# Teaching Respectful Police-Citizen Encounters and Good Decision Making: Results of a Randomized Control Trial with Police Recruits

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## Introduction

**Background and Problem Statement.** Encounters with citizens, whether voluntary or involuntary, are at the heart of police work. On a daily basis, officers have interactions with citizens in numerous settings      walk-ins at the front desk, crime reports by telephone, traffic or street stops, emergency and non-emergency calls for service, investigative interviews, community meetings, and other exchanges. The public's expectations of the police when responding to these diverse (often noncriminal) incidents are very high. Officers are expected to effectively play multiple roles, including enforcer, social worker, marriage counselor, parent/disciplinarian, crowd-control manager, criminal investigator and group facilitator. One minute, an officer might be arresting a disrespectful gang member and, soon thereafter, taking a report from a traumatized elderly victim of armed robbery. In addition to physical prowess, officers are expected to have strong interpersonal skills and the ability to transition from one scenario to the next, while always treating everyone equally, respectfully, and professionally. Officers are also expected to exercise good judgment in terms of resolving or preventing conflict, gaining compliance, or solving problems using the least amount of force necessary.

Notwithstanding these expectations, interacting and communicating with civilians in a manner that is both effective and perceived as fair is a challenge for many officers. Often citizens voice their dissatisfaction with these encounters, with complaints ranging from verbal to physical abuse. Negative public attitudes toward the police stemming from negative encounters are well documented (e.g. Brown & Benedict, 2002; Skogan, 2006; Tuch & Weitzer, 1997). In 2009, the problem received international media coverage when Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. from Harvard University was arrested on his front porch by Sgt. James Crowley of the Cambridge Police Department. President Obama later scheduled a "Beer Summit" at the White House to help resolve their differences and provide a "teachable moment."

The most basic question is why are some residents unhappy with police encounters and what can be done about it? Research indicates that factors such as the officer's perceived demeanor, fairness and impartiality, concern, helpfulness, conflict resolution strategies and professional competence all play a role in determining residents' level of satisfaction with police encounters (e.g. Cheurprakobkit & Bartsch, 2001; Tyler, 1990; Tyler & Huo, 2002; Skogan, 2006; Wortley, Hagan, & Macmillan, 1997). This same research has uncovered a substantial racial divide, with African-Americans and Latinos reporting less satisfaction than whites with the treatment they

receive from the police. In large American cities, residents file thousands of complaints each year against officers regarding excessive force, illegal searches, racial profiling and other problems. Verbal abuse is among the most common complaint. Regardless of the merit of individual cases, municipalities pay out millions of dollars in settlements.

The widespread perception that police are disrespectful or unfair during encounters can have serious consequences for public safety. As numerous police scholars and police chiefs have observed, the police rely on the support and voluntary cooperation of the public to achieve their goals of preventing crime and disorder and administering justice (Rosenbaum, 1998). Extensive research by Tom Tyler and his colleagues indicates that this public support and cooperation are undermined when the community does not view the police as legitimate (Tyler, 2004). Indeed, when police legitimacy is questioned and the public lacks confidence in them, citizens are less supportive for the police, feel less obligated to cooperate with them, and are less likely to obey the law (Tyler, 1990; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). At the most basic level, public compliance with police requests or commands, whether it be as simple as stepping back from a crime scene or providing information about possible suspects, is essential for maintaining order and solving crime. In the 21st century, one of the greatest challenges facing the police is how to maintain order in society without jeopardizing the public's trust and confidence. At the individual level, the challenge is how to maintain control and achieve desired outcomes without resorting to tactics that could undermine one's authority as a police officer, violate civil liberties or possibly escalate conflict.

Police training is one area where police departments have an opportunity to strengthen officers' interpersonal skills during encounters (Haberfield, 2002). Cultural awareness training, for example, has sought to improve police-community relations through general knowledge of diverse groups, but these efforts generally do not target specific behaviors and have not been well received by officers. "Verbal judo" training (citation here) has been widely adopted and does focus on verbal behaviors, but does not directly address the civilian's need for fairness, voice or emotional support during the encounter, nor are we aware of any rigorous evaluations of its effectiveness.

**Training Demonstrations and Evaluations.** Despite extensive worldwide research on procedural justice and legitimacy, very little of this work has been translated into police training and assessing its impact. One exception is the Queensland Community Engagement Trial involving the Queensland Police Service in Brisbane, Australia, where officers were trained in "legitimacy policing" to improve their performance during roadside stops involving random breath tests (Mazerolle & Bennett, 2010). This randomized control trial required officers in the experimental group to follow a script with drivers that covered some key elements of procedural justice, while officers in the control group engaged in business as usual. Survey results from drivers indicate that the legitimacy script increased their perceived satisfaction with the encounter, fairness, respect, trust, and confidence with regard to the police, as well as their willingness to comply with police directives. This is an important and promising demonstration of training effectiveness in this domain. Although it is difficult to determine whether the observed effects were due entirely to new procedural justice behaviors on the part of the officers or to other components of the

intervention (e.g., a news bulletin with crime prevention tips), it remains an encouraging step forward.

In the United States, Chicago's Quality Interaction Program (QIP), developed jointly by the Chicago Police Department and the University of Illinois at Chicago, is the first known demonstration and evaluation of procedural justice training in the classroom and the first to focus on developing interpersonal skills among police recruits. In the 1980s, a randomized control trial was introduced with recruits in the Detroit Police Department to increase their responsiveness to crime victims during preliminary investigations. The evaluation found that the experimental group outperformed the control group at the end of the training period, but the effects dissipated after four months in the field (Rosenbaum, 1987). Also, while the Detroit program gave some attention to respectful treatment of victims, this was not a direct test of procedural justice nor did this training have the benefit of modern pedagogical methods and technology.

## Quality Interaction Program Training Methods and Materials

**Background.** Procedural justice theory suggests that the best way to establish police legitimacy and public support is to improve the fairness and respectfulness of police procedures during encounters with the public (Tyler, 2004). Police effectiveness in controlling crime is important for determining legitimacy, but according to this model, not as important as procedural fairness.

