

## Improving Police Field Training Programs

Approved by Susan Hilal

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# Improving Police Field Training Programs

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Jeff A. Miller

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## **Abstract**

### **Statement of the Problem**

An evaluation of police field training programs is necessary for personal and professional growth in law enforcement organizations. In their current form, training programs for Field Training Officers (FTO) generally rely on instruction provided by private companies that focus on a rigidly numbered system of evaluation. This type of inflexible evaluation system can cause issues with effective training, recruitment, and retention of Millennial officers. Using techniques developed in the academic and corporate world can help resolve those issues. Millennials refer to the cohort of individuals born from about 1982 to 2004. Addressing recruitment and retention issues is also an issue. A variety of techniques is available in the digital world that we live in. Too often, however, police departments are not using the internet as a means to recruit nationally. Creating a blend of academic and traditional training methods will be important to give new officers the best start to their careers.

### **Research Methods**

Training new officers can be a subjective process. One of the most important issues not often taken into account is what Millennials bring with them to their new job. Analyzing current literature and describing what those skills are will be the main focus of this paper. Using police training manuals, scholarly journals, the internet, criminal justice textbooks, and expert evaluation of best practices will provide conclusions and recommendations for police trainers. The problems with a strict and inflexible FTO program and the methods available to mitigate the issues will be explained through adult learning theory and structuring programs to address the adult learner. Bringing together the research and expert's suggestions for best practices in law

enforcement training will lead to a blended system of current training styles and a style best suited for law enforcement in today's society.

### **Summary of Results**

The result of this study indicates that a change in police field training philosophy is needed. After analyzing the current system of training and discovering its weaknesses a more contemporary program that focuses on adult learning and problem oriented policing is suggested. Research indicates Millennial officers have a different expectation of job satisfaction than previous generations. What they want from a job is not necessarily what traditional department training programs can offer. The effects of a generation gap between trainer and trainee can be a barrier , therefore training in better communication skills is recommended.

To find the best-qualified candidates, departments should have a strong internet presence. Options for national recruit hiring options are not currently in place by most law enforcement agencies. Research shows that creating the most diverse department is key to success in the policing mission. Finding candidates who best fit with departmental mission is important. NEO.gov, internet want ads, and social networking sites are among the types of media currently used by Millennial officers and will provide the best results for hiring practices.

Implementation of the strategies recommended will result in better-trained, prepared, and motivated officers. The suggestions are based on empirical evidence and theoretical ideas. By identifying the experts in a variety of fields, sometimes outside of law enforcement, the ideas presented in this study will break down barriers created by unfocused field training.

## Table of Contents

Improving Police Field Training Programs .....	ii
Acknowledgement .....	iii
Abstract .....	iv
Statement of the Problem.....	iv
Research Methods.....	iv
Summary of Results.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
Chapter One: Introduction .....	1
Statement of the problem.....	2
Purpose of the study.....	2
Significance or Implications of the Study.....	3
Methodology.....	4
Contribution to the field.....	4
Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	6
History of Field Training .....	6
Millennial Generation .....	7
Positive Characteristics.....	10
Generations in the Workplace.....	11
Boomer Generation.....	12
Generation X.....	13
Recruitment and Retention .....	14
Recruitment Tactics .....	14
Retention.....	17
Encourage Values .....	18
Training.....	18
Mentoring.....	19
Impact of Work.....	20
Full Disclosure .....	21
Training Strategies.....	22
Field Training Officer.....	22

Appleton Police Department, Wisconsin .....	24
Mesa Police Department, Arizona .....	25
Minneapolis Police Department, Minnesota .....	25
Scottsdale Police Department, Arizona.....	26
Police Training Officer .....	27
Reno Police Department, Nevada .....	30
Eau Claire Police Department, Wisconsin.....	31
Chapter 3: Theoretical Review .....	32
Adult Learning Theory .....	32
Autonomous Learning.....	33
Life Experience.....	33
Goal and Relevancy Oriented Adults.....	34
Practical Training.....	35
Respect.....	36
Bloom's Taxonomy .....	36
Self-Directed Learning Theory .....	39
Conclusion .....	41
Chapter 4: Summary, Recommendations, and Conclusion.....	42
References.....	47
Appendix A.....	53
Appendix B .....	55

## Chapter One: Introduction

According to the Pew Research Center (2010), there are over 50 million Millennials between the ages of 18 and 29. As this generation is coming of age, they are the newest recruits attending police academy and science programs. Millennials have lived their entire life around technology like cell phones, computers, and other communication devices. In their survey, Pew (2010) also indicated that of the list of important life goals, helping people ranks third. Considering the job of a police officer, this statistic is important to note. Getting the top candidates trained and focused on fighting crime is a key issue for law enforcement administrators.

Among a variety of challenges, officers beginning their career in 2010 will face a likelihood of increased responsibility for battling computer related crime. According to a 2006 survey conducted by the National White Collar Crime Center (2006), white-collar crime has risen by 60 percent since 1995. Cyber crime is also outpacing the abilities of law enforcement. This survey also found that more than ever the public recognizes that cyber crime is depleting the nation's resources. The NWCCC indicated that white-collar crime is more severe than ever before. Millennial officers have grown up with electronic devices and should be able to provide needed expertise in this field. Because of the lack of training, funding, or skills it is likely a majority of veteran law enforcement officers have limited ability to stop cyber fraud. Law enforcement trainers need to recognize and tap into the skill set of a new officer.

Another significant challenge for the 21st century officer is homeland security. Schmallegger (2010) says that terrorism will continue to have an impact on departmental time and budgets. Because this will have a persistent effect on training, communication, and intra-departmental cooperation new officers will need to be aware of these issues. Information sharing and



communication between agencies can be an issue. Using computer systems and recognizing the efforts of local agencies will be challenging.

### **Statement of the problem**

Confronting the challenges to law enforcement will require administrators to understand and respond to the needs of the newest generation of officers. Field training officers, specifically, are tasked to evaluate new recruits for a set period of time determined by the organization. Focusing on the tasks that are of critical importance to law enforcement is essential for agency success.

Most FTOs are given limited training, yet are given an incredible responsibility to mold an officer to protect and serve within the police culture of the department. What is taught by FTOs and how it is taught is extremely important for new officers to be successful. The training that is given to FTOs is generally limited to a one-week class that provides some suggestions on evaluating a recruit and some strategies to help resolve conflicts. It is essential, then, that officers assigned to the training division are given the tools to succeed in the important task of field training, to include the basic premises of adult learning theory and Bloom's taxonomy.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to help transition police departments from a traditionally rigid FTO program that often does not allow for trainee growth, to a program that focuses on the learner's needs. Using pieces of established FTO training programs and the Department of Justice's Police Training Officer Program, this study will provide recommendations to improve the on-the-job training of new officers. Recruitment and retention strategies to find the officers that will fit the agencies mission is important to the department and crime-fighting mission. If the wrong individuals are selected, no positive steps can be taken for departmental growth.

The Office of Community Orientated Police Services developed a program through a federal government grant called Police Training Officer (PTO). This program addresses the use of adult learning styles where traditional FTO models do not (DOJ, 1995). The PTO program focuses on coaching and mentoring. It forces new officers to look for community support as they begin their law enforcement career. Many tools are available for trainers to allow the learning process to be successful.

While not a new concept, embracing the complete PTO model has been difficult for agencies to adopt due to the costs of re-training. Therefore, the recommendation of this study, being a blended version of FTO concepts and PTO, will allow more agencies to utilize this fluid model. By blending the two types of training programs, police administrators will be able to satisfy training guidelines currently in place, but also benefit from producing officers that can solve problems on their first day of solo patrol and be able to effectively protect and serve. By producing problem solvers, citizens will have the benefit of a more confident officer from day one of solo patrol. Incorporating adult learning theories into the training is essential.

### **Significance or Implications of the Study**

This paper will argue for a blended system of field training that incorporates a more academic model to training and an objective scoring system for evaluation. An overview for trainers on the, often, special needs of these new officers can provide an important framework for their careers. Howe and Strauss (2000) write that Millennials will be looking for a career that will allow them to build their family at the same time. In addition, they will require “fair play” on pay and benefits. Since the "Great Recession" Millennials have not moved from job to job as much as the previous generation (Pew, 2010). Offering benefits and stability is an important facet of recruiting, gaining by in to the mission, and training objectives. However, retaining these officers

can be challenging. By adopting the recommendations of this study, the hope is that law enforcement administrators should observe less citizen complaints, fewer releases of new officer for performance issues, and produce a better-equipped training staff to meet the day-to-day needs of the organization. A blended FTO concept that has its base in academics will better prepare officers on day one of solo patrol.

## **Methodology**

Research will be gleaned from scholarly peer-reviewed journals and books on the subject. Government publications on training are also an important source of information. Theory will be used to help ground the research in order to make recommendations for improved field training programs. Specifically, adult learning theory, transformative learning theory, and self-directed learning theory will be used.

