup>Penn State College of Education, 2003.

based on combining various knowledge, facts, skills, and logic to make unique personal judgments. Recruits must be transformed into police officers who can combine and synthesize information in making legal and ethical judgments. In-service students need to continually refine that ability.

*Supporting Recommendation*

Use contextualized learning techniques to integrate topic areas in training curriculum.

Effective officers use information in a fully integrated manner in the field. Training should reflect this by drawing connections among multiple subject areas and thereby enabling the student to better understand the challenges of an officer's job. The officer should be trained to understand the relationships among the subject matter covered and the techniques that he will be using.

It is of little value to artificially separate subject areas. An officer will rarely find himself in a situation in which he has to make an arrest without also having to search the subject and contemplate the possibility of appropriate use of force. Problem-based and contextualized learning communicates information in an integrated fashion so that it can be better recalled and applied in an integrated fashion. Arrest, search, and use of force have unique tactical characteristics that in the context of professional service are best viewed as three parts of a whole.

As was alluded to earlier, there are some basic skills such as how to conduct pat-down searches, apply handcuffs, or fire a Taser that might be first taught independently and later integrated into more-comprehensive scenarios. Yet even in these instances, the new skill must be set in the context of other techniques, the laws and policies that govern their use, and relevant community policing and diversity issues. Even basic techniques for handcuffing an individual can differ, as might be the case for a subject under the influence of drugs or alcohol, wearing an arm cast, or one confined to a wheelchair.

Another example illustrating the importance of integrated training is that of an officer stopping an individual whom he suspects has con-

traband. The officer has to determine whether he has probable cause to make the stop. He then determines whether a search is warranted and, if so, the most effective technique for conducting that activity. While looking for contraband, he bears in mind the many safety standards to which he should conform for his safety and that of the subject and others in the vicinity. The officer has to remain aware and be prepared for use of force anytime during his arrest or search.

The LAPD has been creative in building learning domain instruction that connects disparate subject matter through ad hoc “surprise” scenarios. Such creative techniques can both reinforce skills integration and assist students in attaining readiness for any challenge with which the street might confront them.

An understanding of professionalism and its responsibilities points to five elements that, if incorporated throughout LAPD training, would move the Department well along the path toward meeting the dictates of the consent decree’s paragraph 133. These overtly include elements of professionalism in training, considering the consequences of officer actions, contemplating lessons learned, maintaining student awareness of diversity and special-needs issues, and exercising community policing and problem-solving skills. Except for the last elements, the discussion below considers how each of these is currently integrated in the LAPD training curriculum and how it might be better integrated. Please refer to Chapter Four for the full discussion about community policing.

**Professionalism.** A good example of topic integration in recruit training curriculum is LD 31, “Custody.”<sup>16</sup> It includes many of the primary issues that should be integrated into all training curricula, to include the tenets of professionalism. It makes clear the consequences when an officer neglects his responsibilities and incorporates diversity awareness issues so important to properly serving the public. Notably, it also integrates valuable insights drawn from lessons learned from the field.

One of the goals of the custody LD is to teach recruits their responsibilities when they take a citizen into custody. A section of the LD

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<sup>16</sup>LAPD, Training Division, 2001a.

covering “Violation of a Prisoner’s Civil Rights” teaches that “peace officers represent and symbolize the law. They have a special legal and professional responsibility to ensure that the civil rights of all citizens, including prisoners, are protected.”<sup>17</sup>

Instruction provides specific examples to complement the general guidance. An officer learns that denying an inmate a phone call, neglecting to address a medical concern, and discriminating against the inmate are civil rights violations. The LD also emphasizes the officer’s professional responsibility to protect the inmate from harm. This is an exemplary application of integrating the tenets of professionalism in training material. The officer is taught not only that his tactical skills, in this case how to take a citizen into custody, are a function of physical ability and protection of a suspect’s rights, but also that their proper use is a professional obligation.

