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## CHAPTER 2

# The Learning Process

## INTRODUCTION

The minimum length of the Police Training Program (PTP) is 15 consecutive weeks, which includes one week of integration, 12 weeks of training (four 3-week phases), and two weeks of evaluation.

Agencies may wish to change the length of the program to suit local needs. Before entering the PTP, trainees will need instruction in Community-Oriented Policing and Problem-Solving (COPPS) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL). This instruction may take place in the academy or in the agency prior to training.

## THE LEARNING MATRIX

In the PTP, the four substantive topics (e.g., Non-Emergency Incident Response), the 15 core competencies, and the learning activities are brought together to form a learning matrix (see [Table 2.1](#), The Learning Matrix Grid).

There may be some tendency to view the Learning Matrix Grid as a chart for checking off training accomplishments, but this is not the intention of the matrix. Instead, it serves as a guideline for learners and trainers during the training period. The matrix helps determine what trainees have learned, what they need to learn, and what process the PTO will use to evaluate the trainee.

Departmental policies and procedures, laws, and neighborhood problems change periodically. Therefore, this matrix cannot provide specific, detailed procedures for every possible police situation. Not surprisingly, policies and procedures from different agencies may vary considerably. As a result, the program provides flexibility to accommodate local needs.

### *Substantive Topics*

The most common police activities include the investigation of domestic violence and other crimes, patrol procedures, responding to critical incidents, and enforcing local policies and laws. In this manual, each of these topic areas is encapsulated into four Substantive Topics which identify each phase:

- Phase A: Non-Emergency Incident Response
- Phase B: Emergency Incident Response
- Phase C: Patrol Activities
- Phase D: Criminal Investigation

These substantive topics are broad enough to incorporate any new concerns that a community may encounter. In the learning matrix, agencies can elect to include areas of instruction that are unique to their jurisdiction or other policing issues that may arise in the future.

### ***Core Competencies***

Core Competencies represent the skills/activities that officers commonly use/engage in during the daily performance of their duties.

- Police Vehicle Operations
- Conflict Resolution
- Use of Force
- Local Procedures, Policies, and Ordinances
- Report Writing
- Leadership
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Community-Specific Problems
- Cultural Diversity and Special Needs Groups
- Legal Authority
- Individual Rights
- Officer Safety
- Communication Skills
- Ethics
- Lifestyle Stressors/Self Awareness/Self Regulation

### ***Focus Activities***

Each Substantive Topic phase in the learning matrix may also contain a *Focus Activities* portion. When building a learning matrix, individual agencies may identify high frequency activities that they conduct for each substantive topic. For example, in the Non-Emergency Response phase (Phase A) some activities may include responding to residential alarm calls, in-custody citizen arrests, not-in-progress property crimes, etc. Activities that are identified should not be individual tasks, such as responding to a burglary report. The activity should encompass the holistic approach of responding to property crimes.

### ***Performance Outcomes***

Performance Outcomes have been established for each cell of the learning matrix. They are designed using three levels of performance: knowledge, application, and evaluation. Performance outcomes are used as goals for the trainee to achieve while training in each substantive topic. Performance outcomes will also serve as a guideline for Police Training Evaluators (PTEs) to evaluate the trainee during the mid-term and final evaluation periods.

### ***Resource Materials***

Resource Materials will be established for each cell of the learning matrix. This material may include: criminal and civil law, policy, organizational SOP's, philosophy, mission and values statements, training bulletins, and any other materials which may be of value in assisting the trainee in meeting the Performance Outcomes.