## **Contribution to the field**

This paper can be an educational tool for departments wishing to evaluate and change their field-training program and their hiring practices. The nature of police work and changing demographics of new hires necessitate a reevaluation of training techniques. This paper will outline generational differences, highlight learning theory, explore possible liability concerns, in order to improve recruitment, retention of officers, and make for police officers that are more effective.

Adopting realistic and contemporary FTO training programs by departments is the goal of this paper. Providing ideas for alternative evaluation scoring systems, in-car training tools, and other uses of technology will be offered. Finally, using the blended system outlined, administrators and

trainers can better prepare their newest officers for community policing on their first day of solo patrol.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

The literature review will be broken down into five main parts. The first part is the history of field training and generational background. The second part will discuss the Millennial generation's positive and negative characteristics. The third part will describe generations in the workplace. The fourth part is an important piece to the training puzzle, and covers recruitment and retention of new officers. Part five is a discussion on field training officer (FTO) and Police Training Officer (PTO) concepts. Included in this section will be case studies from numerous police agencies that use a version of each style.

### **History of Field Training**

The history of American law enforcement dates back to 1845 in New York City. With little oversight, many departments were often full of corruption (Schmalleger, 2010). Not enforcing laws, drinking, gambling, and taking payoffs from the criminal element were endemic of this period (Haberfeld, 2002). It was not until the community-policing era in the late 1960's that the first true training program was developed. It took over 170 years before an official training program for recruits was developed.

In the late 1960's the San Jose Police Department developed a program they titled the Recruit Training and Management Program. Kaminsky (2002) writes that in the late 1950's a two-week orientation program was implemented at various police agencies, but it was limited in scope and had no accountability for the "training" officer. The most likely scenario for the new officer was to "sink or swim", but few "sunk" because of the lack of true evaluation (Kaminsky, 2002, p.xiii). When an officer who had long been identified as being ineffective by his peers crashed his squad and killed a civilian, only then was a new style of effective and documentable training

implemented by San Jose. By 1972, the San Jose Police Department refined the early program and officially titled it the Field Training Officer Program or FTO.

For the last 40 years field training has progressed, but the new generation of officer lacks a skill set that allows for immediate success. Prior generations were able to fall back on military experience, work on farms, and other professions that required hard labor, tenacity, and mental toughness. Studying the dynamics of the newest police recruits, many of the opportunities for prior experience that provided a head start for officers are no longer utilized. American society has become more scientific and service driven (Zakaria, 2008). Because of the service driven economy, it will be important that police departments recognize the technical skills that new recruits bring to the job. Moving forward, the challenge will be for training to become less formalized and fluid enough to meet the needs of the next generation.

### **Millennial Generation**

Municipalities currently face budget concerns, and training is one of the key issues that police administrators will need to address. Recruiting and retaining new officers is expensive and time consuming. The relationship between new generation officers and older generations, who are the current leaders, should be considered. Often, these more experienced officers are the trainers, and without some idea of the goals and values of the Millennials, problems will occur. Providing insight into this generation is the focus of this section.

The Millennial generation is the latest to flood the workplace. This generation is generally considered anyone born in or after 1982 until about 2004 (Huntley, 2006). As these Millennials come of age, their specific needs and concerns will have to be addressed by law enforcement trainers. In a survey conducted by USA Today, 81 percent of Millennials stated their lifetime

goal is to be rich and famous (Jayson, 2007). Alsop (2008) quotes a Pew Research Center study that states the Millennial generation's top goals are to be rich and famous. A Harris Interactive survey said 56% of 13 to 21 year olds said their dream is to be a millionaire by singing or being a musician (Alsop, 2008, p. 11). They were overwhelmed by TV ads that espouse the perfect body, perfect hair, and “bling” (Huntley, 2006). So much of their life has been spent watching television that their time is often spent attempting to emulate the “heroes” of TV. Huntley (2006) writes that many heroes were presented like “Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Xena Warrior Princess, martial arts chicks”, and others (pg. 48). These types of heroes show their independence and have more control over their lives than past TV heroes. Twenge (2006) writes that television role models often do not have a white-collar job in an office. Instead, they have read an article that leads them to believe that "lots of people our age are CEOs of their own companies" (Twenge, 2006, p. 87). Having self-confidence is a trait shared by Millennials, but misplaced notions of work and responsibility can be a concern for law enforcement trainers.

Negative cultural influences will be a concern with any new generation in the workplace. Non-filtered violent video games became commonplace during Millennial's formative years. Games like "Grand Theft Auto" are an extreme example of violence portrayed in 3-d. Berkowitz (2003) quoted a Gallup poll that indicated 70 percent of American teenage boys played Grand Theft Auto and were more likely to be in a fight than those who had not played the game. Twenty-five percent of the boys surveyed played the game more than three hours per week. These types of negative influences could be associated with the spike in violent crime reported by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) in their special report from 2003. In this report, the BJS noted that for boys aged 14-18 an increase in serious violent crime was noted (Rainville, 2003).

The negative influences on the Millennial generation need to be recognized and counteracted through training.

Additionally, a cult of personality has developed around the 80's anti-hero Tony Montana and Scarface (Lewis, 2008). This icon has demonstrated that hard work pays off, but in a negative way. For some in the Millennial world the "bling" displayed by this drug dealing and murderous individual stands for everything they want. Not following rules and doing whatever it takes to succeed in a reckless manner can be a concern. Getting past some of these adolescent issues to make a professional law enforcement officer can take some extra time that other generations may not understand.

Howe and Strauss (2000) contend that the Millennials are the smartest generation in history. They have corrected a decline in writing proficiency and their reading comprehension is up 4 to 6 percent. Taylor (2010) states that Millennials that have attended some college have already surpassed previous generations. As they continue to move through the educational system, their advanced degree projections will also be higher than previous generations as, according to Taylor, half of the generational members surveyed want to earn an advanced or professional school degree.

Huntley (2006) says that Millennials can be paralyzed by the extreme variety of options afforded to them. Because their Boomer parents were, in general, well off they did not need to work outside the home. They were told since a very young age that they could be whatever they want to be. Lancaster (2010) says that Millennials are coming to the workplace with the least amount of prior experience then any past generation. From 2006 to 2009, Millennials saw a nine percent drop in full time employment (Taylor, 2010). By 2008, this translated into just over 50



percent unemployment for this generation (Thornton, 2009). Because of this drop, Millennials can expect to have a significant college loan debt. They participated in sports, volunteered, and traveled more than any generation in history. While this provides optimism unseen in prior generations, it presents unique challenges to those in leadership and training positions.

Research shows that Millennials are the most sheltered generation in history. Howe and Strauss (2000) point to many factors that contribute to this information. They describe an explosion of kid safety and rules, the '80s child-abuse frenzy, and post-Columbine lockdowns of public schools. The authors write that parents of Millennials pushed them to study hard and planned each portion of their day to the minute. With that kind of attention these kids, now adults can sometimes be lost in situations that require quick thinking and high stress. The challenge for law enforcement trainers is to recognize this and bring these individuals around as slowly as possible. Providing appropriate and challenging training can be effective. At issue is that a generational difference precludes recognition of problems that have surfaced. Though sheltered in their youth, the young men and women coming to law enforcement agencies bring skills unknown to veteran officers.

### **Positive Characteristics**

Millennials are used to working in groups and presenting their ideas verbally. Improvements in all aggregate test scores across minority groups are soaring (Howe, 2000). Millennials are doing better in math and science as well. A survey quoted by Howe and Strauss (2000) revealed that teachers rated students significantly higher in meeting national education goals. The National Center for Education Statistics (NEAP) reported that scores on reading, math, and science were up on an average of two percent better than in the 1980's (Snyder, 2009).

Significant gains in reading comprehension were reported by the NEAP as well. Thirty-six percent more "advanced level" courses were offered to high school students in the 2000's according to NEAP. Overall, the Millennial generation comes to the workplace with more educational credentials than prior generations.

The Millennial generation has respect for leadership and they value feedback from those in charge. Lancaster (2010) writes that Millennials are eager to collaborate and enjoy interaction within the workplace. What they lack in skill they make up for in effort. They have confidence in the future even though recent economic issues have limited the available jobs recent graduates endured. Howe and Strauss (2000) quoted a Gallup poll that indicated 40 percent of Millennials, compared to 68 percent of Generation X young adults stated it was "harder to grow up" than in their parents times (p. 178). In a 1997 survey Millennials stated they were very close to their parents and felt personally happy. An updated survey in 2009, shows the trend to continue as up to 79 percent of young adults rate themselves as happy (Gallup, 2009).

