Twenty First Century Approach to Traffic, Metro Police Officers Training Programs in South African

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Abstract

This paper discusses, a systematic method for establishing and maintaining an effective training program that meets the requirements and expectations of road traffic law enforcers (Metropolitan Police and Traffic Officers) as per (South African Police Service Act 68 of 1995 & National Road Traffic Act 39 of 1996 and National Road Traffic Regulation, 2000). The systematic approach to road traffic law enforcers training includes a professional approach that is distinct, yet interrelated, in phases. These phases include analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. Road traffic law enforcement training focus amongst other on outcome based training systems such as work integrated learning, performance-based training, training system development, instructional systems development, and other similar methods. For the purpose of this paper, theoretical and practical training are interchangeable. The systematic approach method may also be used in conjunction with other training organizations that contain road traffic safety professional training and qualification requirements.

Keywords: law enforcement training; training program; South Africa;

1. Introduction

The cornerstone of Road Traffic Safety is Road Traffic Law Enforcers performing the day-to-day functions which accomplish the National or Organisations Road Traffic Safety mission. According to HSE, (2008) "training means helping people to learn how to do something, telling people what they should or should not do, or simply giving them information. Training isn't just about formal 'classroom' courses". Training that is conducted efficiently and effectively and is directly related to the needs of the work (e.g., performance-based training) is fundamental to ensure the safety of road users and the safe free flow of traffic on the road network. Responsibility for the safe operation of roads lies with the National and Local Governments as well as Organisations involved in traffic and transportation operations. Therefore, achieving professional training requires commitment from the organisation (Metropolitan Police or Traffic Departments) for which training is provided.

This commitment includes making subject matter experts available for participation in and review of the training subjects being provided. It also includes budgeting and scheduling the time required for both initial and continuing training. This commitment must be made by all parties involved from the beginning. These parties must get involved up at the start to ensure that they are not only repeated ongoing activities but are also involved to the degree necessary to thoroughly understand the process. Policies and procedures implemented and support demonstrated by involved lecturers provide the driving force to ensure that the Road Traffic Law Enforcers training programs receive the attention that is imperative, if Road Traffic Law Enforcers training programs are to be successful.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Explaining The Difference Between Training And Education

Cross, J. (1996: 2) states that "training is not education". To come to an understanding on this statement, focus will be placed on both education and training.

Education

Parankimalil, J. (2012: 2) sees education as a "systematic process through which a child or an adult acquires knowledge, experience, skill and sound attitude. It makes an individual civilized, refined, cultured and educated. For a civilized and socialized society, education is the only means. Its goal is to make an individual perfect. Every society gives importance to education because it is a panacea for all evils. It is the key to solve the various problems of life."

Parankimalil, J. (2012: 3) further goes on to explain that "education has been described as a process of waking up to life":

- "Waking up to life and its mysteries, its solvable problems and the ways to solve the problems and celebrate the mysteries of life'.
- 'Waking up to the inter-dependencies of all things, to the threat to our global village, to the power within the human race to create alternatives, to the obstacles entrenched in economic, social and political structures that prevent our waking up".
- "Education in the broadest sense of the term is meant to aid the human being in his/her pursuit of wholeness. Wholeness implies the harmonious development of all the potentialities God has given to a human person".
- "True education is the harmonious development of the physical, mental, moral (spiritual), and social faculties, the four dimensions of life, for a life of dedicated service".

By taking the above into consideration the researchers conclude that education is broadly seen as a more general, less specialized or hands-on approach to enhancing knowledge, namely:

- That which what the individual learn out of ignorance
- Anything that affects the knowledge, skills, and attitudes/abilities of the learner
- The "why" in road traffic safety educates the natural (hurt and health) and Law Enforcement consequences (discipline, reward) of behaviour
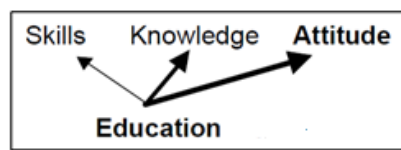- Primarily increases knowledge and attitudes.

Figure 1: Education. The figure (Based on Arthur Chickering's work in Education and Identity, Jossie-Bass, 1993) summarizes the attributes of education and training and poses the critical questions the learner must answer when choosing between them.

