



Professionalisation of Police Training and Development

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VISION, MISSION AND GOALS

The vision of the Hong Kong Police College is 'to become a centre of excellence in police training and development' and its mission 'to develop police officers with the professional ability and integrity to better serve the community'. Behind this mission statement is the conviction that an ethical workforce and service orientation to policing are as important as professional knowledge, skills or ability of its personnel. In line with its vision and mission, the goals of the College are to:

- develop the best qualities of the officers;
- professionalise police training;
- facilitate self-study and workplace learning;
- advance knowledge through research and sharing; and
- disseminate knowledge to benefit Hong Kong, the Mainland and the international community.

The mission and goals of the College have the objective of better preparing officers for more challenging tasks. They are also aligned with the Force's Strategic Directions.

Force training and development is set within a professional, organisational and societal context. It takes into consideration a number of dynamic driving factors: volatility of the external environment (the increasing complexity of policing and the policing landscape), Force developments (such as the imminent retirement of officers recruited in the 1980s¹), and customer and government expectations (rising demands for a responsive and responsible police service).

The College promotes lifelong learning within the Force, which has correspondingly sparked aspirations for professional qualifications amongst its officers. Another factor that has a bearing on developing the professional qualities of officers is the

growing interdependency between the police organisations and local/international community in providing effective solutions to police problems. For example, the Force engages in multi-agency cooperation with non-governmental organisations. In the international policing arena, the Force partakes in international operations; collaboration as such holds the key to successful policing as crime and public order events have become increasingly internationalised.

LEARNING PRINCIPLES

Force training and development is firmly rooted in some broadly based learning principles, which guide the planning and implementation of its training policies, strategies and programmes. The overriding training philosophy of the Force is that 'effective training and development can foster a continuous learning culture and realise the potential of its officers to meet the needs of the Force and the Community it serves' (*Training and Development Plan 2012-2014*).

Competency-based Training

Competency-based training serves to ameliorate employees' knowledge, skills and attitudes to achieve the ultimate goal of better work performance. The Force adopts competency-based training because of its effectiveness in securing mastery of essential job knowledge/skills/attitudes to specified standards and its potential for further performance improvement.

Competency-based training in the College upgrades officers' core, functional and psychological competencies. Core competencies are generic professional skills applicable to officers of all posts that allow them to undertake their operational roles effectively. Examples of core competencies are professionalism, leadership, communication, judgment and resource management.

¹ For discussion of Police College's training and development as a solution to talent management and retention, please read *Police Training Series No.5*.

Functional competencies are those that pertain to a particular job family. Officers in training posts, for example, are required to exhibit competencies in training needs identification and training-related counselling; curriculum planning, implementation and evaluation; and instructional-coaching-facilitation skills.

Psychological competencies refer to 'a set of psychological knowledge and skills, behavioural patterns and lifestyle management skills necessary for the effective performance of a police officer. In short, it is the human aspects of police work in modern policing' (SDG Paper No. 8/2003 para 2).

Context-based Authentic Learning

Many of the scenarios used in training in the College come from recent police cases. As policing emphasises practical fieldwork in an environment that is in a constant state of flux, police training should be placed in close proximity to the real world to prepare officers psychologically for their new roles and to address the complexities of community needs. Context-based authentic learning that makes use of real cases gives trainees a taste of work in the real world in a safe training environment where mistakes are never costly but are instrumental to better future performance on the job. Real scenarios generate focused discussions, empathy with and understanding of the officers in action and any practical considerations in reaching policing decisions. By evaluating and living through the experience, the officers not only gain confidence in discharging their duties but also become more attuned to their policing role.

For inexperienced recruits, context-based authentic learning has mostly taken the form of role-play and projects. For all officers, experienced and inexperienced alike, there are both simulated case discussions as well as real case sharing. Rooting learning

experiences in the real world helps build officers' confidence and competence.

Learning Trio

To keep pace with fast developing community needs, knowledge and skills of officers have to be continuously upgraded. With this in mind, the Force encourages officers to engage in lifelong learning, which is also one of the core human resource strategies of the HKSAR Administration. To promote lifelong learning, the College supports workplace learning and self-study, apart from offering formal structured programmes, because learning does not exist within the classroom alone; it occurs in the workplace and through individual self-learning.