**Consequences of Actions.** The custody LD explicitly identifies the consequences of neglecting custody duties to reinforce the obligations of the student’s status as a professional. Too many other LDs are vague or entirely neglect to discuss the consequences of extra-legal behavior. LD 16, “Search and Seizure,” does not review the ramifications of an illegal search or seizure, for example.<sup>18</sup> LD 15, “Laws of Arrest,” makes only general reference to the “potential civil liability/administrative discipline against the officer” engaging in civil rights violations.<sup>19</sup> LD 31, in favorable contrast, explicitly lists the penal codes that apply to officers who violate individuals’ civil rights and specifically lists the legal and Departmental ramifications of such actions.

Communicating the consequences of intolerable conduct reinforces the importance that the Department places on appropriate and professional behavior. It clarifies the expectation that the officer will perform in-line with Department policy and the core values of the Department, serving citizens with the “highest ethical standards to maintain public confidence.”<sup>20</sup> When such consequences are not

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>18</sup>LAPD, Training Division, 2001c.

<sup>19</sup>LAPD, Training Division, 2001b, p. 17.

<sup>20</sup>From LAPD, 2003b.

presented or accountability is unclear, perceptions of risk can be greatly skewed, leading to abnormal or excessive risk-taking, exaggeration of potential gains versus potential losses, and other critical decisionmaking errors. Ideally, training should focus not only on the specific legal consequences of violating policies, laws, and civil rights, but also on the professional reasons for not doing so in the first place.

**Lessons Learned.** As discussed at length in Chapter Three, lessons learned can be an important tool in developing training that replicates field conditions, providing officers with insight into the realities of policing and helping them prepare for whatever challenges the future might hold. LD 31 does well in incorporating lessons learned from the field into classroom learning material by describing common errors frequently seen when police take subjects into custody. A similar use of examples from actual events takes place in LD 21, “Patrol Techniques.”

*Supporting Recommendation*

Use lessons learned to create realistic scenarios for classroom training.

Unfortunately the use of lessons learned in a negative context is the norm, as is the case in presenting “Common Errors” or “Ten Fatal Errors” during class sessions. Negative lessons undoubtedly have a place in the classroom for demonstrative purposes, but successful problem resolutions and other positive examples should also be used. Successes can be harder to identify because they typically involve the absence of notable events. Doing so is one of the objectives sought in establishing a formal lessons-learned structure within the LAPD.<sup>21</sup>

**Diversity Awareness and Special-Needs Populations.** Because of the diversity of Los Angeles, the LAPD officer needs to practice his skills under varied training conditions. Scenarios need to be realistic, seeking to confront students with situations at least as difficult as

<sup>21</sup>William Geller, expert panel proceedings, one-day workshop, Santa Monica, Calif., October 14, 2002.

those they will experience during field duty. Exercises should not shy away from recognizing potential shortcomings in students. As one analyst notes, “there is no reason to believe that prejudice is any rarer among police than among the general population.”<sup>22</sup> Good training accepts such challenges and seeks to meet them head on. Well conducted, it might assist officers in defusing their hostilities and overcoming prejudices. Quality training sends a strong message that under no circumstances will officers be permitted to “act out their prejudices through violent, or even discourteous, conduct.”<sup>23</sup> Incorporating diversity awareness issues in all aspects of recruit and in-service training provides a constant reminder of the public-service responsibilities inherent in every aspect of police work. Integrating such elements throughout LAPD curricula clearly communicates a Department commitment to just and legal treatment of all persons.

LD 31 is also a model for incorporating issues regarding diversity awareness and special-needs populations. It specifically calls for upholding the civil rights of each individual regardless of special characteristics such as race or ethnicity. It also has a section on “Prisoner Classification” that draws attention to particularities of the individual inmate, including the special needs of juveniles; alcoholics; drug users; inmates who are emotionally ill, mentally retarded, or otherwise handicapped; and sex offenders.

Officers need to understand that every public interaction is a unique event. For example, an officer trying to search a subject who is an alcoholic should be aware that this person is prone to severe tremors, disorientation, and possible convulsions.<sup>24</sup> The alcoholic may be less responsive than other individuals, or he may need physical support to stabilize himself while the officer conducts a search. Nearly half of U.S. traffic stops in which use of force was eventually used involved persons under the influence of alcohol or drugs.<sup>25</sup> Knowing how to determine that a subject is possibly experiencing problems due to alcohol withdrawal or drug use enables an officer to make better decisions about how to interact with the individual. For the offi-

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<sup>22</sup>Geller and Toch, 1996, Chapter 8, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>LAPD, Training Division, 2001a, p. 17.