### **Generations in the Workplace**

Howe and Strauss (2000) write that "a hero generation arrives just after an era of society-wide upheaval in values and culture that many historians call a 'spiritual awakening' and passes through childhood during a time of decaying civic habits, ebbing institutional trust, and resurgent individualism" (pg. 326-327). For Howe and Strauss (2000) even though other experts have raised concerns with the Millennials, they are destined for greatness. The authors provide examples of past generations that re-shaped America after a tumultuous event. The "Glorious generation" born from 1648-1673, were the Puritans who settled America. The "Republican generation" born from 1742-1766, fought for American Independence. The "Progressive

generation” born from 1843-1859, led the country out of the Civil War. The “GI generation” born from 1901-1924, fought World War II and provided leadership during the Cold War era. Civic mindedness and teamwork are patterns that Millennials share with other great generations. Because the parents of these children made a greater effort to shield them in childhood, they were able to face the tough times presented to them later in adult life. These great generations share the ability to form their own destiny.

There are two other generations in the workplace that need to be identified and understood. Their collective experience and reasoning can inhibit true communication with the Millennials. The Boomer generation and Generation X are the names given to these generations. These generations generally comprise the senior command staff, middle management team and the experienced officers and trainers of most departments.

### **Boomer Generation**

Howe and Strauss (1991) describe the Boomers, born between 1943 and 1960, as idealists. Their collective influences include Woodstock and a culture war with their parents over the discovery of their "self". Generally allowed to participate in life as they saw fit this generation, in youth, took more chances and trended sharply downward in academic performance (Howe & Strauss, 1991). As they aged, this group decided that the pleasure of youth was not a trait that needed to be passed down. They continued though to challenge the status quo and defined each crisis as the coming of an apocalypse (Howe & Strauss, 1991). Their values have taken a full turn from the exploration and exploitation of self, to one of abstinence, monogamy, and thriftiness. As they aged into parenthood, a new generation was born into this, seemingly, smug and hypocritical atmosphere.

## **Generation X**

Generation X, born from about 1960 through 1980 are the first-line supervisors and trainers to the Millennials. The collective experience of this generation shapes the philosophy and day-to-day operations of many police departments. Xers lived through one national crisis after another. From Vietnam hysteria to Three Mile Island generation X children turned into a lost generation (Howe, 1991). Their test scores continued to drop and a national crisis in education was declared. Splintered families and a mixed message on sex education provided Xers with a sense of fatalism not seen in other generations. Provide for yourself was another message Xers had to face. More and more Boomer mothers worked outside of the home, young Xers were latchkey kids who spent time by themselves more and more (Howe, 1991). Complex households were the norm for this generation as more than 56 percent of children lived with two once-married parents, 11 percent with a stepparent, and 19 percent with only a single parent (Howe, 1991). More Xers chose military service over other service occupations than any other generation not drafted. Expect the worst, react to it, and handle it on your own is the mantra of generation X (Howe, 1991). They were forced to grow up quickly in a world that did not necessarily care to see them around.

The collective experience of Boomers and Generation X is important to understand so that a discussion on communication during training can take place. Life experience and patterns of influence greatly contribute to attitudes and miscommunication among trainers and trainees. Recognition of the many facets of an individual's experience will allow for a lessening of the communication gap amongst peers.

## **Recruitment and Retention**

Recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of new officers is important, but developing strategies to enhance the positives and suppress the negatives is the key to mission success. Before training begins, getting the right person in the job is crucial. Using a high technology campaign to draw the brightest candidates, developing policy for educational requirements, and psychological screening departments can get those officers hired and retained.

Millennial generation workers have an expectation that they can compete for top-level jobs within six months of starting employment. They have been used to instant gratification their whole lives (Giordani, 2005). What this means to the law enforcement recruiter is that there needs to be up front expectations of “regular” duty. Giordani (2005) writes that jobs are not sought by the Millennials for monetary reasons alone. Making a difference in their community is what Millennials seek in a career. Huntley (2005) states the generation has the confidence and a passion for the career and they will be able to change the world. A job with meaning and purpose is high on the list of career choices for Millennials. Policing is a career that counts on service to the community. Building on that theme can be a challenge for administrators in recruitment but one that must be faced. This can be a battle because too many television shows have displayed unrealistic expectations of patrol officer duties. If the right individual is recruited, it will be up to the FTO to build upon the community service ethic that the trainee brings with them.

### **Recruitment Tactics**

Current recruitment techniques must be examined to ensure that not only qualified candidates are applying, but also to ensure the job openings are available to the majority of interested individuals. An Internet presence is the new newspaper want ads. Many different sites cater to

the employer and allow millions to see an ad. One government website called NEOgov.com allows candidates to fill out an on-line application and be connected to jobs in a multi-state area (NEOgov, 2010). By automating the process NEOgov gives the recruit the power to update their application and stay connected on their own terms. Millennials are not “stuck” in their hometown and will move to accommodate their job preferences. In their worldview and with the ease of travel, simply recruiting in local areas will not generate enough qualified candidates or appropriate diversity in a global world. Use of technology will be important to departments to get the right candidates to the job.

Another tactic to find the most qualified candidates can be to use current Millennial officers as spokespersons. Going to job fairs and speaking to candidates face to face is a best practice according to CA POST (2006). Training recruiters is also important to finding the right candidates. Depending on the size of the agency, CA POST recommends training in diversity, agency mission, public speaking, and diversity issues. Using Millennials as recruiters will allow for their personal growth. Collaborating with others is an identified strength of the generation (Sujansky, 2009). Sujansky (2009) also recommends creating a "fun" atmosphere in the workplace. It is a reality that the role of a police officer is not usually "fun"; taking an opportunity to go to job fairs, recruit, and step outside the daily rigors of patrol can be enjoyable. At the same time, using the Millennial officer's skills to be able to discuss specific job responsibilities with a peer is important.

A high technology campaign can also set agencies apart. Lancaster (2010) writes that putting technology to work can set a company apart. Sujansky (2009) writes that Millennials spend 6.5 hours a day communicating through some sort of media device. In addition, they log 8.3 hours a day in media exposure. Without a presence on social networking sites, the blog-o-sphere, and

other commonly used Millennial outlets 21st century recruiting will stagnate. Huntley (2006) goes further and states that the Millennials are a global generation. They have a "different perception of space" because they have grown up with technology (Huntley, 2006, p. 17). Web sites like amazon.com, CNN, MTV, and KaZaA provide opportunities for departments never before afforded (Giordani, 2005). Social networking sites like Twitter, MySpace, and Facebook can also generate interest in an agency. Twittering the mundane can be a powerful tool for the Millennial because it provides a frame of reference for what will be expected when they start the job. The internet also provides an opportunity to recruit globally and accomplish another of CA POST's best practices of diversity (POST, 2006). Internet sites offer an opportunity to sell a department's brand and can allow for professional growth by allowing new officers to contribute to the recruitment mission.

Progressive agencies have mirrored the corporate world and are using technology to find the right candidates. For example, the Appleton Police Department in Wisconsin produced a high quality DVD that is included in a job packet that is handed out at job fairs or mailed to prospective recruits. This DVD allows the recruit to view photos of current officers, available positions, and benefits. The East Palo Alto Police Department in California uses links on their website to technological devices used by officers on the street (Palo Department, 2010). Honolulu Hawaii Police takes some of their equipment in a recruiting van to sporting events to show their brand (Regan, 2004). The Honolulu Police recognized that recruits are drawn to a strong brand and that use of technology is important to the Millennials. Using non-traditional methods of recruiting is important to find the best qualified Millennials.

## Retention

Assuming that the recruitment techniques discussed worked, the next step in training is retention. In his classic management book, *Good to Great*, Jim Collins contends that starting with the "who" is far more important than the "what" (Collins, 2001). Collins states that the "bus driver" i.e. company leadership, has to "get the right people on the bus". Lancaster (2010) writes that entry-level work seems like a huge step down for Millennial workers. Traditional thinking states that new hires need to wait and pay their dues before a higher-level position is achieved. Lancaster (2010) contends that insecure supervisors are afraid to push the envelope on the job description. She advises to "mix it up" by delegating some of the tasks that can help the Millennial grow and at the same time keep things interesting for them. Once hired and on the bus Millennials can be used to foster the spirit of an organization and be a positive influence on new officers.

Retention must be the ultimate goal of any police agency. Keeping the individuals that are hired and trained is key to the seamless operations of the department. Giordani (2005) lists seven steps to retain these employees:

1. Encourage their values: Any way to show appreciation for their individuality and let them be expressive will keep them around. Allow them to have input into the decision-making process. They want to be heard.
2. Train them: This is the most education-oriented generation in history. If you want a job well done, tell them how to do it. Complete training and availability of answers is the key. Field training concepts will be addressed in significant detail later in this study.
3. Mentor them: They want to add to your company, not own it. Do not be afraid to give feedback, positive or negative. Make their work valid: Don't just give orders, give the reasoning behind them. If you want them to do something, tell them why, in a way that lets them know the importance of the task to the company.



