

introduction

The following training standard outlines 15 problem-based learning (PBL) instruction blocks for delivering the Police Training Officer (PTO) program, and one block for evaluating this training course. Accompanying this training standard is a PTO manual. There are two versions of this manual: one for the training officer and the other for the trainee. At the conclusion of this course, students should be proficient in how the program functions, how to use the PTO manual, and how to instruct police trainees using PBL. There are four factors that will ensure this program's success.

- **PBL instruction is not like other forms of teaching.** It is important that instructors of any PBL course (called facilitators) are fully trained in methods of problem-based learning.
- **Officers who take on the job of training officer should have adequate police experience.** The specific length of service will be determined by each agency, however it is suggested that agencies establish a reasonable minimum experience level.
- **Throughout the course, students will work on a Course Development Problem.** Modeling the PBL method during instruction is the best way to help students discover the effectiveness of PBL. To accomplish this, facilitators present a “Course Development Problem” for group study at the start of the course. Time is provided throughout the course to work on resolving the problem. Facilitators must avoid lecturing to the material. They should make every effort to encourage self-discovery by using the Course Development Problem to focus on the material.
- **Stick to the program.** There are some golden rules for PBL instruction that will help facilitators. Facilitators should make every effort to adhere to these guidelines. They fall into three categories: the role of a PBL facilitator, classroom protocol, and group dynamics.

golden rules for PBL instruction: a guide for facilitators

The Role of a PBL Facilitator:

- **Remember to be a facilitator!** In PBL, self-directed learning is paramount. Even when delivering a lecture, keep in mind that PBL aims to get students to learn on their own terms.
- **Avoid role shifting.** A facilitator will continually be asked to be the authority and expert. It's true that facilitators have expert knowledge, but in becoming the “sage on the stage,” students may be less likely to accept responsibility for their own learning. Stay focused on the facilitation role.
- **The Course Development Problem.** Begin each course with a presentation of the Course Development Problem. Review this problem each day and ask the class to write in journals about what they have learned to help them address the Problem.

- **Describe outcomes first.** Describe the learning outcomes for each block of instruction at the beginning of the block. Use these outcomes as a check during various points in each learning block. Review them at the end of the block. If students do not understand any of the outcomes, record their questions and cover them at a later time. All questions will need to be answered before the end of the course.
- **Use resources creatively.** Facilitators are encouraged to use commercially produced movie clips, case studies, and other resources as might be appropriate to enhance instruction. (Instructors are responsible for getting all copyright permissions required for reprints and viewing.)

Classroom Protocol:

- **Don't leave!** One facilitator should be in the room at all times.
- **Don't interrupt!** When not directly facilitating groups or presenting material, facilitators should avoid disrupting the class, such as talking at the back of the room.
- **Ask challenging questions.** Rhetorical and close-ended questions by facilitators have very limited use during lectures and should be kept to a minimum.
- **Keep them awake.** Pay special attention to the students' body language. If they need a break, give them one. Don't *lecture to the course schedule* in order to finish on time; the material can wait until the students are ready.

Group Dynamics:

- **Watch the groups.** Group work is used extensively in this program. PBL instructors should be skilled in instructional techniques for group dynamics. The first group session should begin with brief introductions. Group members should offer a few words about themselves. Pleasantries are important. During the course, group conflict may arise and facilitators need to watch for this and use group management techniques to resolve problems. Reiterate that the group purpose is to "work the problem," not gossip. Facilitators must not be unengaged during group sessions. They should not intervene, but offer assistance when necessary. Remember, facilitators are there as a resource.

description of the program

This training standard outlines a 40-hour course for Police Training Officers (PTOs). It teaches them how to help their trainees apply policing and problem-solving skills in a 15-week post-academy training program.

The PTO model is specifically designed for agencies engaged in the community-oriented policing and problem solving (COPPS) service delivery method. At each stage of the PTO model, the trainer and trainee apply problem solving to their job tasks.

course outcomes

Facilitators should present these course objectives at the beginning of the course. During the PTO course, students will do the following:

- Engage in adult learning techniques. Trainees apply the PTO manual to their training within the PBL context: cooperative learning, group work, scenario-based exercises, and lecture formats.
- Study the Learning Matrix cells within the PTO model and alter them, when appropriate, to meet local agency needs.
- Engage in problem-based learning as a method to organize their study of both the matrix and the program's evaluation models.
- Incorporate research on new education movements into their training plans, including research on PBL.
- Develop resources for Learning Activity Packages.
- Practice using evaluation methods and forms during scenario and PBL training.
- Employ current technology, including the Internet and automated computerized systems.
- Teach classmates relevant information on emotional intelligence, multiple intelligence, and conflict resolution for use in their training program.
- Design, create and/or review Learning Matrix binders.
- Evaluate this training course.