

Introduction

Getting training right for Police Firearms Commanders is vital to support students when making crucial life or death split second decisions. Police training is often short courses with “fuzzy” summative assessment criteria.

Iconic “Black Box” paper - effective assessment and feedback = improved student learning, but Police traditionally teacher delivering feedback “as expert”.

Therefore, what role could self and peer assessment (SPA) have if police officer students are faced with career defining, pass/fail tests? I examine:

- Making assessment deliberate
- Exploring some established techniques
- “Feedback literacy” amongst officers
- Officers confidence in self/peer assessment
- Issues of gender, confidence, experience & rank
- Teacher role in creating a climate to allow effective self/peer assessment

Methods used

Lived experience as a police officer and trainer
Observations considering current practice
Trialling SPA in police command courses including:

- Online written assessment
- Exemplars, 7 point feedback and self-reflection
- Survey around attitudes to and benefits of SPA
- Student interviews - confidence and SPA.
- Own reflection and observations

Black Box for the Thin Blue Line

Developing Self and Peer Assessment in Police Command Training

Bruce MATHEWS

Police trainers need to focus on gathering evidence, of learning.

Police students support self & peer assessment but to be effective it must feed forward & influence teaching.

Assessment needs planning, engagement and confidence of the students.

Issues of rank, gender & experience can negatively impact on a students assessment confidence.

Effective self & peer assessment in training is an opportunity for a more reflective police culture.

With thanks to...



Analysis – Using William’s 5 key strategies

1. Success Criteria

Some students “don’t know what we are assessing” attitude or believed assessing is teacher’s role. Exemplars effective in setting standard & direction. Guided feedback good for feedback literacy

2. Evidence

Teachers need an “all the time assessing culture”. Good use of discussion but not often assessing all

3. Feedforward

Simulated scenarios 100% effective
Consistency amongst trainers support?

4. Peer Assess

Written exercise responses ranged significantly
Students can lack confidence in what good is
Gender, experience & rank appear to be issues

5. Self Assess

Reflective logs not well used
Students often desire confirmation from teacher

Recommendations

- Develop assessment practice – Stop asking “anyone?” “what’s in my head” questions
- Make formative assessment a deliberate activity and use it to inform the teaching
- Flexibility on courses to offer more time more support and different groups
- Police trainers need to share awareness and practice as part of a training CPD culture

Key Literature - Brown 2019. Using Assessment and Feedback to Empower Students Enhance Their Learning.
Black & Wiliam 1998, Inside the Black Box; raising standards through classroom assessment.
Sadler 1989. Formative assessment and the design of instructional systems.
William 2011. Embedded Formative Assessment. Solution Tree