<sup>25</sup>International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2001, p. iv.

cer to best serve each citizen, he must be aware of such conditions so as to tailor his approach to ensure a mutually beneficial and safe outcome.

*Supporting Recommendation*

Complement recruit learning domains with specific communication techniques for diverse and special-needs populations.

Another positive aspect of LD 31 is its inclusion of a list of potential “prisoner classifications” that the officer might have to manage. The LD provides possible symptoms to look for among substance abusers, identifies persons who might be prone to assault by other inmates, and discusses populations that could pose a security risk. While increasing the awareness of the officer to such issues is important, it is equally important to give him strategies for communicating with diverse and special-needs populations. The LAPD needs further integration of communication techniques throughout its training curriculum. Use of lessons learned can be particularly helpful in developing effective instruction in support of such integration.

There is an immediate need for increasing the integration of demographic diversity considerations in LAPD training. Forty-one percent of city residents are foreign born; 58 percent speak a language other than English at home.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, LAPD training does not include instruction on communication when there is a language barrier between an officer and a civilian. Recruit training LD 15 on “Laws of Arrest” clearly states that the officer must administer Miranda warnings to a subject prior to taking him into custody. However, it does not provide protocol for situations when the individual speaks a language that is foreign to the officer, even though the LD recognizes one of the “elements of Miranda” is that the subject understands the warnings given by the officer. Such failures to provide adequate training for communication across language barriers can make arrest and use-of-force situations far more difficult to negotiate. Physical tactical procedures are thoroughly explained in LD 15 and in LD 20

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<sup>26</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, 2003.

on “Use of Deadly Force,” but there is no attention given to language barriers or demanding field situations. Police resources such as bilingual positions and the language bank available through the communications division should be clearly referenced in the curriculum.

*Supporting Recommendation*

Develop training on tactical communication in proportion to the frequency that it is used in the field.

An officer should be trained to understand how his personal state of being can influence his perspectives and performance of duty. A police officer’s emotional and physiological states are likely far different when arresting a compliant individual than when apprehending an individual after a lengthy foot pursuit or high-speed vehicle chase. Training should provide guidance on when an officer ought to remove himself from the situation at hand and ask for assistance from others because of his own state of mind. It should similarly develop skills regarding how not to take interactions personally and how an officer can best control his emotions. Finally, effective instruction will recognize that police officers are part of a team. It therefore should cover a partner’s responsibilities regarding minimizing the risk of excessive use of force by his fellow officer.

Elements of LD 3 on “Tactical Communications” should be integrated throughout the LAPD training curriculum to underscore the importance of tactical communication skills. The ultimate result should be that every officer’s communication skills match if not exceed his physical skills mastery.

**Build the Scenario**

How are contextualized learning and integration of topics best applied in police training? Scenarios help align a curriculum with the main tenets of adult learning: learning by doing, reflecting real life, and making the learning interactive and self-directed.

Scenario training offers the dual benefits of grounding instruction in the known while introducing the new, thereby allowing the student to synthesize information and function at his highest level of learning. Scenarios by their very nature require integration of topics. Traditional classroom instruction, by contrast, often deals with topics discretely, does not require hands-on practice, and thereby leaves information abstract and compartmentalized in the mind of the student.

The process of learning how to drive a car illustrates how learning works and how topics learned discretely must eventually be integrated. A student wishing to obtain a driver's license must pass a written exam demonstrating his knowledge of traffic laws, that he understands the meaning of braking distances, and that he knows how to adjust for various weather conditions. It is not enough to read a car manual and its explanations of how the windshield wipers, turn signals, brakes, and steering wheel work. The student must practice by actually driving the vehicle under controlled yet realistic situations. Without such practice, the student cannot learn to anticipate the variety of situations that he might encounter on the streets. We would never accept that someone learned to drive adequately simply by reading a book. Use of contextualized learning and scenarios is supported by 30 years of educational research. Learning that is retained is that which engages, challenges, and involves the student.<sup>27</sup>

The Los Angeles Police Department has been working to integrate scenarios in more of its training courses. Newly developed Continuing Education Delivery Program modules are based almost entirely on scenarios. In-service courses such as LETAC and ARCON also incorporate them. The recruit academy is similarly increasing their use. These trends are positive ones in light of adult education best practices. Yet it should be noted that scenario use does not in itself lead to success in training. Scenarios are tools for replicating real-life situations. Only a few such situations can be covered in any curriculum. Instructors and curriculum designers should incorporate unexpected elements in their scenarios in recognition of this limitation

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<sup>27</sup>Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon, 1995, p. 380.

to better prepare officers for the never-before-seen as well as specific events addressed during training.