Workplace learning is what an officer learns from work experiences and job assignments. On the job, officers will be given ample coaching and mentoring by their supervisors. To facilitate quality peer coaching, the College offers training on coaching for development for junior police officers (JPOs) in a supervisory role. Other Force initiatives include mentorship, potential officers and tutor police constable (tutor PC) schemes. Other than the peer advisor scheme and peer coaching, workplace learning is facilitated through experience sharing at different levels.

Facilitating officers' self-study is as fundamental as running structured

curricula. This springs from the belief that learning is as much an organisational as a personal responsibility and that lifelong learning contributes to continuous self-betterment.

Learning as Individual Responsibility

From organising classroom training to supporting individual self-study and workplace learning, the College works on the principle that in addition to organisational training provision, individuals are primarily responsible for their own learning. They must also function as active knowledge promoters and learning facilitators, sharing learning experiences with other Force members and coaching subordinates and peers within their areas of expertise. In other words, they must not only learn but also help others to learn.

Lifelong Learning

The College supports continuous learning through organising formal seminars and providing financial subsidies. The College uploads e-learning packages onto the Learning Portal for sharing Forcewide and organises ad hoc seminars and courses; for example under the Learning and Development Opportunities for JPOs and Inspectors Project, and the Management Development Programme for middle and senior management. Some such

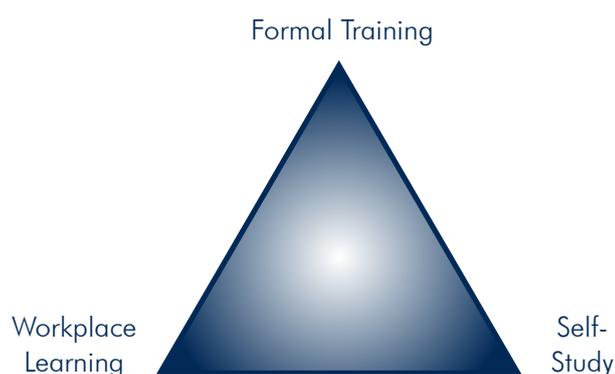


Figure 1. The Learning Trio

ad hoc learning programmes may be organised outside office hours so that interested officers attending the programmes are doing so in their own time.

Financial subsidies in the form of reimbursement of course fees for short local courses provide an impetus to JPOs and Inspectors to engage in learning in their own time. Academic accreditation of College training is a further step to encourage officers to pursue higher university qualifications in policing and police-related areas. In addition, the College also obtains credit exemption from local universities for some of its training programmes.

TRAINING HIERARCHY

The College provides a wide range of training programmes whose contents are tailored to work requirements and which serve the purposes of performance improvement. These

programmes are structured on a continuum that starts with vocational development at foundation level. In other words, vocational or job-specific skills training relevant to day-to-day policing forms the core of training for recruit constables and probationary inspectors.

As officers move up the training hierarchy, the learning spectrum widens to include professional development programmes on generic competencies in the police context. For example, training on police leadership and command of critical incidents is introduced at junior command level but is more focused at middle management.

Senior management is given executive development such as training in strategic planning and perspectives, leadership and policy analysis. The role of the College is to source relevant courses for senior officers.

Permeating the whole spectrum of training and development is personal effectiveness training, including integrity management and professional sensitivity, which is provided at all levels and embedded in all training². The rationale for adopting this training continuum is that officers at different ranks and in different posts need different skill sets and it is more resource-effective if training is provided only on a needs basis.

PROFESSIONALISING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

A lot of the training principles and concepts mentioned above have been around for some time and they form a firm systemic base that sets the direction for the development of police training.