- 4 Show them how their work will contribute to the bottom line: They need to know they are making an impact.
- 5 Provide full disclosure: They value fairness and ethical behavior, while also being skeptical. If they feel you are not truthful, they will not be satisfied.
- 6 Create customized career paths: This will create a sense of control that Gen Y desires and will provide them with a realistic account of their progress and their future with the employer.
- 7 Provide access to technology: Having the newest and the best technology at their fingertips will attract and retain Millennial employees (pg. 11).

Giordani's ideas can play a key role in retention and bear some more detailed analysis.

### **Encourage Values**

Part of a quality retention strategy is to encourage the values that new officers bring with them. Highlighting the departmental values from the beginning of employment is equally important. Many police departments across the nation have a mission and value statement. The Appleton Police Department espouses courage, compassion, and integrity (APD, 2010). Palo Alto Police Department's values are honesty/integrity, accountability/ownership, consistency and fairness, creativity and innovation, positive attitude, teamwork and a strong work ethic (Palo Department, 2010). Honolulu Police describe their values as integrity, respect, and fairness (HPD, 2010). Value statements are a part of a department's identity. Encouraging them is a key component to making a quality new officer.

### **Training**

A training program that recognizes the positive and minimizes the negative influences of the Millennial generation is crucial to successful retention. Junginger (2007) states that collaborative learning is one way to take helpful steps forward in training. Training that involves others in a

technological setting that they control will be a way for them to learn effectively. Atypical training techniques can stimulate the learner and create a positive work culture leading to retention of employees. Training should begin at the first day of hire. Implementing a culture of stimulating and relevant training is key to successful retention.

## **Mentoring**

A mentoring program is crucial for the retention of Millennials. These workers want to feel needed and will have many questions as they begin their career. These questions will not only apply to job performance but to outside concerns. Mentoring is not a new concept. Historically, apprentices trained under masters of a craft until they themselves were ready to be masters (Sprafka, 2008). Police departments focus on the basic training for recruits but often when their initial training is complete, new officers have no official process for asking questions. Sprafka (2008) contends that using a mentoring program will increase the likelihood for success for new officers. Using real-world examples from the mentor can help avoid pitfalls both on duty and off. A formal mentoring program sends a message of inclusiveness through the organization. Sprafka (2008) also says that using a formal process can assist in the leadership message. Types of ideas that will flow down the chain of command might be mission and value statements, discipline procedures, or new policy. Because the formal mentor is a stakeholder in these issues, they can give an unfiltered and unbiased view to their protégée.

For Millennial officers the chance to be a formal mentor can add to their sense of collaboration. Alsop (2008) says that using a mentoring program can enhance the connection to the organization. Formal mentoring is a fantastic way of developing skills and keeping their motivation level high. Lack of confidence is an identified issue with Millennial work. Alsop

(2008) recommends multiple mentors to keep the flow of information to the Millennial moving. A formal mentoring process is a means to provide continual feedback outside of the normal official written evaluation time. A peer mentor can work closely with the supervisory team to keep the new officer up to speed on their progress. In addition, because this relationship is named and recognized by command staff a peer in the field can provide valuable counsel and lessen any confusion the new officer may have on a call for service. Using peer officers, outside the FTO program, as mentors can provide great benefits for both parties involved.

Using veteran officers as mentors is also important to success within the organization. Knowledge transfer is important to a department's stability and professional growth. Putting the veteran officer in the program can reinvigorate them if the right questions are asked. Who needs to know, what needs to be answered, and is anyone talking about it are great questions to ask mentors (Lancaster, 2010). Engaging veterans in these conversations will make the knowledge transfer relevant and seamless. The mentoring program should be outside of other training to be successful. Sprafka (2008) notes three primary goals for a mentoring program. They are: promote professional growth, inspire personal motivation, and enhance the effectiveness of police service. Mentoring is not a performance measure and mentors can provide support and friendship. The mentoring concept can be used as an official or unofficial tool for transitioning the recruit to the department. Using a mentoring program can enhance the training experience and provide stability at the start of a career.

### **Impact of Work**

Feedback on the how and why of Millennial work is important to new officers. The formal evaluation process is the key to the successful retention of officers. Kramer (1998) writes that a personalized system of evaluation could work at an individual level. Creating a system that

evaluates performance measures based on a department's needs allows for officer growth. Kramer (1998) further states that written within the guidelines could be an incentive or rewards program. Traditional thoughts on rewards within police agencies might find this laughable. Creating a paradigm shift in this thinking is crucial to retention of Millennial officers who have been raised with incentives and rewards for participation. Monaco (2007) says that Millennials feel they are special because of the rewards for participation they received while growing up. An evaluation system that provides self-rewards would be a way to bridge the gap in unrealistic, and sometimes contrary to union rules, expectations of rewards. Lancaster (2010) recommends personalization of rewards. This is the most effective means and it can simply be recognition in front of the group. Small items like tote bags, coffee mugs, thumb drives, or other items might be all it takes to keep motivation levels up (Lancaster, 2010). Moving Millennials from their sheltered environment into the real world of policing can be accomplished by a personalized system of evaluation. Words of encouragement can be the best motivator and a superlative way to show the impact of the new officer's work.

### **Full Disclosure**

Communication with Millennials during training and beyond is important for retention. Each generation has their own ideas about communication and each will tolerate different levels of "secrecy". Fleschner (2008) states that the Boomer generation and Generation X will be comfortable with less information passed down because of their experiences of independent thinking. Millennials, however, will be less tolerant of anything but full disclosure because of their upbringing. Given the opportunity to comment and plan everyday activities from a young age Millennials will seek more input even at the beginning of their career. Recognizing and supporting this will be important for retention.

## **Training Strategies**

There are two options for training of recruits employed by law enforcement agencies in the United States. First, field-training officer (FTO) programs are the most widely used and offer command and control options with a scoring system that rates specific tasks observed by the field training officer. Within this system tasks are itemized and performed by the trainee in an on the job training environment. Generally, the training course for prospective FTO's is a weeklong course offered by professional traveling instructors. A second option is the Police Training Officer (PTO) model developed by the Department of Justice. This program is also a weeklong training but has limited availability throughout the United States. Describing and analyzing these options will be the focus of the next section of this paper.

### **Field Training Officer**

Field training is perhaps the most important issue facing police departments today. Due to shrinking budgets, efficiency in operation is necessary. Training new officers for successful solo patrol is imperative to mission success. Historically, FTOs are given basic tools to deal with minor problems and a few strategies for remedial training. The FTO evaluation tools often include daily observation reports (DOR), weekly evaluations, and oral boards (Kaminsky, 2002). While these options are recommended to be standardized, each department that uses FTO has adjusted it to their own specifications. Because of this the standard training model provided by offsite trainers may be ineffective.

The San Jose Police Department set the standard for FTO programs in 1971. Their system is still in use for a majority of departments that use FTO. They developed a system that called for a seven-point evaluation system. The rationale was that "4" was minimally acceptable and that

numbers on either side of that standard would show a graphic representation of the trainee's progress (Kaminsky, 2002). DOR's used in a recommended 14-week program will produce roughly 52 to 65 reports that can be evaluated by supervisors. This system effectively allows for trainee growth, tracking training technique, and holds the trainer accountable.

Research shows that there are many differences in the evaluation system originally designed by San Jose in use throughout the United States. Kaminsky (2002) warns that some of these systems may not represent the true nature of a trainee's problems. In a pass/fail system the documentation effort by the FTO is important as the scoring system could be viewed as subjective (Kaminsky, 2002). A 3-point scale is also judged ineffective by Kaminsky due to the tendency of the FTO to award a 2 (acceptable) just as easily as a 1 (unacceptable). Because there is no room for charting growth, the 3-point system fails. The 5-point system can work but there is not as much graphic proof to be fully effective (Kaminsky, 2002). With the 5-point system, the trainee may show marked improvement, but the continued scoring of a "2" until they reach the minimally acceptable point may be a de-motivator for the trainee. As with any change in an original, different rationale and agency needs should be taken into account.

On its face, the scoring system required by an FTO program could be considered subjective to the trainer's likes and dislikes. To combat this issue, a series of critical tasks are identified and presented to both the trainer and subsequently the trainee. Called standardized evaluation guidelines by Kaminsky in the original material, these tasks set a baseline for the trainee. Broken down into specific points, some tasks include driving skill, routine form processing, general officer safety, interview/interrogation skill and many others (Kaminsky, 2002). From the most general most used police practices to the most complex investigations the task list serves as a guide for training. In addition, a quality-training manual will provide a point of reference to the

trainer by clarifying what numbered score corresponds to the trainee's actions. By using standardized form and guidelines, FTOs and trainees can concentrate on teaching and learning.