There is a genuine opportunity, through recruit training, to grow a new police culture that endorses key values and principles regarding human interaction and seeks to solve interpersonal problems in a way that reinforces this orientation. At the most basic level, these principles suggest that we should treat people the way we want to be treated. The values of respect, caring and fairness, for example, are believed to be at the core of high-quality human interaction, as they have consistently re-emerged over many centuries across multiple cultures.

The new QIP program curriculum was constructed within a community-oriented procedural justice framework that gives primary attention to the quality of police-citizen encounters. It is strongly evidence-based, derived from diverse research in multiple disciplines. It emphasizes how tasks are performed during encounters (procedural justice) and how officers communicate and make decisions in light of the needs of crime victims and other citizens. The new curriculum also emphasizes non-traditional, adult pedagogy. Too often, community/service oriented topics are delivered with a traditional "talking heads" methodology, supplemented by PowerPoint. In contrast, training in firearms and self-defense involves scenarios, simulations, and repetition to achieve proficiency. Educational scholars recognize the importance of student-instructor interaction to maximize interest and learning, especially in adult education environments. Also, repetitive practice is an effective approach to training. Recruits need opportunities to practice behaviors during interpersonal encounters.

Critically important to good education and training is feedback and improvement in performance at the individual level. But if academies do not have a good sense of the level of interpersonal skill possessed by individual recruits, feedback at this level is not possible. Thus, instructors would

need to be armed with knowledge of individual performance if they intend to provide guidance to students who are struggling to reach some level of proficiency.

**Evidence-base Practices.** The current training model draws upon behavioral research to construct evidence-based training (e.g., research on interpersonal communication, procedural justice, race prejudice and profiling, multi-cultural studies, human perception, criminal justice processes, conflict resolution, emotional control, and stress management). The training draws upon studies in the fields of communications, criminology, psychology, sociology, social work, medicine, victimology and law.

What are the optimal interpersonal skills needed by police officers for different types of encounters? What verbal and nonverbal responses will produce the desired outcomes? As noted earlier, procedural justice theory and research (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1990) provides a valid framework for understanding police-civilian encounters, as people's judgments about the legitimacy of the police are based largely on their sense of whether the process was fair. Research suggests that a process is more likely to be judged fair when the elements of participation, demeanor, neutrality and trust are present (Skogan & Frydl, 2004, p. 304). In other words, recipients of police service should be more satisfied and cooperative when they have a voice in the process, feel they are treated with dignity and respect, feel the officer was fair and impartial, and feel the officer was genuinely concerned for their welfare. An attempt has been made to incorporate these elements of police behavior into the training program. Prior research on police encounters supports this decision. For example, when police do not act in a procedurally just manner, citizens are less likely to comply with the officers' requests (McCluskey, Mastrofski, & Parks, 1999) and spouse abusers, for example, are more likely to reoffend (Paternoster, Brame, Bachman, & Sherman, 1997).

Theories of victimization, stress, and recovery have also guided the development of the QIP program. Too often victims of violence experience negative, unsupportive reactions from professionals, which have been shown to inhibit their psychological recovery and reduce the likelihood of future disclosure or reporting to authorities (Ahrens, 2006; Starzynski et al., 2005; Ullman, 1999). Ullman (2000) identifies four key dimensions of *negative* social reactions to victims (i.e. taking control of the victim's decisions, victim blame, distraction from what happened, and egocentric behavior), and three aspects of *positive* reactions (i.e. instrumental, emotional, and informational support). This implies the need for officers to be particularly sensitive to the needs and concerns of victims when responding to calls and taking police reports. Innovation in recruit training has addressed this issue in the past, but only short-term effects have been demonstrated (Rosenbaum, 1987).

The curriculum also incorporates research on stress management, conflict resolution, and cognitive-behavioral therapy. These dimensions were integrated into the procedural justice framework to address the influence of emotion on officers' interpersonal skills and decision-making when interacting with the public. The social function of emotion is to "… mobilize the organism to deal quickly with important interpersonal encounters" (Ekman, 1992, p. 171). Emotion exerts influence on communication and decision-making by (a) carrying information that

is used as input (i.e., feelings as information; Schwarz & Clore, 1983); (b) influencing key cognitive processes (i.e., selection attention, prejudicial biases, and perceptions of risk and evaluations of value; Tiedens & Linton, 2001); and (c) overwhelming the individual, thus impeding his/her ability to engage in a deliberative decision-making process (Loewenstein, 1996). In addition, research suggests that one person's emotional state influences another person's emotional state through the mechanisms of evoking complementary emotions and/or operating as an incentive for reinforcing the other's behavior (Morris & Keltner, 2000). Officers' emotions not only affect their skills and decisions, but also influence citizens' responses to their requests.

Cognitive behavioral therapy has been shown to be effective in reducing negative behaviors (Butler, Chapman, Forman & Beck, 2005). Some of the key elements of cognitive behavioral therapy include the assumption of a causal link between thoughts, feelings and behaviors, an emphasis on the learning process, and cognitive activities including pre-event expectations, post-event attributions, and self-talk (Kendall & Braswell, 1993). By integrating elements of cognitive behavioral therapy into the program, the training attempted to address some of the barriers to using the appropriate interpersonal skills consistently. Officers were encouraged to interpret and control their thoughts and emotions with internal self-statements and other tools. They were trained to respond in a fair and respectful manner in all encounters, including situations where they may be stressed, angry, or overwhelmed.