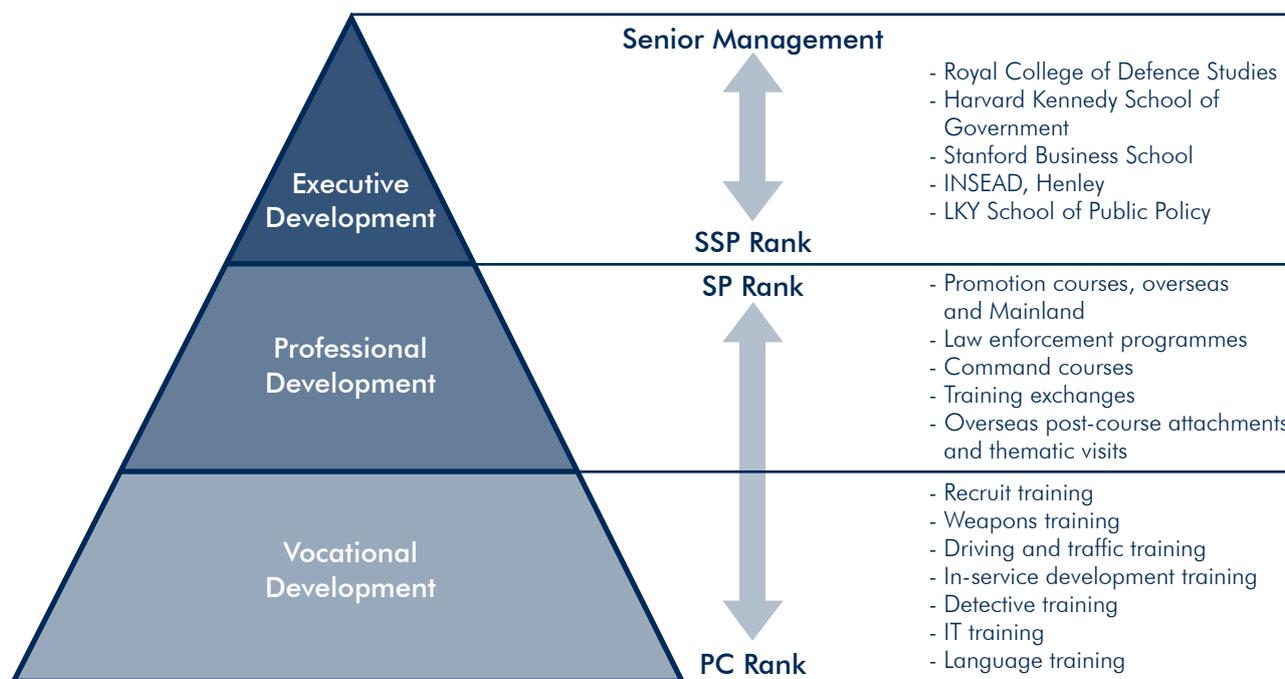


Figure 2. The Training Hierarchy

² For details about ethics education, please refer to the Police College thematic paper *Ethics Education in the Force*.

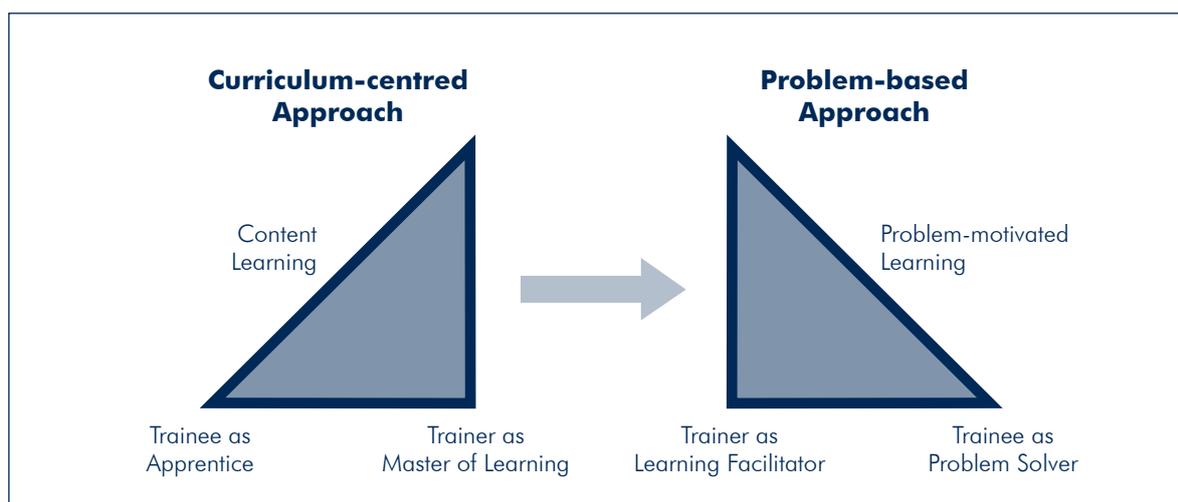


Figure 3. From Curriculum-centred Approach to Problem-based Approach

Problem-based Learning

In shifting emphasis from curriculum-centred to problem-based learning, the College has to balance actual experience with theoretical knowledge. Traditional classroom face-to-face pedagogy, while retaining its attraction for experience sharing and for content learning of theoretical knowledge, gives a limited feel of work in a police setting and has to be supplemented by hands-on practice and problem-motivated learning that takes training into the authentic environment and builds confidence and competence in problem-solving.