Training

Advrights (2010) describe "Training as a form of education that helps develop a person's abilities to gain new knowledge, acquire new skills and employ creative methods of problem-solving. This training program is based on a participatory approach, i.e. on the method of participation. The whole group actively participates in the process of learning, allowing individuals to share and exchange their knowledge and problems, and then together search for optimal solutions to their common issues." Further Advrights (2010) goes on to explain that the "purpose of a training program is to provide a setting where":

- "the participants' knowledge and skills *(abilities)* are valued and constitute the base for new information";
- "the participants have an opportunity to share their experience and analyze it in a comfortable atmosphere, without anyone forcing or constraining their responses;
- there is an opportunity to learn through practice";
- "Participation in the training session is voluntarily and participants take responsibility for the skills and knowledge they acquire *(i.e. there are no grades, exams and other 'punitive' methods of evaluating new knowledge")*.

In conclusion training provides the opportunity to study complicated or emotionally sensitive issues in the road, traffic and transportation environment of a training session, rather than a real life situation that poses threats and risks. Training allows for learning without the feeling of anxiety or discomfort that result from a 'wrong' answer.
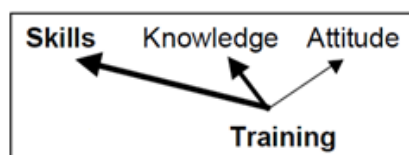
Figure 2: Training. The figure (Based on Arthur Chickering's work in Education and Identity, Jossie-Bass, 1993) summarizes the attributes of education and training and poses the critical questions the learner must answer when choosing between them.

2.2   Creating An Effective Training Program

Overall, the new science of learning is starting to provide knowledge to improve significantly Road Traffic Law Enforcers abilities to become active learners who seek to understand complex subject matter and are better prepared to transfer what they have learned to serve their community more effectively. The question to be asked is; "How do we create a training program for Road Traffic Law enforcement that will be effective?" This is a major challenge, but it is not impossible. The emerging science of learning is to focus on re-thinking what is taught, how it is taught, and how learning is assessed. This paper will address the basic concepts of a training program to provide a good starting point for training development that improve the quality of current or planned Law Enforcers training programs. There are literally volumes of material and information on how to develop effective training programs available today. This paper is not attempting to address all of the philosophies surrounding curriculum development; however, it will address most of the basic concepts. The typical method utilized for developing an effective training program is the "Systematic Approach to Training," which utilizes the "structure design" methodology for performing the analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation of the training program in order to meet the specific needs of Road Traffic Law Enforcers.
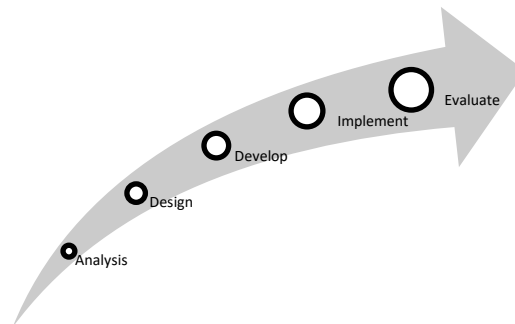

Figure 3: Layout of an effective Law Enforcement Training Program

Analysis

Analysis is used to determine the content for the Road Traffic Law Enforcement training program, due to the higher levels of risk. This is similar to determining what each Road Traffic Law Enforce needs to know, due to the emphasis that is placed on the requirements of the work and the possibility of injury. A useful tool for determining training content from work requirements is a work hazard/risk analysis and needs assessment. This paper identifies the key step of the Road Traffic Law Enforcers work process using a combination of Qualitative and Quantitative risk methods to develop a "Static" hazard identification and risk assessment method. The static assessment method purpose is to systematically identify all of the hazards and risks associated with the Road Traffic Law Enforcer's task, activity or process, and put appropriate controls (e.g. training program) in place to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with that activity. This entails breaking the activity down into separate components and ascertaining all of the hazards/risks associated with each component of the activity. Once the hazards are identified an assessment of the level of risk is done, to determine its priority. According to the level of risk and hence the priority, a decision is make on what controls to put in place to eliminate or reduce the identified risks. Key elements in breaking the work activity down into separate components e.g. each activity to be performed and ascertaining all of the risks associated with each component of the activity are:

- Work location e.g. where and when for each activity;
- Key steps of each work activity (preferably in the order in which they are performed);
- Skills, tools, personal protective equipment (PPE), machines and materials used;
- Actual and potential hazards associated with these key work activity steps;
- Risk assessment of work activity, time and location; and
- Practices, activities, and equipment required for each work step to ensure the work activity and its steps are done as safely as possible.