**Interpersonal Skills.** What type of police officers do we want to produce in our society and how do we achieve that goal? If one agrees with traditional police scholars who argue that police work is all about the use (and misuse) of coercive force (e.g. Bittner, 1980), then the current focus of training academies on physical agility – physical fitness, driving, use of force, and self-defense – may be the right model. If, however, one is inclined to agree with community policing scholars who argue that the police are primarily in the business of providing high-quality services to citizens, preventing crime, and engaging citizens in the "co-production" of public safety (Rosenbaum, 1994; Skogan, 2003), then a new set of skills should be taught at the academy that focus more on interpersonal communication, multi-cultural sensitivity, leadership, decision-making and problem- solving, ethics and integrity, and responsiveness to the needs of crime victims and others in the community. The process of policing "for the people" (Mastrofski, 1999) is given a higher priority under this community model.

The reality is perhaps more complex than either of these positions suggest. Municipal police are expected to fulfill a wide range of functions, including preventing crime, helping crime victims and others in danger, keeping the peace, protecting constitutional guarantees, managing the movement of people and vehicles, resolving conflicts between parties, creating a feeling of safety in the community, and providing a host of other services (see Goldstein, 1977). But we would argue that in virtually all of these mandates, the interpersonal skills of the officer are essential. Even the decision to use physical or deadly force can sometimes reflect a "failure to communicate" in less dramatic or consequential ways. Hence, giving more attention to the development of general interpersonal skills should reduce the risk of officer or civilian injury, promote mutual respect and solve immediate problems.

**Training Objectives and Scope.** The primary training objective was to develop a program that would increase the quality of police-citizen encounters by increasing officers' skills during these events. The program added approximately 20 hours of new material to the larger curriculum. It is evidence-based, community-service oriented, and integrated with other courses. In addition, it includes individualized feedback and allows for student engagement, practice and repetition.

If the new training is successful, officers should be able to complete an encounter in a manner that 1) resolves the problem or maximizes citizen compliance with the officer's request; 2) requires the least amount of time and effort; 3) requires the least amount of force or threat of force and 4) provides the maximum amount of "procedural justice." From the victim's/civilian's perspective, the encounter should result in less psychological harm, a less negative or even positive assessment of the experience, a greater desire to cooperate with police officers in the future, and greater trust in the police as an organization. These outcomes can only be assessed once the recruits have left the training academy. The present study examines hypothesized changes among new recruits at the completion of the six-month training period. The QIP training was designed to instill more respectful and supportive attitudes, behavioral intentions, and actual behaviors among recruits with respect to police-civilian encounters; to increase their communication skills; and to encourage better decision-making and problem-solving in these settings. The training was designed to increase officers' skill by incorporating five key components into existing and new training modules:

- ❖ Procedural Justice
  - competency
  - fairness, dignity and respect
  - neutrality
  - participation or voice
  - honorable intentions or motives
- ❖ Interpersonal Communication Skills
  - good listening skills
  - take concerns seriously
  - sensitivity
  - empathy
  - explain process and what can and can not be done legally
  - avoid inappropriate language and gestures
- ❖ Decision-Making Skills
  - means to ends thinking
  - weighing pros and cons
  - conflict resolution
  - arrest as a last resort
  - building partnerships

- ❖ Cultural Awareness
  - understanding communication differences
  - creating impressions and managing interactions
  - responding to diversity <u>between</u> and <u>within</u> communities
- ❖ Stress Management
  - social support
  - relaxation
  - mental preparation
  - positive coping strategies
  - cognitive behavioral techniques

**Curriculum Development.** Curriculum development followed a modified ADDIE model of instructional design (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement and Evaluate with rapid development; Piskurich, 2000; Stokes and Richey, 2000) and incorporated proven adult education strategies such as modeling, repetitive practice, individualized feedback (Moses, 1978) and learning styles (i.e., verbal, visual, logical, intrapersonal, interpersonal, music, kinesthetic, and existentialistic; Garnder, 1999).

In order to develop an effective training program various resources were marshaled: 1) personnel were assigned to oversee, coordinate, and manage the project; 2) instructors and supervisors from the academy participated in workgroups designed to develop, implement and evaluate the new training program; and 3) staff videotaped all recruits as they engaged in role-playing scenarios to allow individualized feedback to the trainees.

Training academy personnel and Platform researchers participated in workgroups tasked to design, implement and evaluate the new training curriculum. The workgroups covered the following domains:

- ❖ Curriculum identification and enhancement
  - identify current curriculum modules where key components can be inserted
  - adapt current curriculum as needed
- ❖ New module development
  - develop new training modules
  - field test components as needed
- ❖ Instructors training
  - develop a training program for instructors
  - train the instructors to teach the new program
- ❖ Quality control
  - develop a quality control program
  - develop measures and indictors of success
  - develop an overall evaluation plan

To maximize learning and retention, students must be engaged. Instruction should to move beyond "talking heads" (lectures) to explore a wide range of possibilities to challenge students

physically and mentally and keep their attention on performance. Students need individual attention and feedback to know how well they are performing and what type of corrective action is needed. In this regard, role playing and behavioral modeling should be used as much as possible. The steps involved are as follows (Moses, 1978):

- ❖ *Modeling:* Trainees observe filmed, videotaped or actors performing a task or dealing with a problem;
- ❖ *Rehearsal:* Trainees practice the behavior frequently;
- ❖ *Feedback:* Trainer and other trainees provide feedback on the rehearsed behavior;
- ❖ *Transfer of Training:* New behaviors are employed on the job.

To achieve this type of individual engagement, several teaching methodologies were used, including case studies (business-school model), scenarios, role-playing, and simulations (see Appendix for training materials). In theory, the more opportunities students are given to read it, hear it, see it, discuss it, discover it, solve it, or experience it, the greater the probability of learning and retention.

One of the central tasks in the curriculum development process was the development of verbal scripts appropriate for various encounters as well as scripts that would be inappropriate and should be avoided. Different sets of scripts are needed for different types of encounters. The notion of scripts is central to the new curriculum as conceived. As one instructor noted (half jokingly), officers have many different versions of a single script in the field, namely, "We can do this the easy way or the hard way—which will it be?" Unfortunately, threat often leads to counter-threat rather than compliance. A decision was made that new officers could benefit from having a more diverse repertoire of verbal statements that can be used in different situations.