Problem-based learning has the advantage of training officers' analytical powers, critical thinking and decision-making skills while simultaneously giving them a real-life flavour and a secure environment to learn and make mistakes. It involves the learner in applying problem-solving skills to identifying the problem and information/resources needed for its solution. The trainer plays the active role of a facilitator or coach in learning.

Scenario-based Learning

Scenario-based learning has the merit of enhancing learners' confidence in solving real-life

situations. In rooting learning in simulated work environment, it tests learning through authentic cases. It also consolidates knowledge and skills learnt through their application to a police-related scenario. In scenario-based learning, the learner is fed with all information and resources required to solve the problem according to trainer-determined learning outcomes.

Optimal Use of Learning Technologies

As policing is becoming more complex, it is vital to disseminate just-in-time knowledge and skills to Force members. The solution in the College is to maximise the potentials of learning technologies to augment training efficiency, providing learning opportunities simultaneously to a large group of learners in simulated learning environments while correspondingly reducing classroom training time and related resources. The interactive nature of e-learning has the added advantage of generating learners' interests and adding an authentic flavour to the training scenarios.

To enable easy access, e-learning packages are uploaded onto the Learning Portal that is accessible from the POLice INTranet (POINT)

and to 'POINT from Home' users. To bring training information to all Force members and facilitate better monitoring of training activities, the Force has developed a Training Management System to automate training administration, such as nomination, enrolment, and training records. By making e-learning materials and training information easily available and maintaining a well managed training record system for Force members, individual officers can monitor and build their competencies according to their preferences and at their own convenience.

Because of its potential to provide time and cost efficient training and assessment alternative, the College leverages technology to supplement traditional in-class learning. For example, by using in-housed developed learning technology systems, crime investigation learning takes on a new dimension when practical exercises are moved to a virtual setting, where participants examine the crime scene, collect and examine three dimensional exhibits, trace clues, conduct sweeps, interact with investigation team and eye witnesses, make decisions and give interviews in real time.

The technology option means not only greater interest for the

new generation of tech-savvy crime investigators and easier setup of the exercise scene but also better control over the learning outcome and more opportunity to practise.

Learning Collaboration

With rapid community changes over the last few decades, policing is becoming increasingly knowledge-led, and such knowledge and information may exist outside the Force. It is therefore important for the College to tap these valuable outside sources to supplement its practitioner wisdom and to expand its reservoir of learning resources. Learning collaboration is also a growing international trend that exists across learning institutions, across jurisdictions, and across law enforcement agencies.

Collaboration with Tertiary Institutes

One important source of outside knowledge is academic input. By developing closer collaboration with universities and other learning institutes and partnering with practitioners in the field, the College bridges the gap between academic theory and practical knowledge. Academic input provides a solid theoretical framework to what is fundamentally practical policing fieldwork such that officers will know not just the 'how' but also the 'why' of policing. Partnership has the added benefit of securing acclaimed professional standards in its training delivery.

One example of such partnership is the agreement between the College and the Open University of Hong Kong in providing academic input in hitherto untapped areas of policing psychology and social aspects of policing in foundation training. Training in psychological competencies is also developed in partnership with the University of Hong Kong, the Chinese

University of Hong Kong and Lingnan University, with the Psychological Services Group acting as internal advisor.

Another means of infusing expert knowledge into the curriculum is through the appointment of honorary advisors and associates³, who advise on the development of training and development programmes and share knowledge and experience at training forums. To broaden trainees' perspectives, outside speakers, both academics and practitioners, address trainees at College venues, whilst visits to private organisations and NGOs are arranged from time-to-time.

Overseas Training Exchanges

To broaden their international perspective, officers of all ranks may have the opportunity to undertake overseas and Mainland training. Such training can be officer-specific where individual officers undertake overseas training to bring back vital skills and knowledge on specialised areas. Alternatively, they can be in the form of post-course attachment, thematic visits and training exchanges.