Rotation between FTOs is crucial to the success of the program. Kaminsky (2002) writes that having multiple FTOs allows ideas to be presented in different ways and styles. "People learn in different ways as trainers train in different ways" (Kaminsky, 2002, p. 15). This approach allows the trainee to take pieces from each FTO and develop their own style from those pieces. Being exposed to different styles allows personalities to be taken into account for evaluation purposes. If the trainee does not connect or has difficulty with an FTO, a planned switch to another FTO will show if they can't do the job or if the training style was inappropriate for that individual (Kaminsky, 2002). The San Jose model recommends three FTOs that rotate every four weeks in "phases". Using different personalities and training styles a trainee can grow and be prepared for solo patrol.

The following departments use some form of FTO. Some have deviated a great deal from the original program; others have retained much of the structure.

### **Appleton Police Department, Wisconsin**

The Appleton Police Department (APD) uses a system developed from the San Jose method. Its system, however, mirrors its post-FTO evaluation system. This method allows officers to be familiar with the post-FTO evaluation process (APD, 2010). APD uses a pass-fail system that does not use numbers to evaluate; instead, three tags track the progress of the recruit officer. Satisfactory is achieved when the trainee shows any performance above minimally acceptable. "Improvement Needed" is noted when a trainee does not complete a task to the standardized evaluation guidelines called "the critical task list" (APD, 2010). "Unacceptable" is scored if the

trainee does not make a true effort at completing the task, is overwhelmingly deficient in a part of the task, or violates basic safety principles. The APD uses a version of the original San Jose method of training, but tries to assimilate the new officer to the department by using documentation formerly introduced after training is complete.

### **Mesa Police Department, Arizona**

The Mesa Police Department in Arizona uses a version of FTO that is crafted to meet the needs of their agency. Mesa uses a four-phase nineteen-week system. Recently, the program incorporated a "proficiency program" that allows flexibility in the number of weeks a recruit is in training (Mesa, 2010). A significant change from the original program is that the trainee can operate on their own for up to five weeks. The FTO is still monitoring their progress and filling out daily report forms but are driving in a different vehicle. The FTO, by using this technique, can still oversee the trainee but meets the agencies needs of more officers on the street (Mesa, 2010).

Forms used by Mesa Police FTOs do not significantly differ from the original model. Their scoring system is the 1-7 scale recommended by Kaminsky. However, one form that was added to increase supervisor responsibility for trainees is the Sergeant's Weekly Report (SWR) (Mesa, 2010). This form forces the patrol sergeant to be directly involved in the trainee's progress. By using this form, the first line supervisors must provide input to the FTO allowing for trainee growth.

### **Minneapolis Police Department, Minnesota**

Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) modified the original program to incorporate a longer evaluation period. MPD's FTO program is one of the longest in the nation. They incorporate five



phases and up to five months of training (Burbank, 2009). They named the daily report the Recruit Officer's Performance Evaluation (ROPE). The trainee is scored in 26 categories. While not significantly different from the forms used by San Jose, the MPD forms ask for specific details on the trainee's day-to-day activity. Two areas of specific note, not often seen in other programs, are crime scene/physical evidence observations and problem solving skills. This detailed analysis of the recruit's daily performance enhances the FTO program's ability to evaluate the trainee's skills.

Another significant deviation from the original model at MPD is the "unplugging" of the recruit. Burbank (2009) says that unplugging from street duty may be needed if the recruit is lagging behind in any specific competency as determined by the FTO. In this occurs, the recruit is assigned to a trainer who is "good at teaching that category" (Burbank, 2009, p. 7). If the problem cannot be remediated at the FTO level then the trainee may be reassigned to the academy for re-training. This technique is a way that MPD has deviated from the original program to improve the performance of recruits to specifically fit the mission of the department.

### **Scottsdale Police Department, Arizona**

Scottsdale Police Department (SPD) uses a system that is similar to the original model. Their program uses a 5-point scoring evaluation. The recruits daily tasks are evaluated by the FTO on a daily observation report (DOR). (Parrow, 2003). SPD has a 13-week program broken into the recommended four phases. SPD specifies within their policy the amount of work the FTO should be exposed to. For example, in phase 1 the trainee should be exposed to 5-25% of the workload and the FTO handles 95-75% of the work (Parrow, 2003). SPD uses a large majority of the original model without a lot of changes.

A training topic not covered in any of the other researched departments is an emotional survival course taught by SPD staff. Officer suicide rates occur at a much higher rate than should be expected when compared to the general population. Pangaro (2010) writes that while criminals kill between 100 and 150 officers a year, almost 300 suicides happen. SPD addresses this issue head on by teaching the recruits emotional survival techniques. Areas include stress and burnout, maintain healthy diet, keep current relationships, and available departmental counseling options. This type of training is outside of normally suggested topics, but may have a substantial impact on the life of a new officer.

When it was developed, the FTO concept was revolutionary because it allowed a police agency to chart the progress of a recruit. Its structure allowed for accountability, command and control, and guidelines that produced effective police officers. Over time, the concept was modified by individual agencies to suit their own needs. FTO is still applicable for training new officers and its popularity and ease of use compensates for some of the shortcomings of the original model.

### **Police Training Officer**

The office of Community Orientated Police Services developed a program through a federal government grant called Police Training Officer or “PTO”. This program addresses the use of adult learning styles where traditional FTO models do not (DOJ, 1995). The PTO program focuses on coaching and mentoring. It forces new officers to look for community support as they begin their law enforcement career. Tools available to develop problem-solving skills include problem based learning exercises, coaching and training reports, and a neighborhood portfolio exercise (DOJ, 1995). Using traditional FTO methods, too often, the recruit officer must find these resources on their own.

The PTO program redefines the use of field training evaluation techniques. Using problem-based learning exercises, weekly coaching reports, daily journaling, a neighborhood portfolio exercise, and other techniques, the PTO program provides “contemporary evaluation” that current FTO models do not (DOJ, 1995). One of the main teaching tools for the PTO is problem-based learning exercises. In the beginning of the phase, the recruit officer is presented with a “real-life”, ill-structured problem that has no easy solution (DOJ, 1995, pg. 6). Good “theoretical” situations have a number of possible outcomes and the recruit is asked to provide two solutions to the problem. Appendix A (attached) is taken from the DOJ training manual as an example. These types of training scenarios allow the recruit to hypothesize, ask questions, research, and then solve the problem (DOJ, 1995). Working together with the PTO to identify community services, important stakeholders, and other resources the recruit develops critical thinking skills within the framework of training instead of at their own pace once released to solo patrol. The problem-based exercises are ideal for developing problem solving skills in a new patrol officer.

The PTO program also uses a group philosophy of problem solving. Using the resources available to them, probationary officers can use the skills they learned from their academic career to solve problems. The problem solving activities can be assigned to a group of officers. In addition, all the officers in the PTO program usually accomplish the neighborhood portfolio exercise. This allows for a team approach and it saves time and money. These exercises can be a key factor in the development of the officers and often help them transition to solo patrol easier.

The PTO concept identifies core competencies, which focuses the trainee on the most important issues presented throughout training. The 15 competencies are among the first items introduced to the new officer (DOJ, 1995). They are identified as the most common issues facing

a police officer. Included in the list that is unique to the PTO program are conflict resolution, leadership, cultural diversity and special needs groups, ethics, and importantly lifestyle stressors/self-awareness/self-regulation (DOJ, 2008). Being aware of these competencies in day-to-day operations is the focus of the trainee.

A training matrix is used to chart the progress of the trainee in the PTO program. The training matrix juxtaposes agency specific policy and procedure and the core competences. The matrix shows the trainee upcoming events and ensuring the appropriate skills are learned at the right time (DOJ, 2008). Like FTO, the PTO program uses a phase concept. The skills presented are grouped into four stages of learning. Phase A covers non emergency response, phase B covers emergency incident response, phase C covers patrol activities, and phase D has criminal investigations as its focus. Throughout this process, the trainee is required to keep a daily journal of their activities. This journal documents daily activities, allows the trainee to reflect on calls for service, and helps identify areas where improvement is needed (DOJ, 1995). This system is flexible so that if an incident occurs outside of the phase assigned the PTO and trainee can use that opportunity to train and discuss this incident.

Another distinctive training technique used in the PTO program is learning activity packages (LAP). These packages cover a wide variety of specialized learning activities (DOJ, 1995). Because academic and recruit programs can differ in focus, the department using a PTO concept can introduce specific learning activities that focus on important topics. The LAPs are included in the manual for the trainee to read and ask questions about the issue presented. Verbal and/or written quizzes are used to ensure understanding of the topic. The PTO also asks the trainee to apply these concepts in a question and answer session where the trainee develops a verbal scenario as to when they would actually use the specific information in a real world contact.

When the contact does eventually happen in a citizen contact this information is included in the recruits journal and the weekly coaching report to reinforce the training. The use of LAPs is an important part of developing problem solving skills in the trainee.

The following departments use the PTO method. As noted, one of the advantages of this program is that the training can be crafted to meet each individual agencies needs.