Trainees and instructors in the experimental group developed verbal scripts that were guided by research on procedural justice, social support, customer satisfaction and other areas of social interaction. For example, research on social support and "emotional work" points to the importance of showing compassion during encounters with persons who are upset or distressed by adverse experiences. The key sub-processes involved in "compassion" are *noticing* the person's suffering, *feeling* the person's pain, and *responding* in some way to help correct the situation (Kanov, Maitlis, Worline, Dutton, Frost, & Lilius, 2004; Miller, 2007). Hence, noticing and feeling scripts might include statements such as, "I can see that you are upset by what happened," "I'm sorry this happened to you" or "I've been through this myself, so I know the feeling." Acknowledging the victim's feelings and expressing empathy were considered important objectives behind the task of script development. This task was considered especially important for young officers who do not "naturally" display these social interaction skills or who needed additional reinforcement and practice.

Negative scripts to be avoided include blaming the victim (e.g., "Why were you out at 2 AM – what were you thinking?"). Officers in one district assisted the project by developing a list of negative scripts, based on their own experiences. These negative scripts, used in the field, reflect the stereotypes present in the police culture. Some of them were used in the new curriculum for "inoculation training" to illustrate what not to do. Conversely, a new set of positive scripts was

developed by students in the experimental group, which they practiced delivering and were encouraged to use in role playing.

Instructors were trained in the new curriculum. Part of the instructor training focused on creating a culture where integrity of the message, using the right tone and appropriate pedagogy, is critically important. Instructors were sensitized to the fact that they can sometimes send mixed messages to the recruits, and consequently, undermine their own training objectives. Instructors were also trained in the professionalism of teaching and the importance of role-modeling, including starting and ending class on time, treating every student with dignity and respect, evaluating students using fair and objective standards, etc.

The curriculum began with a core four-hour period during which recruits were exposed to lectures, videos and role playing scenarios lead by two instructors – one police officer and one university professor. Key concepts discussed included procedural justice, communication skills, decision-making skills, cultural awareness and stress management. The instructors used three case studies to help recruits determine how to communicate and resolve conflict in diverse interpersonal situations, ranging from neighbors fighting over a parking space to working with a partner who is being verbally abusive to a civilian.

The new curriculum was also integrated into several existing classes that focused on the handling of property crimes, personal crimes and domestic violence. In smaller groups, students were exposed to role-play scenarios, where "beat officers" (recruits selected from the class) were asked to conduct a preliminary investigation with a victim or witness to a property or personal crime. The initial role player (victim/witness) was previously instructed to remain upset until the officer used certain scripted language to either acknowledge the victim's feelings or expresses empathy (e.g. "I understand…" or "I'm sorry…"). During and after these scenarios, the class was asked what other questions should be asked and what else needs to be done to properly finish the investigation.

In addition to group exercises, practice of new skills and individualized feedback were important components of the program. Each student in the program participated in a role-playing scenario around a domestic violence incident (violation of an order of protection) that included videotaping of their encounter with an angry victim, followed by individualized feedback from instructors. Students were encouraged to use the verbal script they had developed during their role play encounter with the victim.

The individualized feedback program required instructors to review the tapes, note areas where improvement was needed and prepare comments for a one-on-one feedback session. Structured feedback was given on key aspects of procedural justice (e.g., voice, neutrality, respect, intentions), emotion control (keeping cool and not getting frustrated), and resilience (helping them reduce stress). Instructors used the taped performance to identify positive examples of good communication skills and other examples that should not be used (e.g., blaming the complainant, using condescending or sarcastic language). Safety tips were also covered. Instructors were encouraged to model good interpersonal communication at all times. Finally, instructors for the

treatment group were expected to reinforce the concepts during six "homeroom" classes over the course of several months.

**Study Design and Participants.** The study was a randomized control trial. Prior to starting the academy, recruits were matched on gender, race, age and prior military background and then randomly assigned to the training condition or the standard academy curriculum.

A total of 157 recruits participated in the randomized control trial. Seventy-two percent were male. About 44 percent were white, 25 percent African-American and 29 percent Latino. The average age was approximately 28 years old. The majority of the recruits were single and less than a quarter served in the military prior to joining the police department. Most of the recruits reported having at least a college degree. More than one-third reporting being bilingual, with Spanish as the mostly commonly reported second language. There were no statistically significant differences between the control and training group in terms of participant demographics (see Table 8-1), thus confirming the effectiveness of the random assignment process.

**Table 8-1. Demographics for Control and Training Groups**

|  | Controls | QIP Training |  |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sex |  |  |  |
| Males | 74.3% | 70.3% |  |
| Females | 25.7% | 29.7% | $X^2$ = .277 |
| Race / Ethnicity |  |  |  |
| African-American | 22.7% | 28.1% |  |
| Asian | 1.3% | 3.1% |  |
| Latino | 29.3% | 28.1% |  |
| White | 46.7% | 40.6% | $X^2$ = 1.227 |
| Education |  |  |  |
| Less than a college degree | 42.7% | 34.4% |  |
| College degree | 50.7% | 46.9% |  |
| More than a college degree | 6.7% | 18.8% | $X^2$ = 4.835 |
| Marital Status |  |  |  |
| Single | 66.7% | 73.4% |  |
| Married | 18.7% | 20.3% |  |
| Other | 14.7% | 6.3% | $X^2$ = 2.542 |
| Prior Military Service |  |  |  |
| No | 81.3% | 84.1% |  |
| Yes | 18.7% | 15.9% | $X^2$ = .186 |
| Bilingual |  |  |  |
| No | 61.8% | 65.1% |  |
| Yes | 38.2% | 34.9% | $X^2$ = .155 |
| Age | M = 28.75 (SD = 4.08) | M=28.75 (SD = 4.03) | F = .500 |

Self-report questionnaires were administered prior to training and at the conclusion of training (six months later) for both experimental and control groups. These survey-based attitudes and behavioral intentions were supplemented by direct observations of recruits' behavior during role-playing scenarios. A portion of the recruits in both experimental and control groups were videotaped at the beginning and end of their six-month training period as they interacted with scripted complainants who had called the police for assistance.[2] These videotapes were scored by graduate students not affiliated with the training and "blind" as to the experimental conditions. Each video had two or three separate raters and their scores were averaged to create a single score for each trainee. The measures obtained from both the surveys and observations focused on dimensions of procedural justice and emotional control during encounters. They are discussed along with the results in the following section.