Post-course attachment is arranged for officers attending overseas training, where they will have first hand knowledge about police work of the host organisation through interacting with ground-level workers. During these overseas exchanges, course participants are assigned a specific comparative theme to study, and information so gathered is brought back to the Force for sharing and improvement purposes.

Agreement has been reached with the Singapore Police Force, the Metropolitan Police Service and the Dutch National Police for thematic visits and exchange where the officers taking part gain in-depth

understanding of a particular policing issue in the host country.

The College also engages in trainer exchanges with overseas police learning establishments with a view to benchmarking and further improving its training effectiveness. For this purpose, the Force has entered into Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on trainer exchanges with a number of overseas police training establishments⁴.

Mainland Interface

Since the reunification in 1997, Mainland interface occurs in all aspects of police work. In police training, it has led to increasingly frequent learning exchanges between Hong Kong and the Mainland. Mainland interface has been one of the key areas of the Statement of Strategic Directions and Strategic Action Plan since 2005. Training cooperation is all the more important because the One Country Two Systems principle has resulted in different policing systems in Hong Kong and on the Mainland. Updated policing knowledge helps officers better cope with cross-boundary crimes and policing events.

There are regular Mainland study programmes offered to officers by Chinese People's Public Security University, Beijing People's Police College, and Shanghai Police College. These study programmes develop officers' knowledge of the Mainland's law enforcement and legal system as well as cultural, social, economic and political trends in addition to networking with Mainland counterparts. Training exchange programmes enhance learning outside formal classroom training and build a strong base for cooperation with Mainland Public Security Bureau (PSB)⁵, Shanghai Municipal PSB and Guangdong Provincial Public Security Department.

³ College advisors are appointed from amongst outside academics and professionals in the field together with former Force members while College associates come from within the Force.

⁴ Trainer exchange MOU have been signed with the Australian Institute of Police Management, the International Law Enforcement Academy (Bangkok) and Dutch National Police.

⁵ A Chief Inspector of Police is currently appointed instructor at the Chinese People's PSB University.

Mobile training teams also provide training to the Mainland on a regular basis. Other than regular study programmes, there are thematic exchanges on specific police topics, such as negotiation, media management and firearms tactics training.

Engagement of Frontline Commanders

The College believes that learning is a whole-organisation commitment; Force management and supervisory levels must actively support learning and development. In practical terms, the Force Steering Committee on Human Resources Management (FSCHRM) oversees Force training and development policy, and major formation commanders are involved as members to identify training and development needs. At the operational level, major formation commanders and formation commanders are engaged to educate and share their experience and expertise in appropriate training forums. Force senior management is also invited to

speak at training forums to update officers about policing practices and developments.

Academic Accreditation

An interest in continuous self-betterment has to be nurtured in its personnel if an organisation is to strive for continuous improvement. With this belief, the College seeks accreditation of its training programmes from local universities which will hopefully be a springboard to a university education for its non-graduate officers and a specialist qualification for all its officers. Partnership with the Open University of Hong Kong has seen foundation training for recruit constables accredited to the Certificate in Law Enforcement and Security Management. Accreditation and credit exemption have also been sought from universities for other training programmes.

Quality Assurance

Quality management not only maximises quality and efficiency; it also brings about standardisation

in the training deliverables of the College and is an essential ingredient for recognition by comparable training establishments. In addition, it is the hallmark of any professional organisation that it possesses an effective mechanism for continuous self-improvement.

The College has developed a quality assurance mechanism in alignment with the Force's quality management model based on the European Foundation for Quality Management model of excellence⁶. Quality assurance is in-built in the entire training process and involves all training personnel in monitoring Force training needs and the quality of College training programmes. Instructor training is also enhanced such that all new instructional staff are mandated to attend instructional skills training immediately upon their transfer to a training post, and serving instructors are to follow continuing professional development programmes during their entire tenure with the College.

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Note

For specific training, please refer to other papers under the Police Training Series:

- No. 3 Psychological Competency Training
- No. 4 Building a Learning Theory for Crime Investigation Training
- No. 5 Learning and Development for Talent Management

⁶ For details about the College quality assurance system, please refer to the Police College thematic paper *Quality Assurance in Training*.