### **Reno Police Department, Nevada**

The Reno Police Department (RPD) was the original test site for the PTO method. Since the implementation of the PTO model, RPD modified some aspects of the program to fit their needs. Specifically, they train their FTOs to use Bloom's Taxonomy to address training issues (RPD, 2004). The program focuses on using adult learning techniques. The manual directs FTOs to be, primarily, a trainer instead of an evaluator. Though, the DOJ's training manual addresses these theories, RPD expands the concepts and makes adult learning a focal point for the FTO and trainee.

The uses of performance plans based on Bloom's Taxonomy are also unique to RPD's version of PTO. Training the FTO to use a "falling forward" technique, RPD addresses the concerns most FTO programs encounter. Using this concept the trainee can learn in real time not only what works, but also what does not without fear of reprimand (RPD, 2004). This approach, naturally, puts the trainee at ease and allows for officer growth. Focusing on adult learning produces problem solvers within Reno Police Department, as intended by the original PTO model.

### **Eau Claire Police Department, Wisconsin**

The Eau Claire Police Department (ECPD) uses the PTO method. Their training documents mirror the DOJ PTO book exactly. The phases are laid out precisely as the DOJ manual suggests. Because of the flexibility in design, the learning activities are focused on solving identified community problems. Airport codes, checking of specific buildings, detox areas, and landlord tenant issues are trained in phase A or the non-emergency incident response phase (ECPD, 2008). Within the guidelines, a recruit is pointed towards websites that give specific information on the areas of patrol. In addition, community leaders are identified for easy reference if questions arise on problem-solving strategies. In phase B, or emergency incident response, ECPD designates time for the trainee to meet with the police chaplain for training. Final evaluations are done by DOJ recommendations using verbal and physical tests of skill. Using the DOJ manual as a guide, ECPD incorporates the essential tools to build a community-oriented police officer.

The Department of Justice developed the Police Training Officer concept in response to concerns by police administrators over liability issues (RPD, 2004). Administrators recognized that the FTO concept was not updated for over 30 years. Basing the program on how adults learn was a revolutionary step in breaking from the command and control and militaristic model of FTO. Using the PTO system based, in part, on problem-based learning successfully used in the education and medical fields is a significant step in creating professional police officers in the 21st century.

### **Chapter 3: Theoretical Review**

Adult learning refers to a collection of theories under conditions where learning is optimized (Trivette et. al, 2009). This collection has the potential to bridge the generation gap and improve communication to enhance field training. Research has shown that a base of adult learning is necessary for trainers (Haberfeld, 2002). The following analysis of the theory is important in forming a foundation for training the trainer.

Current training models do not address the use of these theories in any substantial form (Bumbak, 2010). Because FTO training has not been changed in 30 years, the use of these techniques has taken a backseat to controlling every aspect of the training process. Integrating these concepts can have a significant impact on a new training model.

#### **Adult Learning Theory**

Knowles put the adult learning theory forth, originally, in 1970. Knowles provided six main tenets to his theory:

1. Adults are autonomous and self-directed
2. Adults have accumulated a foundation of life experiences and knowledge
3. Adults are goal oriented
4. Adults are relevancy oriented
5. Adults are practical
6. Adults need to be shown respect (Lieb, 2009)

Each of these characteristics is important for the training officer to consider as a trainee begins the field-training program. By understanding these concepts, an FTO can be more aware of the process of learning that best fits the individual trainee's needs. Examining each of these tenets will provide the basis for the theoretical review.

## **Autonomous Learning**

One key issue with all law enforcement trainers is control of a situation. The first characteristic of the adult learning theory states that adults need to be autonomous in learning. Indeed, in some situations, the trainer needs to be in control for safety purposes, but some honest mistakes can be made without harm to the service call or officer safety needs. Making mistakes is part of learning. What is important is to minimize errors and provide quality feedback to lessen the negative emotional result (Trivette et al, 2009). When tasks are laid out in clear and concise manner, trainees will be able to have better skill acquisition than in the traditional model. Trivette et al. (2009) also recommends that are more likely to be effective if the training uses "multiple learning experiences, large doses of learner self-evaluation, and facilitated learner assessment of (their) learning against a set of standardized criteria" (p. 11). Sometimes, allowing a mistake can be a better learning tool than controlling and correcting everything immediately. Training the FTO to debrief, evaluate, and provide quality feedback after every call for service is an important part of the learning process. Indeed, both the FTO and the recruit can benefit from short debriefings that relates to performance criteria set forth in the FTO manual.

## **Life Experience**

Life experience and knowledge is another component to the adult learning theory that can help with transitioning new recruits from campus life to street life. Too often, the training officer is not even aware of the significance of this element of learning. Varieties of factors are responsible for this dynamic. First, veteran officers have a pre-set image of recent graduates and may feel the recruit has nothing to offer. Second, because of time constraints and training agendas, prior life experience is often discounted. Finally, a feeling that "dues" must be paid can



be pervasive in an agency. Training FTOs to consider life experience is important to successful outcomes for the trainee.

Lieb (1991) writes that a knowledge base is what new workers bring to the job. They must use this base to be able to learn any new task. Wojecki (2007) says that adult learners forge their identities through workplace learning. By telling and re-telling stories to peers, they are able to gain perspective as to the quality of their work. One goal of field training should be to make the new employees' identity strong.

### **Goal and Relevancy Oriented Adults**

The next generation of law enforcement officers often has different values, goals, and motivations than prior generations. Law enforcement administrators must outline departmental goals and values throughout training and into solo patrol. Constructing a program that progresses in a manner that builds skills is imperative for growth. Imel (1998) writes that the role of the teacher (trainer) is essential because they provide the structure needed for success. Building an environment of trust and care develops a relationship with the learner (Imel, 1998). Imel (1998) also states that because the instructor is already a part of the community they "set the stage" of learning by being a role model to the recruit. The recruit officer is immediately immersed in the goals of the organization if the field-training officer uses this tenant adult learning theory.

Relevancy oriented adults must see a reason for what they are doing and what is being taught. In their training manual, Sokolove and Locke (2006) provide outlines of training techniques and role playing exercises. They advocate practice, outside of calls for service, because it allows the trainee to gain confidence in unfamiliar skills in a controlled environment. The FTO can provide further relevancy to the training by debriefing a skill used in an uncontrolled environment.

Providing this feedback is significant because it gives the recruit a frame of reference when presented with the same problem at a different time. This method can allow for the relevancy an adult learner needs to move forward and retain important information and skills.

### **Practical Training**

Adults need practical training that reinforces the topics offered by the trainer. For obvious reasons, recruits should be interested in the task not just for the sake of knowledge, but also for safety reasons. However, to provide a quality training environment the FTO has to provide relevancy to the training. Sockolove and Locke (2006) give a good example of that relevancy in their section “four steps to make a cop” (pg. 43). The authors explain that “civilians look, cops see, you must learn what the ordinary is to see the out-of-the-ordinary, you must see crime in your beat, and you must see people who commit crimes in your beat” (Sockolove and Locke, 2006, pg. 44). Using this statement as an outline, the FTO can point out frequent crime areas during training time. Important topics can be made relevant by the trainer in a low stress situation and can be reinforced by discussion.

Kaminsky (2002) states that motivation is "probably the dominant force that governs the student's learning progress and ability to learn" (p. 161). A training environment that provides relevant information can be motivation for the recruit officer. The desire for personal gain, comfort and security, and tangible rewards all motivate the recruit to learn (Kaminsky, 2002). Unapparent objectives are likely to cause the trainee to tune out the FTO and important training time and skills can be lost. Each task discussed and trained, therefore, must be made relevant by the FTO through direction and debriefing for learning to occur.

## **Respect**

Showing respect should be a standard operating procedure, but in a learning environment, it is imperative that the recruit feels his opinion and experience matter. Lieb (1991) writes that learners need to feel that the opportunity to express their opinion is available. Training a new police recruit can be stressful, but the trainer needs to recognize the trainee as an equal in non-stress situations. Training should put officers in high stress situations and sometimes the need for safety overrides the need for learning. These safety overrides are referred to as “officer override” in the training text. If used properly an "officer override" can still be beneficial to the trainee without the negative connotations that can accompany correcting mistakes (Sockolove & Locke, 2006). In an adult learning environment, follow-up and debriefing must occur. By speaking about the incident that caused the training officer to take full control, the trainee is made to see their error and the situation can be made into a positive learning experience instead of a negative. Indeed, this incident may have been a call for service not previously trained or discussed by the trainee, so no negative comments are necessary. The key to successful transfer of knowledge is presenting the information in a respectful manner.

As noted above, the six tenants of Knowles’ adult learning theory can be used as a baseline in a new training program for FTOs. Experts indicate that adult learning is an important concept for FTOs to be familiar with (Bumbak, 2010). Appendix B has a sample-training outline that offers a two-hour block of instruction on adult learning theory.

