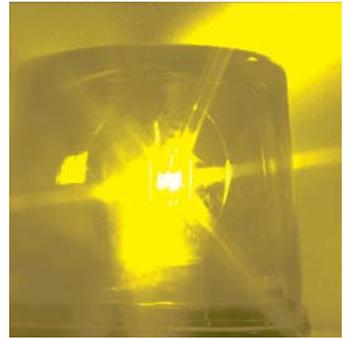


# course handouts



## pto course overview and outcomes

### Program Description

This training standard outlines a five-day course for police training officers (PTOs). It teaches them how to help their recruits apply policing and problem-solving skills in a 15-week training program after the recruits graduate from the academy. This training standard accompanies the “Problem-Based Learning Manual for Training and Evaluating Police Recruits”-the PTO manual used during the training program with the recruit. This standard provides course content, objectives, and teaching methods for the 15 blocks of training used throughout the five days. If necessary, the 15 blocks can be modified to fit into a course of four, 10-hour training days.

The PTO program offers a number of advantages for police agencies over other training systems most commonly called FTO models. This program is specifically designed for agencies embarked upon 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.

In order for PTOs to model the problem-based learning (PBL) teaching method with their trainees, this training course uses PBL to teach the program to PTOs. Throughout the 15-week training program, trainers must apply current operating procedures in their agency to the PTO program to tailor the model to local circumstances.

### Glossary of Terms

#### Community learning

In traditional PBL classrooms, learners have “cohort groups” or peer learning groups. The opportunity for this type of partnership rarely occurs in policing. In this model, community-learning partners will constitute the “group” experience found in other forms of PBL. Once a recruit receives the Problem-Based Learning Exercise, he or she will form “partnerships” to solve the problem. These partners may include other police officers, including the training officer, members of social or community services, witnesses, victims or other members of the community. This process is called “community learning.”

#### Core Competencies

These are the knowledge, skills, and abilities required by all police officers when providing all aspects of police service.

#### Failing forward

Some of our most profound learning occurs when we make mistakes. Contemporary police writers call this “failing forward” (Geller and Swanger, 1995). By using PBL, recruits discover not only positive solutions, but also *what does not work*. They learn through self-discovery, and failing forward is an important part of it.

#### Ill-structured problems

- Ill-structured problems, called Problem-Based Learning Exercises in this model, are the foundations upon which PBL rests. The characteristics of ill-structured problems include the following factors:

- They are not easily solved
- The learner lacks essential information that must be obtained to solve the problem
- The learner must consider a variety of facts and issues
- The learning occurs in the context of the problem solving
- Learning that occurs has a “real life” context
- The learner follows a process that he or she can apply to future problems

### **Learning matrix**

This program uses a Learning Matrix, which is a chart of the 15-week PTO training model. This helps the trainer and recruit organize the recruit’s learning time. Substantive Topics are listed across the top of the chart with Core Competencies on the side. The chart contains learning “cells” for each phase of the training. The “cells” contain policing regulations, procedures and skills that the recruit needs to learn.

### **Multiple intelligences**

Recent developments in education, led by Harvard professor Howard Gardner, indicate that individuals learn at different rates using a variety of inherent talents. Recruits will need to understand learning styles and the strengths and weaknesses that they bring to the learning process.

### **Problem-based learning (PBL)**

PBL is a student-focused model that incorporates problem solving as the vehicle for learning. Traditionally, learning has involved a teacher or facilitator delivering information as content to the learner. PBL, however, begins with presenting a *real life* problem that the student must attempt to solve. The student follows a pattern of discovery whereby he or she gathers ideas and known facts, decides what information he or she needs to learn, and develops action plans to solve the problem.

### **Problem-solving skills in policing: SARA and the PBL technique**

There are a number of skills officers can use to resolve neighborhood problems in problem-oriented policing. The most common version, the SARA model, is an analytical approach for stopping or preventing crime. SARA stands for scanning, analyzing, responding to and assessing problems.

However, this model also uses other methods for solving problems including a learning approach called the PBL technique. In the PBL technique, recruits develop ideas, list known facts and learning issues, develop an action plan and then evaluate it. The SARA method is applied for the purpose of addressing ongoing problems in a neighborhood, while the PBL technique is used as a learning method by the recruit during training.

### **Phased training**

Recruits will complete four 3-week phases of training. The first phase is oriented to Non-Emergency Incident Response, and the second Emergency Incident Response. Patrol Activities and Criminal Investigation constitute the other phases. For various reasons, PTOs may wish to change the order of the phases and this is a flexible model that encourages such changes.

### **Substantive Topics**

During the research for this program, agencies identified some key topics of police activity that comprise the majority of police work. They include investigating threats and harms to life and property, investigating criminal events and apprehending offenders, protecting members of the public from physical harm, protecting constitutional rights, ensuring the free and safe movement of people and vehicles, providing services such as assisting in medical emergencies, and maintaining a communal security.

In this program, these are summarized into four areas of police response. They are called Substantive Topics. They include Emergency Incident Response, Non-Emergency Incident Response, Patrol Activities, and Criminal Investigation. Each Substantive Topic area comprises a three-week phase of instruction during the recruit's training program.