Table 2.1

## THE LEARNING MATRIX GRID

		PHASE A	PHASE B	PHASE C	PHASE D
CORE COMPETENCY		Non-Emergency Incident Response	Emergency Incident Response	Patrol Activities	Criminal Investigations
PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES	1. Police Vehicle Operations	A1	B1	C1	D1
	2. Conflict Resolution	A2	B2	C2	D2
	3. Use of Force	A3	B3	C3	D3
	4. Local Procedures, Policies, Laws, Philosophies	A4	B4	C4	D4
	5. Report Writing	A5	B5	C5	D5
	6. Leadership	A6	B6	C6	D6
	7. Problem-Solving Skills	A7	B7	C7	D7
	8. Community-Specific Problems	A8	B8	C8	D8
	9. Cultural Diversity and Special Needs Groups	A9	B9	C9	D9
	10. Legal Authority	A10	B10	C10	D10
	11. Individual Rights	A11	B11	C11	D11
	12. Officer Safety	A12	B12	C12	D12
	13. Communication Skills	A13	B13	C13	D13
	14. Ethics	A14	B14	C14	D14
	15. Lifestyle Stressors / Self-Awareness / Self-Regulation	A15	B15	C15	D15
LEARNING ACTIVITIES <i>(Click on activity for additional information)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Learning Matrix</li> <li>· Trainee Journaling</li> <li>· PTO Training Progress Notes</li> <li>· Focus Activities*</li> <li>· Implement Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise (NPE)*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Learning Matrix</li> <li>· Trainee Journaling</li> <li>· PTO Training Progress Notes</li> <li>· Focus Activities*</li> <li>· Continue NPE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Learning Matrix</li> <li>· Trainee Journaling</li> <li>· PTO Training Progress Notes</li> <li>· Focus Activities*</li> <li>· Continue NPE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Learning Matrix</li> <li>· Trainee Journaling</li> <li>· PTO Training Progress Notes</li> <li>· Focus Activities*</li> <li>· Continue NPE</li> </ul>	
EVALUATION ACTIVITIES <i>(Click on activity for additional information**)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Problem-Based Learning Exercises (PBL #1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· PBLE #2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· PBLE #3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· PBLE #4</li> </ul>	

\*The Focus Activities for each phase and the Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise (NPE) are to be determined by the Agency.

\*\* NOTE: See [Volume 2, Training Workbook](#), for specific Core Competencies (1 –15), Problem-Based Learning Exercises (PBLEs), and Performance Outcomes.

### *Applying the Learning Matrix*

Each cell of the Learning Matrix Grid ([Table 2.1](#)) contains a number of required skills, police procedures, responsibilities, and Performance Outcomes. As previously noted each department that uses this training manual must review each cell and add its own local procedures, policies, laws, etc.

During the course of training, the trainee and the PTO will maintain Journaling/Training Progress Notes on their activities while handling calls for service. Trainees will refer to the cells throughout the training program to ensure they are learning the appropriate skills and achieving the outcomes required. During the mid-term and final phase evaluations, the PTEs will evaluate trainees using the learning matrix outcomes relevant to trainee progression in the program.

The matrix serves to demonstrate interrelationships between Core Competencies and daily police activities. Recognizing how Core competencies apply to daily activities is the foundation for teaching police officers to think more holistically.

### **PROGRAM PHASES**

- *Integration/Orientation Period*
- **Phase A:** Non Emergency Incident Response
- **Phase B:** Emergency Incident Response
- *Mid-Term Evaluation*
- **Phase C:** Patrol Activities
- **Phase D:** Criminal Investigations
- *Final Evaluation*

The training steps of the PTP are detailed below, including options for trainee orientation before the program begins (the one-week Integration period that acclimates the trainee to the agency) and the four training phases. The other two weeks of the program — mid-term and final evaluations — are outlined in the subsequent section on the Coaching and Evaluation Process.

▶ ***Trainee and PTO Assignments*** – The program recommends the trainee remain with their first PTO from Integration to the completion of Phase B. Following the successful completion of the mid-term evaluation, the trainee would be assigned to a second PTO for the remainder of the program. If the trainee does not successfully complete the mid-term evaluation, the Board of Evaluators (BOE) will determine the appropriate course of action.

▶ ***Shift Orientation and Area Assignments –Any shift.***

### **INTEGRATION/ORIENTATION PERIOD**

Following the successful completion of police academy training, the trainee will enter the Police Training Program. Before starting the program, the trainee needs to understand its steps and philosophies. The duration and location of the orientation to the PTP's steps and philosophies depend on each organization's needs. The trainee does not receive an evaluation during the integration/orientation period. This is the time for the trainee to acclimate to a

new environment while under the PTO's supervision. The following format may help guide organizations in developing an integration/orientation period into the PTP.

### 1. *Orientation*

The Police Training Program (PTP) includes a period of adjustment for the trainee before phased training begins. This orientation period lasts a minimum of one week and is designed to prepare the trainee to:

- Report for duty
- Acquire necessary equipment
- Become familiar with the organization
- Begin developing relationships within the organization
- Reinforce the PTO PBL learning processes including evaluations

### 2. *Introduce Trainees to the PTP*

This introduction should provide the trainee with a clear understanding of the learning process, problem-based learning, training phases, and evaluation processes.