Due to a lack of resources, only a subsample of the recruits was videotaped at the pretest (n=70) and due to attrition in this component of the study, this subsample was further reduced at the posttest (n=34). This subsample compromised our statistical power and also introduced the possibility of differential attrition across experimental conditions. Chi-square analyses were run to test for differential attrition. As shown in Table 8-2, there were no significant differences between the experimental and control groups in terms of participant demographics.

**Table 8-2. Demographics for Control and Training Groups in Video Observations**

|  | Controls | QIP Training |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sex |  |  |  |
| Males | 79.5% | 78.8% |  |
| Females | 20.5% | 21.2% | $X^2 = .005$ |
| Race / Ethnicity |  |  |  |
| African-American | 17.9% | 21.2% |  |
| Asian | 2.6% | 6.1% |  |
| Latino | 30.8% | 30.3% |  |
| White | 48.7% | 42.4% | $X^2 = .778$ |
| Education |  |  |  |
| Less than a college degree | 38.5% | 36.4% |  |
| College degree | 51.3% | 48.5% |  |
| More than a college degree | 10.3% | 15.2% | $X^2 = .392$ |
| Marital Status |  |  |  |
| Single | 61.5% | 75.8% |  |
| Married | 20.5% | 21.2% |  |
| Other | 17.9% | 3.0% | $X^2 = 4.116$ |

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[2] The pretest video involved taking a report from a domestic violence victim whose order of protection had been violated and who was upset at the police for their slow response time and inability to prevent repeat offending. The posttest video required the trainee to take a report regarding a dispute between two neighbors who were arguing over a parking space (both disputants were present).

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Prior Military Service | | | |
| No | 77.5% | 78.8% | |
| Yes | 22.5% | 21.2% | $X^2$ = .018 |
| Bilingual | | | |
| No | 52.5% | 63.6% | |
| Yes | 47.5% | 36.4% | $X^2$ = .918 |
| Age | M = 29.41 | M=28.30 | |
| | (SD = 3.70) | (SD = 3.46) | F = .1.56 |

**Findings**

**Respectful Attitudes toward Police-Civilian Encounters.** We hypothesized that recruits exposed to the Quality Interaction Program would place a greater value on being respectful during police-civilian encounters, giving civilians the opportunity to talk, and controlling their own emotions. In a procedural-justice framework, several questions were used to measure the impact of the program on recruits' attitudes about treating civilians with respect during encounters and controlling their emotions. Each item was coded on a five-point scale (1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3=Neutral, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree). Principal Components Factor Analysis identified a single Respect toward Civilians Index comprising the following items:

- All people should be treated with respect regardless of their attitude (Reverse)
- It is OK to be rude when someone is rude to you
- Being respectful is nearly impossible when you are dealing with a gang member
- Officers can't be expected to keep their emotions in check when people are disrespectful
- The time that officers spend chatting with average citizens could be better spent investigating crime and suspicious situations

At the pretest, this factor explained 49.21 percent of the variance in the items with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 74. Similarly, at the posttest, the factor accounted for 47.42 percent of the variance with an alpha coefficient of 0.70. A higher score on the index indicated a more positive attitude toward respectful encounters during encounters. (Time1 Mean = 3.82; SD=.57; Time2 Mean =3.65; SD = .59).

A GLM repeated measure analysis was performed in SPSS to estimate program effects over time. GLM provides an analysis of variance that allows for hypothesis testing for both between-subjects (Experimental group) and within-subjects (Time) effects. The Time-by-Group interaction terms captures the treatment effect, as it tests for differential change between the treatment and control groups over time. As shown in Table 8-3, a significant effect was found for the Time variable, indicating that respectful attitudes toward civilians declined between time 1 (start of training) and time 2 (six months later) for both training and control groups. However, no treatment effect was found on this index.

**Table 8-3. GLM Results for Respect towards Civilians Index**

|  | Time | Mean | Std. Error | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control | 1 | 3.86 | .08 | | | |
| | 2 | 3.61 | .08 | **Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts** | | |
| Training | 1 | 3.79 | .08 | Time | $F = 6.90$ | $p = .010$ |
| | 2 | 3.69 | .09 | Time*group | $F = 1.30$ | $p = .257$ |

Higher values indicate greater amounts of shown respect.

**Respectful and Supportive Behavior during Police-Civilian Encounters.** Attitudes toward police-civilian encounters are important, but actual behavior is a preferred outcome measure because the link between attitudes and behaviors can be inconsistent. As noted earlier, for a smaller sample of recruits, we videotaped their actual performance during role-playing scenarios and coded their behavior. Six different variables were coded by blind observers to capture respectful and supportive behaviors towards the actors. These included whether the officer (on a three-point scale):

- apologized to the victim for what happened,
- acknowledged the actor's feelings and concerns,
- made reassuring or empowering statements,
- had a courteous demeanor,
- had a friendly demeanor, and
- was reassuring and efficacious.

Using the pretest data, these six items were factor analyzed and found to be unidimensional. The factor explained 74.74 percent of the variance and showed strong internal consistency as reflected in the Cronbach alpha coefficient ($\alpha$= .93). The items were aggregated and averaged (M = 1.67, SD = .50). Response options included 1 = Yes/Often, 2 = Sometimes, and 3 = No/Never, therefore a higher score on this index indicated lower respect towards the individual.