**Key Communication Elements to Include in the Scenario.** The LAPD Continuing Education Delivery Program establishes a good initial foundation for further development of scenarios in support of Department training. There is room for improvement, however, particularly in adopting adult education principles for an integrated approach in recruit training. The variables discussed in Appendix K include those that should be considered when building training scenarios. The appendix does not provide an exhaustive list, but it does cover many of the issues that need to be considered in police training. The focus is an area requiring improvement for the Department: tactical communications.

Tactical communications are at the center of all police interactions with the public and are particularly critical for officers seeking compliance or cooperation from a subject. It has already been repeatedly noted that tactical communications therefore need to be considered in training for any police activity. Tactical communications as currently taught are too limited in scope and poorly integrated with other instruction. Explanations regarding the character of effective communications and how to employ them in the field too often border on the superficial. Whether a police officer is giving driving directions to a tourist, responding to a medical emergency, pulling over a speeding vehicle, or taking a violent felon into custody, he will need tactical communication skills if the outcome is to be positive. Public and officer safety are jeopardized by poor communications. An unarmed officer possessing well-honed communication skills would in many cases be a more potent law-enforcement implement than an officer with poor communication skills but expert in the use of weapons. The ideal combination, and the legitimate objective of Department training, is a balance between these two extremes: officers who are both skillful communicators and proficient in the use of physical assets.

Two premises should be reiterated at this point:

- *Equitable treatment does not necessitate identical treatment.* While everyone should be treated fairly and granted all the civil protections due them, communications can and should vary as

necessary. A police officer must be able to alter his communication approach to suit circumstances. For example, in the interest of equal treatment, speaking to a deaf person who is unable to read lips would be ludicrous.

- *Small changes in communication methods can cause significant changes in the outcome of any interaction.* Knowing what changes to make in given circumstances is an essential ingredient in developing good tactical communication skills.

**The Communication Continuum.** Communications between police and the public do not take place in a vacuum. Training must therefore not treat them as if they do. Even a one-on-one interaction can have witnesses, either among bystanders or those who later see the interaction on videotape or hear about it from others.

Police officers serve in an environment with a communication continuum. Along this continuum are communications that are characterized as follows:

- *Primary:* between the officer and an individual or small group and those in the immediate vicinity who witness the interaction.
- *Secondary:* between the officer and those who witness an interaction from a more distant perspective such as across a street or through a window. If some component of the primary communication is missing—for example, if only part of the communication is witnessed or not all of the words exchanged are heard—then it is secondary.
- *Tertiary:* officer communication mediated by a newspaper, a televised report, or as recalled by a bystander.

Police officers should recognize that their tactical communications extend beyond their primary focus into secondary or tertiary realms. Moreover, secondary or tertiary factors can influence the primary communication, as when hostile bystanders affect the behavior of a subject being interviewed by an officer.

**The Variables in Persuasive Communications.** Effective communications are tailored to the circumstances at hand. This is especially true of persuasive communications. Voluntary compliance is the result of successful persuasive communication. The literature of social

psychology recognizes a number of variables that contribute to the outcomes of persuasion efforts. Ignoring or inadequately addressing these variables will thwart any effort to obtain voluntary compliance. Conversely, the best persuaders employ these variables skillfully and are rewarded for their efforts.

A listing and discussion of some fundamental persuasive communication variables that are important to police tactical communications appear in Appendix K. These are drawn from the seminal texts and reports on persuasive communications. They are grouped into four categories for ease of use:

- the *source* of the persuasion attempt
- the *subjects* of the persuasion attempt
- the *environment* in which the persuasion is attempted
- the *format* of the persuasive message.