## **Bloom's Taxonomy**

Bloom's taxonomy is another social theory that can be relevant to field training programs. Bloom speaks about the "cognitive domain" where learning occurs (Bumbak, 2010). Included in this domain are six cognitive learning levels: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis,

evaluation, and synthesis (Bumbak, 2010). If provided with a background in this theory FTOs can transform a recruit who has general knowledge, from recruit school or criminal justice courses, and perform in a stressful street encounter. Bumbak (2010) argues that law enforcement trainers have used this technique without being aware of it. By naming it and providing specific instruction, this educational tool can enhance the quality and efficiency of training.

Each subsection of Bloom's Taxonomy is important for this discussion. The first cognitive domain for Bloom is knowledge. Bumbak (2010) explains that police officers must "know" the laws they are enforcing. To transfer Bloom's theory from the classroom to law enforcement training it is important for the FTO to be versed in this concept. The first domain is simply a way to measure the student's basic level of ability to remember terms, policies, and mission and values (Bumbak, 2010). Because FTO training progresses through different phases, the first cognitive level can be useful for new officers without prior experience. The topics presented by the FTO should be appropriate to the level of understanding articulated by the trainee. Recognizing the first cognitive level is important for the FTO and the trainee.

The second and third levels of Bloom's Taxonomy are comprehension and application. These two tasks can be evaluated simultaneously by the FTO. Using verbal tests and calls for service the trainee will be able to display more advanced investigative tactics. An FTO familiar with Bloom's Taxonomy will be able to better guide the learning process, thereby providing more flexibility within the program (Kaminsky, 2002). Bumbak (2010), recommends the use of the problem-based learning (PBL) exercises described in the PTO manual. Using the PBLs the trainee will quickly be able to attain levels two and three of comprehension.

The fourth level of understanding in Bloom's Taxonomy is, analysis. This level of comprehension is crucial for the aspiring police officer. Testing the trainee's ability to put into action the classroom and scenario based training previously presented to them. Indeed, Bumbak (2010) says that without this "oft-neglected" skill officers are not using their own understanding of the issue and are merely repeating what they have seen. Without this level of comprehension FTOs are not produce problem solvers needed for the next generation.

The fifth level of development is evaluation. Community policing techniques are based on evaluating the issues facing the community. A way to develop problem-solving techniques is using crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) concepts. Crowe (2000) says that evaluating neighborhood issues based on the environment is key to successful crime prevention. If the trainee cannot evaluate key concepts through CPTED or other trained techniques, perhaps they will attempt to implement an ineffective plan. Understanding level five of Bloom's Taxonomy, FTOs can better evaluate the trainee's progress.

Level six of Bloom's Taxonomy is synthesis. Bumbak (2010) argues that this level is not often seen in law enforcement training. She states that often creativity is not a virtue demanded by trainers. While not a new concept, CPTED can be implemented on the patrol level if FTOs are giving proper instruction. Using the PTO manual as a guideline, many PBL exercises encourage the use of creative thinking for problem solving. An officer may not reach a level of synthesis, or mastery, of a specific topic in field training, but providing the student and FTO with an understanding of Bloom's theory can help bridge the gap between training and solo patrol.

Research indicates that a problem in police training is often teaching too much at a time (Haberfeld, 2002). Bloom's Taxonomy can help prevent this issue because if the principles are

followed the trainee will be processing information in the necessary steps. Understanding that most recruits will be operating in level two and three (comprehension and application) for most street encounters is important for the FTO to recognize. Using levels four and five (analysis and evaluation) the FTO and trainee take significant steps in moving toward solo patrol and perhaps more importantly, problem solving. It is when the trainee achieves the final level of synthesis that the training can be completed.

### **Self-Directed Learning Theory**

Merriam (2003) writes that Self-Directed Learning (SDL) is a process in which the student develops the capacity for self-direction, transforms that knowledge into action, and provides the adult learner with the readiness for action. First presented in the 1960's by Tough and Houle, the theory allows adult learners to think critically about their educational goals (Merriam, 2003). The SDL process can be described as linear with the learner "diagnosing needs to identifying resources and instructional formats to evaluate outcomes" (Merriam, 2003, p. 9). Self-Directed Learning Theory can be used by FTOs to assist in the learning process of new officers.

Merriam (2003) makes two key points that may contribute to the successful use of the Self-Directed Theory. As the trainee moves from novice to expert in their training, they will have different needs. Merriam (2003) says that power and control issues will have an impact on the ability of the adult learner to successfully use this technique. As noted, Millennial officers have an affinity for technological devices and are skilled at navigating the internet. Simmering & Posey (2009) point to online learning as an effective means of fostering self-direction. FTOs and other trainers can direct the trainee to a website to enhance training topics. Use of law enforcement websites like [officer.com](http://officer.com), [inthelineofduty.com](http://inthelineofduty.com), and [policemag.com](http://policemag.com) have an almost

unlimited supply of video and articles related to training. The use of web-based training may be the classroom of the future for law enforcement training.

To test the Self-Directed Learning Theory, trainers can use an online testing site to ensure knowledge transfer. Blueboardit.com (2010), developed by Wisconsin Dells Police Lieutenant Brian Landers, is a website that is password protected and can meet the needs of an adult learner. Within this environment, trainees can take online quizzes and tests on material. In addition, users can browse through many training modules specifically developed by department trainers. The presentations are viewed at the student's own pace with deadlines to finish mandated by training staff. Millennial officers can be engaged by a variety of presentation techniques like PowerPoint, video, audio, and community forums. This website allows for self-direction not only for the officer as they begin training, but can enhance that officer as they progress to tasks that are more complex and may set the tone for continued education for their careers.

Self-Directed Learning Theory promotes freedom, responsibility, and personal views. Loyens (2008) states that learning can be placed on a continuum that flows between teacher oriented and self-direction. This type of learning environment is conducive to the field training process because it allows multiple tasks to be introduced within a short time frame. Setting goals and monitoring thoughts is another tenant of self-directed learning (Loyens, 2008). The boundaries within these goals are monitored by the FTO in this process. The trainee will have the freedom to name the problem they are working on and explore the relevant techniques to solve the problem (Haberfeld, 2002). Self-Directed Learning Theory can provide FTOs with techniques to advance officer growth.

No one theory can be singled out as the best practice. When examining the need for self-direction and autonomy, self-directed and adult learning theory concepts support the idea for

trainees to experience and develop their own style of policing. Gibbons (2008) says that people spend more time outside of school than in it. He further contends that teaching individuals to self-educate must be a priority. Applying the concepts learned within the training environment is, of course, important, but without the ability to apply the training on solo patrol, the result is an ineffective police officer.

Each of the theories discussed can be blended in the field-training environment; FTOs must be skilled in setting a proper tempo for learning. Providing practical training (adult learning concept) while applying a specific cognitive skill from Bloom's Taxonomy will allow the tempo to flow from simple to difficult skills. For Bumbak (2010), knowledge is the cornerstone of well-rounded skill. Coupled with practical training in a positive learning environment the trainee can begin to develop the skills needed to be effective. Directing the trainee to use outside resources i.e. internet, peer-reviewed journals, and departmental experts "war stories" will provide a significant increase in their knowledge base. Gibbons (2008) recommends these practices to allow the trainee to prepare them for life-long learning. Effective use of adult learning strategies will propel an officer from simple knowledge to synthesis.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, adult learning theory concepts are an important component to successful field training. If departments provide these ideas to FTOs, they will have a better understanding of how best to serve and mentor their trainees. Twenty-first century law enforcement recruits expect a more detailed approach to training due to their educational experiences. Significant differences in generations and expectations can lead to miscommunication, however; these issues may be overcome by giving FTOs a background in theory.



#### **Chapter 4: Summary, Recommendations, and Conclusion**

The field training programs used by almost every agency in the United States are in need of an update. Educational tools used in a variety of professions are available and should be implemented to enhance the quality of new officers. For too long FTOs have been trained to merely document an officer's application of academy taught skills (Bumbak, 2010). A new paradigm is needed as Millennial officers begin their careers. The needs of these new officers outpace the traditional field training methods offered.

Law enforcement administrators must be aware that field training has not been updated since most of them were new officers. Research indicates that the Millennial generation will have nearly twice as many members as Generation X (Howe & Strauss, 2000). The Millennials have different values and goals than previous generations. Their learning style is entirely different than past generations, as well. They are used to a style of teaching that encouraged group collaboration, heavy use of praise, and rewards for work completed (Lancaster, 2010). These techniques can be foreign to the way first line supervisors think. A shift in training technique needs to be implemented. In addition, the use of technology for recruiting of Millennial officers needs to be examined. Technology should be on the forefront of any recruiting effort.