Due to the fact that two actors were present during the posttest homeowner/parker scenario, new variables were created by averaging the scores on the above items between actors. Pearson r correlations showed strong relationship across these six items ranging from 0.65 to 0.88, all less than the .001 significance level. Factor analysis identified a single factor that explained 60.05 percent of the variance in the items. The items also showed strong internal consistency (   = .87). A six-item respect index was computed (M = 2.03, SD = .47). Similar to the pretest respect index, a higher score on this index indicated lower respect towards the individual.

The GLM repeated measures analysis (see Table 8-4) provides support for the treatment hypothesis. Over time, recruits in the experimental group were significantly more likely than the control group to display respectful and supportive behavior during encounters with a live actor. In terms of net changes, the experimental group showed a small increase in the amount of respectful and supportive behavior over time, while the control group showed a sizeable decline on this index.

**Table 8-4. GLM Results for Respect-Support Index**

| | Time | Mean | Std. Error | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control | 1 | 1.59 | .12 | | | |
| | 2 | 2.11 | .12 | **Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts** | | |
| Training | 1 | 1.98 | .14 | Time | F = 7.91 | p = .009 |
| | 2 | 1.90 | .14 | Time*group | F = 14.41 | p = .001 |

Higher values indicate less frequent respectful and supportive behavior.

**Procedural Justice Behavioral Intentions during Traffic Stops.** A series of questions was developed to evaluate recruits' perceptions of the importance of procedural justice practices when conducting a traffic stop. Recruits were given the following scenario: *An officer has just pulled over a driver who committed a traffic violation. The driver <u>did not</u> come to a full stop at a stop sign.* Recruits were then asked to determine how much priority, on a five-point scale from very low to very high, they thought should be placed on a list of specific behaviors. The list of behaviors was designed to represent two different sets of policing behaviors – procedural justice and legalistic/procedural competence. We hypothesized that the training should increase the priority that recruits place on procedural justice practices, but have no effect on their evaluation of procedural competence.

Factor analysis of relevant items yielded two dimensions consistent with these construct, and thus two separate scales were computed. The Quality of Treatment Index, composed of six items, was designed to capture procedural justice behavioral intentions as well as emotional supportiveness. The scale exhibited good internal reliability at time 1 ($\alpha$ = .84) and time 2 ($\alpha$ = .89) and the factor explained a substantial portion of the variance at time 1 (56.68 percent) and time 2 (65.31 percent). (Time1 Mean = 4.01; SD= .70; Time2 Mean = 3.74; SD = .87). A higher score on this index indicates that the officer intends to give a higher priority to the quality of treatment or procedural justice during traffic stops. The following items were included in this Quality of Treatment Index:

- Be respectful when dealing with the driver
- Stay calm even if the driver yells at you
- Acknowledge the drivers feeling
- Let the driver tell his or her side of the story
- Try to answer all the drivers questions
- Explain the process for paying the tickets or going to court

The GLM repeated measures analysis does not support the program hypothesis (see Table 8-5). Furthermore, from time 1 to time 2 all recruits placed less, not more, emphasis on both the quality of treatment and marginally less emphasis on legalistic/procedural practices.

**Table 8.5. GLM Results for Traffic Stop Quality of Treatment Index**

| | Time | Mean | Std. Error | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control | 1 | 4.08 | .10 | | | |
| | 2 | 3.71 | .12 | **Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts** | | |
| Training | 1 | 3.98 | .10 | Time | $F = 10.74$ | $p = .001$ |
| | 2 | 3.76 | .13 | Time*group | $F = 0.70$ | $p = .405$ |

Higher scores indicate greater priority given to Quality of Treatment.

**Procedural and Legalistic Competency.** To clarify treatment effects, we used a "non-equivalent dependent variables" design that included outcome measures that should be unrelated to the treatment. Specifically, we measured officers' competency with respect to general procedures that should be followed during preliminary investigations or traffic stops to meet both legal and professional expectations. We hypothesized that the experimental and control groups would show no difference on procedural competency because both groups were trained in these matters as a requirement of good, professional policing.

For the self-report questionnaire, officers were asked four procedural questions as part of the traffic-stop scenario described earlier. The Procedural Competence Index was composed of four items and showed good internal reliability at time 1 ($\alpha = .81$) and time 2 ($\alpha = .89$). The factor accounted for 63.91 percent and 75.60 percent of the variance at times 1 and 2, respectively. (Time1 Mean = 4.56; SD= .57; Time2 Mean = 4.39; SD = .77). A higher score on this index indicates that the officer would give a higher priority to legalistic/procedural competence during traffic stops.

Procedural Competence Index:
- Explain to the driver why you stopped the car
- Ask to see the driver's license
- Get the drivers insurance information
- Check to see if there are any warrants for the arrest of the driver

The results, shown in Table 8-6, support the hypothesis that no difference will be detected on procedural/legalistic competencies that are unrelated to the treatment. Furthermore, from time 1 to time 2 recruits in both groups placed less, not more, emphasis on these practices, despite receiving some training on these topics.

**Table 8-6. GLM Results for Traffic Stop Procedural Competence Index**

| | Time | Mean | Std. Error | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control | 1 | 4.62 | .08 | | | |
| | 2 | 4.42 | .11 | **Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts** | | |
| Training | 1 | 4.51 | .09 | Time | $F = 3.14$ | $p = .079$ |
| | 2 | 4.37 | .11 | Time*group | $F = 0.09$ | $p = .769$ |

Higher scores indicate greater priority given to Procedural Competence.

A second test of procedural competence hypothesis was conducted using observational data from actual behavior during role playing. For the observations of videotaped behavior, six items were

measured on the officer's behaviors regarding routine procedures during an encounter, similar to the Procedural Competence Index. These included whether the officer:

- asked questions about the incident and facts,
- answered any questions from the actor,
- offered solutions to the problems,
- explained the next actions to be taken,
- took matter seriously, and
- was knowledgeable and competent.