Although the appendix is not exhaustive, it covers most of those variables found in the literature of social and cognitive psychology to contribute greatly to the outcome of persuasive communication attempts. The variables should be treated as a foundation for communications used during interpersonal interactions and subjected to evaluation during scenario-based exercises. Relevant questions might include the following:

- Which variables are most—and least—important to the police officer in such cases? For example, which few are most important for a recruit to remember in seeking voluntary compliance?
- What other circumstances (e.g., time of day, weather, condition of subject, and number of officers) can influence the use or effectiveness of a variable?
- How does the value of variables change? For example, is it correct to assume that if the individual is intoxicated the officer can forget about speech pattern as an indicator of attitude?
- What variables can the officer control (e.g., the amount of time given to a subject to consider a command) and how should he control these? How should an officer react to variables he cannot control (e.g., language barriers)?

## Conduct a Thorough Debriefing

Scenario training should be accompanied by thorough debriefings. Debriefings often receive short shrift in the training process, but they are critical to solidifying learning. Assistant Chief George Gascón notes that “because scenario training can be open-ended and less controlled than lecture, it is essential to bring things together at the end.”<sup>28</sup>

We observed inconsistencies in LAPD training debriefings; several instructors appeared to have difficulties guiding and concluding them. Instructors need to practice breaking down what the recruit is learning using a structured, detailed, and consistent format—a debriefing that consistently follows the same format and reviews similar key elements of instruction (e.g., What were the subjects’ demographic and psychological descriptors? What was the background noise like during the event? How many bystanders were there and how might they be characterized?). Creating standardized debriefings will provide a critical benefit to training. Effectively conducted, they should improve student performance. A student who knows what he or she will be debriefed on will pay more attention to those details during the interaction, thereby improving both performance and recall of salient details.<sup>29</sup>

Debriefings should be constructed at the same time and in the same way that a scenario is built. This simultaneity allows the curriculum developer to identify the learning points that he wants to cover, incorporate them in the scenario, and ensure they are reinforced during the debriefing session.

Debriefings in the field should follow the same format as those in training, thereby increasing the transfer of knowledge from classroom to field and back again. Conducting debriefings in a structured, consistent fashion will allow the LAPD to assess why and how communications techniques succeed or fail in the field. Without this kind of analysis, assessments are based on little more than opinion and hindsight.

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<sup>28</sup>LAPD, 2001.

<sup>29</sup>Iyengar and Kinder, 1987.

The goal of scenarios is to practice decisionmaking and other skills as officers would use them in the field. Instruction can be ineffective or even detrimental if a session is not closed with a structured discussion about the relative merits of different actions (including actions that are illegal or unethical). An instructor has a duty to facilitate an active discussion among students and to clarify points as necessary.

## CONCLUSION AND SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

We have suggested a process that can serve as a guide for building a curriculum that promotes successful Department training to meet the demands of establishing and maintaining police expertise. It consists of the following four elements:

- *Contextualize* training materials to give the officers a real-life understanding of what they are learning.
- *Integrate* key topic areas to demonstrate how they are related and how they will be used in policing.
- *Incorporate* scenarios based on lessons learned from the field throughout all Department curricula.
- Conduct *thorough and comprehensive debriefings* to provide immediate feedback on student performance and reinforce primary teaching objectives.

The goal of police training is not to provide officers with checklists of options or to exhaust the list of possible situations that they might confront by covering every possible event during instruction. Rather, it is to develop professional police officers who understand and accept the tenets of corporateness, responsibility, and expertise and their implications for behavior and performance. Such a professional must be prepared to handle unexpected contingencies. The goal of LAPD training should be to provide its officers with the expertise to take on any contingency confidently and to maximize the chances of his resolving it successfully.

In the following example of a recruit training curriculum, we apply the recommendations from the preceding pages. The objective is to provide a demonstrative example for how the Department can revise

many of its existing courses and how it might approach the design of future course offerings.