### 3. *Introduce Learning Activity Packages (LAPs).*

LAPs help trainees who are struggling with a particular area of training. LAPs can be used to introduce trainees to specialized areas, to supplement learning, or remedy problems. The following are examples of subjects that agencies can incorporate into LAPs (see sample LAP examples in [Appendix G](#)):

- The agency's organizational structure and history
- Domestic violence policies
- Leadership, ethics, and emotional intelligence qualities
- The judicial process
- Community orientation
- Interpersonal communication

### 4. *Introduce Agency-Specific Components*

Academy experiences vary greatly across the state. Agencies may discover there is a need to provide agency-specific training to trainees following the academy. Examples of this type of agency-specific training include: computer literacy, specialized range and firearms training, less lethal weapons training, impact weapons, defensive tactics, and policies and procedures. These learning areas should be identified by the organization as *specific and necessary training* for the trainee before integration into the PTP experience.

## PHASED TRAINING OPTIONS

The training program includes four phases of instruction. Each phase corresponds to a substantive topic area. The phases of training allow both trainee and trainer to spend time working on Core Competencies associated with particular substantive topics.

If a topic arises from one phase during the instruction of another (for example, a criminal investigation arises during the Non-Emergency Response phase), the PTO has **three training options**:

1. The PTO can simply introduce the criminal investigation topic and have the trainee document the main issues.
2. The trainee can return to review the incident later during the appropriate phase in the training.
3. A phase may be changed when an event is rare and provides an exceptional training opportunity. This should occur *after* discussion with Supervisors.

The sections of the learning matrix corresponding to each phase of training are included below, as well as descriptions of Performance Outcomes that apply to each cell in the matrix. Both trainers and agencies should incorporate any additional procedures, regulations, or skills as needed during the building of their agency's matrix.

Each phase contains an assigned problem-based learning exercise. [Volume 2, Training Workbook](#) contains evaluation forms for the Problem-Based Learning Exercises.

**PHASE A Non-Emergency Incident Response** (*Substantive Topic*)  
Initial training and learning experience for the trainee.  
*Duration: 3 weeks*

**PHASE B Emergency Incident Response** (*Substantive Topic*)  
Second training and learning experience for the trainee.  
*Duration: 3 weeks*

► **Mid-Term Evaluation**

**PHASE C Patrol Activities** (*Substantive Topic*)  
Third training and learning experience for the trainee.  
*Duration: 3 weeks*

**PHASE D Criminal Investigations** (*Substantive Topic*)  
Final training and learning experience for the trainee.  
*Duration: 3 weeks*

► **Final Evaluation**

## SOLO PATROL ASSIGNMENT

Following successful completion of the training and learning experience, the trainee is transferred to a solo patrol assignment. Some departments may wish to require additional Problem-Based Learning Exercises (PBLEs) following the completion of the training program and prior to the end of the trainee's probationary period. These optional assignments reinforce the PBL process during a critical period in a new officer's/deputy's career.

## TRAINEE JOURNALING

Trainees will maintain journals to record relevant daily information on their learning process. This may include recording the various stages of the PBL process — ideas, known facts, etc. — as well as any information from regular calls for service and patrol duties. These journals will also allow the trainee and the training officer to record instances where learning has or has not occurred during a shift. The trainee will also use his/her journal to keep track of information needed for PBLEs and the Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise (NPE). Journaling is



discoverable for court purposes and trainees must remember to keep the language and the content at a professional standard.

Recording learning in a journal will:

- Strengthen the learning process
- Identify areas for improvement
- Provide a written opportunity to debrief calls for service
- Facilitate creative thinking and self evaluation
- Cause the trainee to develop action plans for using newly acquired skills
- Revisit problem-based learning processes and their application to police activities

► **Maintaining a Journal** is an essential process for reinforcing daily learning. Journal topics include strengths and areas for improvement, debriefings on calls for service, and dialogue on selected PBL exercises. Journal entries are a source for information to be used later in the Problem-Based Learning Exercises (PBLEs) and the Neighborhood Portfolio Exercises (NPEs).