Factor analysis of the above items yielded a single dimension at both the pretest and posttest. Items from the posttest were averaged across the two actors. Pearson r correlations showed strong relationship across five of the items ranging from 0.59 to 0.97, all less than the .001 significance level. The Pearson r correlation on the item "answers questions" was lower (r = 0.47, p < .01) but was included in the index. This Procedure Index showed good internal reliability at time 1 ($\alpha$ = .87) and time 2 ($\alpha$ = .83). The factor explained a substantial portion of the variance at time 1 (61.99 percent) and time 2 (56.50 percent). Response options included 1 = Yes/Often, 2 = Sometimes, and 3 = No/Never, therefore a higher score on this index indicated less routine procedure type behavior toward the individual. (Time1 Mean = 1.52; SD = .36; Time2 Mean = 1.67; SD = .44).

Consistent with the self-report data, the GLM repeated measures analysis of the observational data support the hypothesis of no difference between the groups, as shown in Table 8-7.

**Table 8-7. GLM Results for Procedural Competence Index**

|          | Time | Mean | Std. Error |                                          |          |          |
|----------|------|------|------------|------------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Control  | 1    | 1.58 | .09        |                                          |          |          |
|          | 2    | 1.75 | .11        | **Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts**   |          |          |
| Training | 1    | 1.65 | .11        | Time                                     | F = 0.28 | p = .603 |
|          | 2    | 1.58 | .13        | Time*group                               | F = 1.40 | p = .248 |

Higher scores indicate less priority given to Procedural Competence.

**Communication Skills and Emotional Intelligence.** We hypothesized that recruits exposed to the training program would show improved communication skills and emotional intelligence relative to controls. An index was created that reflects both communication skills and emotional intelligence. The latter indicates an ability to read, understand, and respond appropriately to emotions in others and oneself. Recruits were asked to evaluate their communication skills by indicating whether they agreed or disagreed with the following eight statements:

- I know how to talk with people.
- I know how to resolve conflict between people.
- I have good communication skills.
- I know how to make someone comfortable.
- I feel confident when using my communication skills.
- I am good are reading other peoples emotions.

- I know how to show empathy or compassion.
- I know how to use nonverbal cues to communicate my feelings to others.

Although the items were designed to tap more than one communication dimension outlined in the training curriculum, analyses indicate that these items were unidimensional at time 1 and time 2 and showed reasonable good internal consistency (time 1 α = .88; time 2 α = .88). As a consequence the items were averaged to create a scale (Time1 $M$ = 3.20, $SD$ = .35; Time2 $M$ = 3.14; $SD$ = .5).

The results from the GLM repeated measures analyses do not support the program hypothesis. Students in the training group did not show significant improvement in their communication skills or emotional intelligence at the end of the academy relative to the controls. If anything, these skills declined slightly in both groups, although the change was not significant (see Table 8-8).

**Table 8-8. GLM Results for Communication Skills**

|  | Time | Mean | Std. Error |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control | 1 | 3.17 | .05 |  |  |  |
|  | 2 | 3.13 | .05 | **Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts** | | |
| Training | 1 | 3.23 | .05 | Time | $F$ = 2.74 | $p$ = .101 |
|  | 2 | 3.16 | .05 | Time*group | $F$ = .15 | $p$ = .699 |

**Decision-making and problem-solving skills.** We hypothesized that recruits exposed to the training program would exhibit better decision making and problem solving skills than recruits in the control group. Recruits were presented with a scenario to measure their decision-making and conflict-resolution strategies. The training program emphasized the importance of conflict-resolution skills and the use of force or arrest as last resorts when other strategies have failed. Students in both groups were presented with the following scenario for measurement purposes:

> *As an officer, image that you are sent on a call to investigate a group of youths "hanging out" in the park. You arrive on the scene and ask the youths to go home. At first, they refuse and start goofing around and calling you names.*
> *Listed below are some methods that might be applied to dealing with the above situation. Some methods may be more effective than others, while some methods may be more appropriate than others. On a 10-point scale ranging from 0 (Not at all) to 10 (Very), please rate how effective and appropriate each of the methods would be for dealing with the situation.*

We hypothesized that the training would impact recruits perceptions of the appropriateness of specific conflict resolution strategies. Recruits who participated in the training would be more likely to rely on mediation and diffusion and less likely to rely on physical force and arrest than recruits who did not participate in the program.

The results for the GLM models are presented in Tables 8-9 through 8-13. The training program yielded a number of positive results in this youth scenario. Relative to controls, the recruits in training group reported that they would be:

- less likely to accept the situation and leave
- more likely to diffuse the situation by telling the kinds they did not have to go home, just leave the park.
- less likely to exert control and authority by yelling at the kids
- less likely to use physical force to get youths to leave and go home
- less likely to arrest all of the youth (see tables below).

**Table 8-9. GLM results: Accept the situation and leave.**

| | Time | Mean | Std. Error | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control | 1 | 0.41 | .29 | | | |
| | 2 | 1.20 | .28 | **Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts** | | |
| Training | 1 | 1.33 | .31 | Time | $F = 0.78$ | $p = .601$ |
| | 2 | 0.82 | .30 | Time*group | $F = 6.20$ | $p = .015$ |

**Table 8-10. GLM results: Attempt to diffuse the situation
by telling the kids they did not have to go home, just leave the park.**

| | Time | Mean | Std. Error | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control | 1 | 6.51 | .42 | | | |
| | 2 | 6.00 | .38 | **Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts** | | |
| Training | 1 | 5.69 | .44 | Time | $F = 1.70$ | $p = .200$ |
| | 2 | 7.13 | .41 | Time*group | $F = 7.41$ | $p = .008$ |

**Table 8-11. GLM results: Exert control and authority by yelling at the kids**

| | Time | Mean | Std. Error | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control | 1 | 3.65 | .36 | | | |
| | 2 | 4.69 | .38 | **Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts** | | |
| Training | 1 | 4.40 | .39 | Time | $F = 1.94$ | $p = .167$ |
| | 2 | 4.20 | .40 | Time*group | $F = 4.22$ | $p = .043$ |