Several of the training recommendations introduced to this point that play a role in the following discussion include

- use adult learning techniques (interactive, reality-based) in curriculum development
- use problem-based learning where possible to increase retention (and to develop officer problem-solving skills)
- integrate the Department philosophy of community policing throughout curriculum
- integrate diversity awareness elements throughout curriculum
- root new material in previously learned material
- teach topics in an integrated fashion
- use scenarios for applied learning
  - emphasize verbal communications techniques in scenarios
  - add lessons learned in the field into scenarios
- make scenario debriefing a critical element of the class.

The recruit course “Use of Deadly Force” (LD 20) offers an excellent opportunity to demonstrate how the LAPD could employ the above recommendations in enhancing its Department-wide training.

The class is currently designed as a lecture. As discussed in Chapter Three, lectures are generally not the most effective teaching format for adult learners. “Use of Deadly Force” should instead be taught utilizing adult learning techniques such as problem-based learning that actively involve students. Recruits should be required to participate in and actually structure their own learning in order to increase mastery of the material. The class should be redesigned using a problem-based format, meaning that the topic is described through problems on which students work together to find solutions. This causes students to seek and uncover information relevant to the topic in the process of solving the problem. Such a challenge might involve a confrontation on skid row involving two homeless mentally ill people and a third person who is particularly prone to violent be-

havior. The problem should be carefully written to prompt questions and leave various courses of action open. Students would work in teams to determine the technical and communication skills they might use and identify pertinent legal and ethical issues.

Presentation of problems and scenarios is only one way an instructor might choose to teach this course. There are other techniques available for better involving students in their learning. At a minimum, the instructor should foster an open class environment in which students are free to ask for clarification or to debate issues presented. A course can incorporate active learning methods ranging from simple polling (asking students to apply their experiences or offer alternative approaches to resolving a situation), to having one speaker call on another, to more elaborate knowledge-sharing activities such as a true-false game. In the last, each student is given a card with a statement on it such as "Officer use of lethal force is justified to stop a vehicle driven at excessive speeds toward a public demonstration." The students' shared mission is to determine which statements are true and which are false, using any feasible method they desire (e.g., asking each other or looking in a resource manual). Students find the answers and solutions for themselves, learning how to use various resources that would also be of value in finding solutions to other problems in the future.

Once desired teaching methods for a course are chosen, the next step is identification of pertinent learning elements. As discussed throughout this book, an officer's professional responsibility is to serve society. Any instruction regarding the application of lethal force should therefore include community policing and cultural diversity considerations. Integrating community policing theories and cultural diversity awareness strategies throughout the deadly force curriculum is a first step toward assisting the officer in his understanding of how the three areas of use of force, community policing, and diversity awareness are inseparable during operations in the field. Instruction should incorporate other skills and knowledge likely to be called on in use-of-force scenarios, e.g., search-and-seizure procedures and arrest drills.

Certain elements will take precedence and require greater emphasis during training sessions. For LAPD officers, cultural issues are potentially a factor of significance in virtually every officer-citizen in-

teraction. Since Los Angeles society is particularly diverse, cultural issues should be integrated throughout all relevant parts of the LAPD training curriculum. It is the responsibility of the LAPD to prepare officers to account for these differences effectively during their daily interactions with the public. Among the cultural skills and information that an instructor might include in his interactive training are

- the influence of perceptions, cultures, and prejudices on behavior
- identification of public and private agencies that provide assistance to members of the community, such as immigrants
- ways to reduce citizen complaints, lawsuits, agency-customer friction, negative media, and liability through an understanding of how situations can be perceived differently
- officer safety skills
- conflict-resolution techniques.

With community policing and diversity awareness as underpinnings for instruction, additional material can be added in a contextualized and integrated manner. Such new information is introduced in the context of existing knowledge. Use of deadly force would be incorporated into the students' knowledge base regarding other force options. That is, the instruction should be taught in the context of previously learned material and, as appropriate, prior experience. (The latter would be particularly relevant during in-service training involving long-service officers or in FTO-recruit joint training sessions.) This serves the purpose of anchoring the new learning in topics with which the student is already comfortable, thereby immediately providing context and assisting understanding. It also reminds the officer of the spectrum of tools he has available and reinforces the importance of considering all options when deciding what level of force to apply. Providing context during Department instruction improves retention and helps to prevent officers from relying on only the most recently learned techniques, regardless of their applicability. Such training not only develops expertise in applying specific skills but additionally hones communications abilities and sharpens officer judgment.