A review of the literature revealed Millennial officers will present special needs for law enforcement training. Howe & Strauss (2000) said that Millennials are the most sheltered generation in history. They have enjoyed a special relationship with their parents and government whom provided safety regulations on sports, vehicle travel, and school violence. Howe and Strauss (2000) also discuss a set a values, commitment to community service, and individualism indicative of the Millennials. Huntley (2006) discussed the heroes of television that formed the collective mindset of Millennials. While not always positive, this influence gives

insight into this cohort of persons. Analyzing the literature it is clear that challenges in molding an effective law enforcement officer will fall to the FTO.

Recruiting and retention issues were examined for this paper as they relate to the Millennial generation. It was discovered that the trend within law enforcement hiring has not changed much over the course of time. Entry-level standards have not changed substantially over the last 20 years (Kamnisky, 2002). Though widely debated, the topic of requiring formal post-high school education has not been mandated by federal or state officials (Hilal & Erickson, 2010). What is a reality, however, is that the Millennial generation is the best educated in the history of the United States (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Because a majority of the members of the Millennial generation will get a college degree, the debate on the effectiveness of a more educated police force may resolve itself. Because of the Millennial's education, however, a system of training that incorporates adult learning theory will be important for success. Even though standards have not changed, new officer's needs will require a change in FTO thinking.

Finding the right individual who best fits into the community, policing mission, and position must be done right. Studying the corporate world's internet presence and their efforts to recruit as diverse an organization as possible provides interesting possibilities for law enforcement recruiting. The Millennial generation is a particularly technological group. Getting the recruiting message to them by non-traditional means can be an important step to adding diversity to a police force. Twitter, Facebook, NEO.gov, and other internet sources can widen the net of potential candidates. As communities become more diverse, a police force that recruits nationwide will be able to keep pace with the changing needs of that community. Without the right personnel, the community may not get the most efficient crime fighting team.

Mentoring new employees was examined for this paper as it relates to field training and retention. Sprafka (2008) argued for effective mentoring programs outside of the FTO process that can benefit both the new officer and veteran. Mentoring is especially important for the Millennial officer because research indicates that they are in need of positive reinforcement (Lancaster, 2010). Because a mentor is not necessarily involved in the training process, they can provide the support and guidance a Millennial officer needs. A recommendation that stems from the research would be to have a veteran FTO mentor a new FTO during the training process. If the new FTO is in doubt on the complexities of the evaluation process, the veteran FTO can be there to answer questions and provide guidance. As noted in the theoretical review, the use of adult learning methods will help the veteran officer provide better direction for the new FTO. The use of mentoring will have great benefits for every officer involved in the program.

A review of Field Training Officer and Police Training Officer Programs, the two major programs used by law enforcement, was discussed. FTO has been in use since the early 1970s when it was developed and put into use by the San Jose Police Department and PTO was developed in the mid-1990's by the Department of Justice. After reviewing a number of departments that use both programs, it was found that each has many positives. Some issues that hinder trainee growth can be attributed to the lack of theory in an FTO program. Prohibitive re-training cost is an issue facing departments wishing to change to a PTO program. A recommendation from this paper would be to blend each program and produce an in-house training system that encompasses each individual department's needs. Based specifically in adult learning concepts, this in-house program will provide for better FTO and trainee growth with the ultimate goal of reaching Bloom's sixth level of development.

A blended program would provide an agency the opportunity to construct specific topics to fit the mission and values of their community. A sample outline for training is attached in Appendix B. An example of a blended program should include the following topics:

- Adult learning theory topics
- Recruit journaling
- Critical task checklists
- Daily observation reports
- Problem based learning exercises
- Motivation of recruits
- Daily training techniques
- Department specific FTO training manual review

The opportunity for a new FTO to discuss, in detail, any new system should not be discounted. Haberfeld (2002) says that large agencies that use an in-house system of FTO training see good results and produce FTOs who are comfortable in the training environment. These large agencies have the resources and time to train their own, but this paper argues that even smaller agencies can do this training on their own.

In addition to the empirical research there were three sociological theories presented that may help transform field training in the 21st century. The theories explored help to provide a framework for training of FTOs. The three theories examined and applied to field training were Knowles' Adult Learning Theory, Bloom's Taxonomy, and Gibbon's Self-Directed Theory.

Current training models for FTOs only minimally look to adult learning theory to help guide the training process. Sockolove and Locke (2006), one of the most popular Midwest training teams, mentions adult learning strategies one time in their training manual. Knowles' Adult

Learning concepts provide valuable insights into how the adult learner perceives training material. Kaminsky (2002) who, literally, wrote the book on FTO in San Jose in 1968 recommends using adult learning to train new officers. Kaminsky (2002) incorporates tenants of all three theories presented in this paper and many more in his book, as a recommendation to help produce an effective training officer. He discusses variety of topics, fundamentals of learning, providing "guidance not grades", and levels of learning. Bumbak (2010) writes that adult learning is the most important issue when initiating change in a training program. For her, the focus of a training outline should be how adults learn. Experts in contemporary field training suggest basing any field-training program in adult learning theory.

While the strategies discussed in this paper are not all inclusive for the improvement of field training, the majority of the suggestions provide an outline for positive change. Small to mid-size departments may not have the funds or schedule flexibility to send FTOs to a weeklong class. Providing a framework for a new in-house program is the purpose of this paper. The strategies above were taken from experts in the field in law enforcement, education, and corporate environments. Blending all available sources and providing a theoretical framework for updated programs, law enforcement training can meet the needs of communities and effectively fight crime and solve problems into the 21st century.

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## Appendix A

### Problem-based learning exercise #1

#### NON-EMERGENCY INCIDENT RESPONSE

##### Vehicle Stop

You and your partner stop a car on a busy street with a great deal of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. You have stopped the car for speeding in a school zone. Upon stopping the vehicle you notice the passengers in the rear seat strapping on their seatbelts. As you approach the vehicle, you note the windows are down and you hear agitated voices. All occupants of the vehicle are from the same minority ethnic group. The passenger in the front seat complains loudly to the others about racial profiling. At this point he has not yet seen you. Several passers-by have stopped to watch the event. Upon request, the driver produces identification, but the passengers are argumentative and refuse to identify themselves.

You must present to your Police Training Officer two or more possible outcomes for this Problem-Based Learning Exercise. In each instance you must include the following:

**Ideas**—Record initial responses to the problem. What are two separate possible ways you can deal with this situation? Explain them to your PTO.

- What are your initial thoughts on solving the problem?
- What are the issues?

**Facts**—List all of the known facts about the problem. For example, you are in a school zone; the passengers in the vehicle will not provide identification.

- What do you know?

**Learning Issues**—Identify the relevant content for the learning matrix for each decision. For example, what do you know about racial profiling and what conflict resolution skills are most appropriate in this circumstance?

- What do you need to know to solve this problem?
- Where can you find it?
- Whom should you contact?
- What resources are available to solve this problem?
- What other information do you need?

**Action Plans**—Create a precise and specific plan for either solving or reducing the problem. Your action plan should arise from what you know about the problem and what your research has taught you. For example, once you speak to a variety of individuals and carry out your research during the “learning issues phase”, what plan can you now develop, using the new information you have, to help you deal effectively with this problem?

- What can you do to solve or reduce this problem?
- Do you make arrests?
- Describe the rationale for each decision.
- Describe the possible consequences of each decision in your action plan.
- Describe how you would behave given each set of circumstances.

Remember, this is an ill-structured problem, and your action plan does not have a simple solution.

## Appendix B

### Training Outline Field Training Officer

#### *Day 1:*

0800 – 0900: Introduction to Field Training

0900 – 0915: Break

0915 – 1015: Adult Learning Theory

1015 – 1030: Break

1030 – 1130: Adult Learning Theory

1130 – 1230: Lunch

1230 – 1330: Training Situations

1. What if
2. Isolation exercises
3. Role playing
4. Scenario training

1330 – 1345: Break

1345 - 1445: More training situations

1445 – 1500: Break

1500 – 1600: Motivation of probationary officers

***Day Two***

0800 – 0900: Field Training

1. Jumping calls
2. De-Briefing
3. Using the manual as a resource
4. Objective evaluations

0900 – 0915: Break

0915 – 1015: Introduction to the field-training manual

1015 – 1030: Break

1030 – 1130: Field training manual and introduction to forms

1. Top 5 topics

1130 – 1215: Lunch

1215 – 1315: Field training manual

1. Important elements to cover with recruit
2. Elements of issues to become familiar with

1315 – 1330: Break

1330 – 1430: Activity performance measures

1430 – 1445: Break

1445 – 1600: Daily Observation Report (DOR), scoring, Not Responding to Training (NRT) documentation, and end of phase documentation

***Day Three:***

0800 – 0900: Video and hands-on DOR practice

0900 – 0915: Break

0915 – 1015: Video and hands-on DOR practice

1015 – 1030: Break

1030 – 1130: Video and hands-on DOR practice

1130 – 1215: Lunch

1215 – 1400: Group discussion and presentations on DOR documentation

1400 – 1415: Break

1415 – 1600: Final group discussion and presentations, course evaluation, and final questions/clarifications