**Table 8-12. GLM results: Use physical force to get the youths to leave and go home**

| | Time | Mean | Std. Error | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control | 1 | 0.75 | .20 | | | |
| | 2 | 2.29 | .33 | **Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts** | | |
| Training | 1 | 1.04 | .21 | Time | $F = 15.65$ | $p < .001$ |
| | 2 | 1.42 | .35 | Time*group | $F = 5.78$ | $p = .018$ |

**Table 8-13. GLM results: Arrests all of the youths**

| | Time | Mean | Std. Error | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control | 1 | 1.82 | .36 | | | |
| | 2 | 3.00 | .39 | **Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts** | | |
| Training | 1 | 2.27 | .39 | Time | $F$ = 1.12 | $p$ = .293 |
| | 2 | 1.76 | .42 | Time*group | $F$ = 7.20 | $p$ = .009 |

**Conclusions**

This project demonstrates that the National Police Research Platform can be a useful mechanism for conducting and evaluating randomized control trials. The Platform measurement system provided pre- and post-academy data on recruits that were useful for assessing the effectiveness of the Quality Interaction Program. Longitudinal measures within the Platform framework can also be used to evaluate outcomes after recruits leave the training academy.

The findings from this evaluation are promising, but mixed. The program did not appear to impact recruits' attitudes about showing respect or procedural justice during encounters with civilians, nor did it alter their self-reported interpersonal communication skills. However, for a subsample of the recruits that was videotaped, the program appears to have been effective at increasing respectful and reassuring behavior during real encounters. Based on ratings from independent "blind" observers, recruits in the experimental group were more inclined than controls to engage in the desired verbal behaviors such as apologizing for what happened, acknowledging the actor's feelings and concerns, being courteous, and making reassuring statements. Regardless of the recruits' true attitudes and internal feelings, these verbal statements may be a direct reflection of the scripts that they developed and rehearsed. This raises an important question about whether external changes in officers' behavior must be accompanied by internal changes in attitudes or feelings, or whether it is sufficient that the victim/ complainant hears these statements. Only future research can address this issue.

The Quality Interaction Program also had a significant positive impact on recruits' decision-making regarding conflict-resolution with youth. Many researchers and practitioners argue that good decision-making on the streets is at the core of good policing and good police administration (Cordner & Scarborough, 2010). Recruits in the training group felt more comfortable getting involved (vs. doing nothing) and attempting to diffuse the problem of youth hanging out in a park. Furthermore, the training group was less inclined than the control group to resort to yelling at the youth, using physical force and/or arresting them. Given the importance of good judgment in the exercise of police discretion, especially with youth, these findings are important. Whether these behavioral intentions will translate into actual behavior in the field remains to be seen.

The impact of the Quality Interaction Program on respectful attitudes and communication skills may have been limited for several reasons. First, the opportunities to rehearse or practice new behaviors or to be given immediate feedback on performance at the individual level were limited, despite the use of innovative materials and methods. Verbal feedback after role-playing scenarios

was provided during the first week of training, but most individualized scenario-based feedback during basic training was focused on officer safety and departmental policies and procedures rather than the quality of encounters. More frequent videotaped feedback was planned, but was judged to be too costly. Second, the dosage of treatment was estimated to be less than 20 hours of class time, embedded in a curriculum that includes more than 1000 hours devoted to other topics. Instructors were encouraged to reinforce the concepts during a one-hour "homeroom" at the start of the day. Observations and feedback from instructors suggests that this reinforcement varied by instructor. In sum, the level of integration with other classes may not have been sufficient to change behavior and attitudes relative to the control group that was exposed to the same non-treatment curriculum.

Third, some degree of "cross-contamination" may have occurred between the experimental and control groups. Although separate instructors were used for treatment and control groups and were cautioned about not sharing treatment materials, we learned that treatment instructors were occasionally assigned to the "homeroom" of control instructors to fill in during their absence. During these assignments, some sharing of the QIP program concepts with controls may have occurred. Also, we learned that at least one control group instructor, who had contact with QIP students during integrated exercises involving all students, was "bad mouthing" the program because he did not believe in the concepts. Thus, the students were receiving mixed messages. These issues underscore the importance of creating physical distance between experimental and control groups in randomized control trials to prevent contamination. Whenever possible, independent training academies in separate locations should be the unit of assignment rather than individual officers.

Fourth, based on considerable observation in the classrooms and hallways of the training academy, this type of innovation in training is likely to be "swimming upstream" against a socialization process that favors toughness and officer safety. Both the treatment and control groups, for example, reported a greater reliance on physical force after six months of training (although the treatment group's reliance on force grew at a significantly slower rate). One Chicago police officer noted that the training academy, perhaps not unlike other academies, suffers from an identity crisis – "on the one hand, we want engaging and innovative learning strategies that are student-centered, yet we hold on tight to a paramilitary model that stresses toughness and discipline above all else." Clearly, toughness and self-defense are critically important for preparing young women and men for potentially life-threatening encounters. The challenge is figuring out how to integrate respectful policing and negotiation skills into this safety paradigm. Without a doubt, safety, respect, and civilian cooperation can, and should be, more strongly linked to each other within the training environment. Hence, the total training process requires more careful examination, especially with regard to the complexities of interpersonal communication and the best way to achieve diverse personal and organizational goals during police-civilian encounters.

Despite these limitations, at the conclusion of a six-month training period, the Quality Interaction Program appears to have produced positive changes in actual behavior as judged by independent observers. While these findings should be viewed with caution because they are based on a subsample of recruits, they are consistent with recent work by Mazerolle & Bennett (2010) in

Australia indicating that procedural justice behaviors can be scripted and taught to law enforcement personnel. The next question is whether these effects can be transferred to the post-academy environment and whether they will persist over time. That is, will recruits act the same way or will they "forget what they have learned" at the academy? Will verbal statements be viewed as genuine or contrived? In the end, the civilians encountered on the job will be the final judge of whether the officers' performance is believable.

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