The issues inherent in use of deadly force include virtually every topic in the recruit curriculum. Connections and relationships need to be explored in the classroom and during practical exercises in the field. For instance, vehicle pull-overs, search and seizure, arrest, custody, and instruction involving persons with disabilities and special-needs populations all have ties to the topic of deadly force. An officer should be aware of the potential for a “routine” contact to escalate to a situation in which force is required in every encounter that he has with a member of the public. It is a lesson that officers need to learn early: The need for force could arise in a split second when conducting a traffic stop, taking a person into custody, or communicating with a mentally ill member of society. Integrating these and other relevant issues during training replicates the conditions the officer will confront in the field.

Developing and perfecting communication skills must likewise be a part of any deadly force instruction. LD 20 could be dramatically improved by incorporating instruction involving specific communication techniques instead of addressing them separately as is done currently in LD 3, an entirely different course. Communication skills should be fully integrated throughout LD 20 and other pertinent curricula. The force continuum cannot be taught effectively without incorporating verbal communication instruction. The concepts involved in applications of force and decisionmaking must be taught holistically. Officers need to learn how, when, and with what type of person certain communication techniques are more effective than others. This is particularly important when deadly force might be applied. A person who does not understand English or a person with a mental illness might inadvertently send aggressive signals to the officer. The officer needs to be adept at selecting from and effectively applying various modes of communication, verbal and nonverbal, under conditions of extreme stress. Partners need to know how to best assist those with whom they work to protect both fellow officers and members of the public. So taught, law enforcement personnel will gain a better understanding of how to resolve situations with the minimal force necessary.

Scenarios and other teaching tools can be designed once the curriculum content is established. Scenario training portrays the realities of policing much more closely and comprehensively than does use of the traditional lecture format. Problem-solving abilities developed

through well-designed problem-based scenario training better prepare the officer for the unexpected. No number of training scenarios can cover every eventuality an officer might confront in the field. The more realistic the training and the better the understanding that the officer holds of the nature of his job, however, the more prepared he is to improvise in the inevitable unanticipated situation.

Scenarios can also enhance training approaches other than those specifically designed as “scenario based.” Regardless of use, scenarios and accompanying debriefings have to be carefully constructed. They must be as realistic as possible if they are to best stimulate active student participation. When feasible, they should incorporate lessons learned taken from observations in the field. Scenarios help prepare students for the inherent complexity of police work. Department philosophies such as community policing can be integrated with diversity and special-needs issues. Information previously learned appears together with new information to expand understanding of both. The well-conceived scenario also allows officers to practice verbal communication skills as they attempt to deescalate and peacefully resolve combatant situations. Scenarios also provide officers an opportunity to practice their technical skills and consider alternatives during debriefing sessions.

The critical partner to the scenario—the debriefing—allows students to deconstruct what transpired so that they learn from their own and others’ mistakes and successes. A skillful debriefing makes scenario training a more useful instruction tool. The instructor must be prepared to discuss both areas needing improvement and those in which demonstrated performance should be sustained. Each debriefing should reference the learning elements used to build the curriculum. In most adult and active learning techniques, the instructor takes on more of the role of facilitator than of expert. This is only in part true during the conduct of debriefings. The instructor facilitates the debriefing discussion and may use open-ended, non-judgmental techniques to generate discussion. In a facilitated meeting, the group usually arrives at an answer together, one that is subjective and right for that group on that day. However, in the classroom an instructor does not leave the solution solely to the students. There are still right and wrong answers. The instructor makes sure that the class addresses critical learning points, clears up any

misunderstandings, and ensures that students come up with a solution that is legal, ethical, moral, and suitable for LAPD officers.

The objective of such instruction is expert police officers—expert in technical skills applications, in communicating effectively with the public verbally and otherwise, and in making correct decisions under pressure. It is a police force in which partners know their role in best serving the interests of colleagues and the public via supporting fellow officers or intervening when a situation pushes emotions to the extreme. The objective is an expertise that by its very nature incorporates the police professional's sense of responsibility to the public and his understanding of duties to police himself as well as society.