### **Course Objectives**

During the PBL course for training PTOs, the learner will perform the following:

- Engage in adult learning techniques throughout the course. Learners apply the adult learning model to their training with the manual in the context of PBL, cooperative learning, group work, scenario-based exercises, and lecture formats.
- Study the Learning Matrix cells within the model and alter them, where appropriate, to meet local agency needs.
- Engage in PBL as a method to organize his or her study of both the matrix and the evaluation models in the program.
- 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 and create Learning Matrix binders.
- Evaluate this training course.

## learning activity package (LAP) problem-based learning

### Introduction

Educators often describe problem-based learning (PBL) as a method of teaching and learning that focuses on solving a problem. The foundations of police problem-based learning include a respect for adult learning styles, the need for relevance in what police officers are learning, and the achievement of outcomes from that learning that deal directly with significant issues in the police officer's life.

**The PBL Method:** Instructors begin by presenting a problem to the learner/trainee that has real-life significance. "Real life" means that the problem is one that the trainee would normally encounter during the course of his or her duties. These problems may vary from serious community disorders to an ongoing series of minor disturbances in a parking lot. The problems are "ill-structured," which means that they are not easily solved and they have a number of inherent issues that the learner must address to either solve or lessen the severity of the problem.

Once the trainee has spent some time looking over the problem, he or she presents a number of ideas about possible solutions. These ideas, right or wrong, become an important part of the learning process, so trainers and trainees should record them.

After speculating on possible solutions, the trainee then looks at the problem and considers all the known facts of that problem. This becomes a valuable problem-solving skill for the trainee as he or she learns to think critically and record all of the issues and facts before leaping to any conclusions.

**Gathering Information:** After listing what he or she knows, the trainee then considers what learning issues he or she must research. The trainer should help during this part of the learning wherever possible, but not by giving answers. Remember, they don't know what they don't know! For example, if a trainee is working on a drug problem in a park, he or she may not have any knowledge regarding the use of local ordinances governing park closing times or prohibited behaviors. Rather than giving them answers, the trainer simply indicates that this is an area of the law that the trainee may need to consider as part of the problem-solving strategy.

“**facilitators** present a  
problem the **trainee**  
would normally encounter  
while on **duty**”



## ■ learning activity package

**Problem Solving:** After the trainee lists what he or she doesn't know and then goes about learning that information, both the trainer and the trainee should look at the trainee's original thoughts on how to solve the problems. Often, they discover that their first impulse or first conclusion was inadequate, insufficient or incorrect.

At this point, armed with new knowledge, the trainee sets out an action plan to solve or lessen the severity of the problem. Following the plan's implementation and after a suitable time, both the trainee and the trainer evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.

### Outcomes

This Learning Activity Package discusses how police trainers and trainees use the PBL method during training. After completing this LAP, the patrol officer will be able to perform the following:

- Explain the benefits of problem-based learning
- Describe the purpose of learning cohorts
- Analyze ill-structured problems to determine if they are suitable for problem solving
- Evaluate the need for *Emotional Intelligence* in working with learning cohorts and other members of the community

### Comprehensive Questions

- How can police trainers and trainees use PBL to work on small, medium or large community projects?
- What problem-solving skills are essential elements of the PBL process?
- To what extent does the *real life* problem involve the "community"?
- What makes an ill-structured problem? Are the problems given to the trainees during training easy to solve or do they require higher order thinking for resolution?
- How does problem-based learning accommodate a variety of learning styles and problem-solving abilities?
- During the "community learning process," what *Emotional Intelligence* skills will a trainee require for successful team behavior?

### Application

Pick a chronic community problem and apply the PBL process to help solve that problem. The stages of recording the *ideas, known facts, learning issues, action plan and evaluation* should follow sequentially. Discuss with your trainer how much time you estimate you need to complete each phase of the process and discuss your performance during each phase of the problem solving. Reflect on whether your time estimates were accurate at the end of the PBL process.

**Resources and Additional Reading**

University of Delaware Problem-Based Learning home page [Online] Available: [www.udel.edu/pbl](http://www.udel.edu/pbl)

Southern Illinois University School of Medicine/Department of Medical Education—Problem-Based Learning Initiative page [Online] Available: [www.pbli.org/pbl/pbl.htm](http://www.pbli.org/pbl/pbl.htm)

Problem Based Learning Faculty Institute. University of California, Irvine. “What is Problem-Based Learning?” [Online] Available: [www.pbl.uci.edu/whatispbl.html](http://www.pbl.uci.edu/whatispbl.html)

Samford University Center for Problem-Based Learning home page [Online] Available: [www.samford.edu/pbl](http://www.samford.edu/pbl)

Classroom of the Future Teacher Pages on Problem-Based Learning [Online] Available: [www.cotf.edu/ete/teacher/teacherout.html](http://www.cotf.edu/ete/teacher/teacherout.html)

National Teaching and Learning Forum home page [Online] Available: [www.ntlf.com](http://www.ntlf.com)

Crux Consulting home page [Online] Available: [www.cruxconsulting.org](http://www.cruxconsulting.org)

Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE) Internet Classroom—Problem-Based Learning [Online] Available: [score.rims.k12.ca.us/problearn.html](http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/problearn.html)

Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy Center for Problem-Based Learning home page [Online] Available: [www.imsa.edu/team/cpbl/cpbl.html](http://www.imsa.edu/team/cpbl/cpbl.html)

Monthly Time Schedule

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
_____ 29	_____ 30	_____ 31				

**Include:** Journal Writing, Weekly CTR, NPE, PBLE, Field Activities, References