When used correctly, journaling is an extremely effective learning tool. Proper journaling causes the writer to face the strengths and weaknesses of his/her own performance. It can allow the trainee to understand not just the mechanics of daily police tasks but also the underlying concepts and how they are interrelated.

Because most trainees are unfamiliar with it, effective journal writing can be a tripping point for trainees. Too often, trainees choose the easier path; they narrate an event and stop writing before they reach any meaningful self-reflection. Narration describes what happened and what the trainee did, not what the trainee learned and still needs to learn. To avoid this pitfall, trainees may find it valuable to journal using the **DPA model**:

- **D**escribe
- **P**ersonalize
- **A**ct (or **A**pply)

The trainee begins by *briefly describing* the incident. The narrative is limited to enough information to refresh the incident in the writer's mind.

The trainee then discusses what the event meant to him or her, *personalizing* the experience. The writer must challenge him or herself to honestly and accurately discuss their own performance and decision process. This portion of the journal entry is an excellent place to discuss learning needs as they relate to the core competencies and performance outcomes. Additional information may include: concepts, policies, procedures, tactics, skills, or resources he/she must improve upon to handle similar calls more effectively in the future.

In the *action* (or *application*) portion of an entry the writer determines his/her own learning plan and commits to a learning goal based on the previous discussion. It is helpful to be specific about what is to be learned, and how the trainee will learn it. Trainers may want to look for REALISTIC deadlines for learning goals and Action Plans for demonstrating the learning.

It is helpful to be specific about what is to be learned, and how the trainee will learn it. Trainers may want to look for *realistic* deadlines for learning goals and Action Plans for demonstrating the learning.

► **Trainers and PTP SACs should review Trainee Journals** regularly as part of the training process. Journal review is important to both the trainee and the organization. Access should be limited to training staff; however, organizations may wish to include the Board of Evaluators (BOE) as a level of journal review. Trainees should always be aware that their journal is subject to review. Reviewers should always remember to look for content, process, honest self-reflection, appropriate action plans, and documented contacts and resources from daily activities.

## PTO TRAINING PROGRESS NOTES

Training Progress Notes should not be confused with journal writing. While both trainee and trainer can engage in journal writing, only the trainer should maintain Training Progress Notes. In compiling these notes, the trainer identifies learning issues and competencies from the trainer’s perspective. The trainer and trainee should then discuss the learning issues from their individual points of view. This process should provide the trainee with timely feedback regarding performance and deficiencies.

As with journal writing, trainers may find a standard process helpful (the **DLA model**) in writing training Progress notes:

- **D**escribe
- **L**earning Issue
- **A**ction Plan

Using the DLA model, trainers *describe* the training-worthy event, identify *learning issues*, and develop an *action plan* to improve trainee performance. This model allows the trainer to evaluate performance and identify training issues after an event. The trainer may comment on progress made by the trainee or may identify learning issues and develop training to enhance areas that require improvement.

► **Self-reflection and feedback** – When trainees write in journals and trainers write training progress notes following significant learning events throughout the day, the trainee is assured continual feedback and adequate opportunity to self-reflect. Feedback is immediate and the trainer and trainee develop consistent communication regarding performance and expectations.

## COACHING AND EVALUATION PROCESS

The Police Training Program allows the PTO various opportunities to teach and coach the trainee. Although evaluation will be a component of the process, the daily, weekly, and phase activities exist to support the training of new officers/deputies rather than the termination of the marginal few.

## NEIGHBORHOOD PORTFOLIO EXERCISES (NPEs)

Throughout the training, the trainee develops a detailed geographical, social, and cultural understanding of the area where he/she works. The trainee may use Journal entries, PBLEs, and other activities as support material for the NPE.

The NPE is designed to give the trainee a sense of the community where he/she will work. It also encourages the trainee to develop community contacts that are critical when practicing the COPPS philosophy. Examples of the components of the NPE include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Geographical and demographic characteristics of the area of responsibility
- Identification of the various neighborhoods and cultural communities in the area of responsibility
- Crime problems
  - Historical
  - Current trends
  - Relationships to other crime trends
- Quality of life issues impacting the area of responsibility
- Problem-solving efforts
  - Historical
  - Current
  - Relationships to other problem-solving efforts
- Community Groups and Neighborhood Advisory Committees
- Resources Template
  - Law enforcement resources
  - Governmental resources
  - Community resources
  - Business and private resources
- Trainee’s observations and recommended plans of action

## **PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING EXERCISES (PBLES)**

There are four problem-based learning exercises provided in this manual. Agencies may choose to supplement the exercises with their own PBLEs based on local community problems. The PBLEs include one for each phase of the program. For example, in Phase A, the first problem calls for the trainee to work through a wide range of possible outcomes when responding to non-emergencies. The trainee proceeds through the learning process by listing initial ideas, stating known facts, identifying learning issues by asking questions and gathering material, and suggesting two possible action plans. The trainee may present his/her response to the problem in a number of different ways: verbally, in writing, as a report, or as a formal presentation to the PTO.

## **LEARNING ACTIVITY PACKAGES (LAPs)**

If a PTO recognizes either a deficiency in a trainee’s skills or knowledge, or sees an opportunity to enhance learning, the trainer should use a *Learning Activity Package*. These learning tools will serve as a supplemental resource for PTOs and trainees to support the trainee’s progress through the program.

Agencies should identify consistent areas of weakness shown by trainees and prepare supplementary training material to address the training needs. The material in the LAP may include legal information, videos, training bulletins, policies, procedures, information from community partners, and other materials relevant to the topic. The agency will add information to the LAPs as necessary. This information will provide an additional resource for trainees during the program.

## PRESCRIPTIVE TRAINING

Prescriptive training is a trainee-designed action plan that will be used to address specific, significant, or repetitive training deficiencies. Trainees that are having difficulties comprehending and applying training in a given core competency or competencies should have a prescriptive training plan designed.

Prescriptive training plans should be designed following a process to identify the root cause of the training deficiency. The following outline can be used to design a prescriptive training plan:

- **Describe** the performance or behavior deficiency in accordance with the performance outcomes in the learning matrix.
- **Identify** the cause of the deficiency.
- **Determine** the learning domain (cognitive, affective, psychomotor) and at what level of Bloom's Taxonomy the problem is occurring (knowledge, application, evaluation).
- **Analyze** the environmental conditions, emotional intelligence, learning vs. teaching styles, and self-assessment by the trainee.

Considerations to assist the trainee may include:

- Reduce the stress of the training program
- Provide a fresh point of view (PTO change)
- Assign a dedicated training exercise
- Mentoring or peer assistance
- Performance contracts

Include the trainee's input in the prescriptive training plan. Trainees need to have input with the prescriptive training plan to assist trainers in identifying the individual trainee's learning style. It is the goal of the prescriptive training plan to assist trainees in achieving their own learning objectives.

## MID-TERM EVALUATION

Prior to the mid-term evaluation, the PTO, the PTE, and the trainee meet to discuss the evaluation process. Following Phases A and B of the learning experience, the trainee transfers to the Police Training Evaluator (PTE) and participates in the mid-term evaluation. The PTE will use the [learning matrix](#) as an evaluation tool to assess the trainee's performance during the course of that week's activities. In the event the trainee is experiencing difficulties and does not successfully complete the mid-term evaluation, he/she may need to return to Phase A and/or B or be assigned additional training. The BOE or PTO staff may recommend LAPs, PBLEs, prescriptive training, or any other training to help overcome deficiencies.

## FINAL EVALUATION

Prior to the final evaluation, the PTO, PTE, and the trainee meet to discuss the evaluation process. During the final evaluation the trainee transfers to the PTE. The PTE will use the learning matrix as an evaluation tool to assess the trainee's performance during the course of the evaluation period. If the trainee experiences difficulties and does not successfully complete the final evaluation, he/she may return to a training phase. Additional training may be

accomplished through re-entering phase training, performing LAPs, PBLEs, prescription training, and any other training that focuses on the deficiencies.

If a trainee does not respond to training and is recommended for termination, the PTP SAC should forward all material, including recommendations, to the BOE. The BOE will conduct a review of the trainee's performance before providing a written recommendation to the PTP SAC. The Appendices contain a more detailed look at duties and responsibilities in the PTP.

## **COMPETENCY ATTESTATION**

When a trainee has successfully completed the Police Training Program, a Completion Record/Competency Attestation Form ([Appendix I](#)) shall be completed and signed by the agency head attesting that the trainee has successfully completed the training program and is released to solo patrol duties. The completed form shall be retained in the trainee's personnel file.