Design

Design on the other hand determine the content of training for Road Traffic Law Enforcers at higher levels of risk is similar to determining what any road traffic law enforcer needs to know, but more emphasis is placed on the requirements of the task, activity or process and the possibility of injury. One useful tool for

determining training content from task, activity or process requirements is the hazard analysis described earlier. This procedure examines each step of a task, activity or process, identifies existing or potential hazards, and determines the best way to perform the task, activity or process in order to reduce or eliminate the hazards.

Equipment and material data sheets provide information for training Road Traffic Law Enforcers in the safe use of the equipment or materials. These data sheets, developed by manufacturers and importers, are supplied with instructions that describe the equipment functions or material ingredients of a product, its hazards, protective equipment to be used, safe handling procedures, and emergency first-aid responses. The information contained in these sheets can help identify road traffic law enforcers in need of training (i.e., workers handling substances described in the sheets) and train Road Traffic Law Enforcers in safe use of equipment and material. Equipment and material safety data sheets are generally available from suppliers, manufacturers on a regular basis, or they can be developed and included in the law enforcement agencies policies and procedures.

Development

While all Road Traffic Law Enforcers are entitled to know as much as possible about the safety and health hazards to which they are exposed, and law enforcement agencies should attempt to provide all relevant information and instruction to all road traffic law enforcers, the resources for such an effort frequently are not, or are not believed to be, available. Thus, agencies are often faced with the problem of deciding who is in the greatest need of information and instruction. One way to differentiate between Road Traffic Law Enforcers who have priority needs for training and those who do not is to identify employees which are at higher levels of risk. The nature of the task, activity or process will provide an indication that such groups should receive priority for information on occupational safety and health risks.

Developing guidelines for a Road Traffic Law Enforcement Training program identify key directions for the improvement of the training program and trainee's participation in that it is that basic and operation principles could evolve, e.g., "subject or activity-specific," "Unique or "next generation" principles. However, their development would constitute a separate effort, building on and extending the basic and operating principles presented here, namely.

- Every trainee can through learning learn to learn better, regardless of current level of achievement; one's potential is not limited by one's current ability.
- Although everyone requires help with learning at times, the goal is to develop the trainee to become a capable, self-sufficient, life-long learner.
- An empowered trainee is someone who follows a learning processes and self-assessment to improve their performance.
- To develop expertise in a controlled discipline, a trainee not only develops a specific skill and knowledge based in a specific field, but also acquires life-long learning skills that relate to all disciplines in law enforcement.
- It is important to recognize that law enforcement training criteria is applicable for all stages of training levels e.g. beginning to Professional Development. It is critical, therefore that the law enforcement training program criteria supports the academic as well as the practical training.

Implementation

To implement an effective training program, one must clarify the goals, determine quality desired and identify the key process. from beginning to end. Furthermore, the training program must be performance-based philosophy of education which integrates different educational theories, processes, and tools in emphasising the continuous development of learning skills through the use of assessment principles in order to produce learner self-development and focus on basic principles and responsibilities that apply to all stages of the training program e.g. from strategic to operational levels.

It is important to recognize that these levels are interdependent and, in some cases, may conflict. A balanced approach is critical when applying the training principles to a Road Traffic Law Enforcement training program, ensuring it fulfills its purpose and is carried out in what would constitute a world best practice training program.

Evaluation

Examining the steps in the training process continuously, will help to determine where course revision is necessary. By not adopting continuous improvement evaluation for a training program, represents a major missed opportunity. By tapping in to the creativity of all the people e.g. lecturers, trainees, third parties that contribute to the training program, not just a handful of specialists, it is possible to become much more innovative. After all, with every person's contribution, how small, its knowledge gained that takes the training program a step closer to having a perfect training program. The experience of past trainer's triggers

ideas that add up to greater flexibility, higher quality and better training programs. Working towards designing a value added assessment, ensures perfection. This is an attempt to measure the training program and trainees growth over a curtain time period, e.g. from the trainee entering the program until the trainee graduates, using pre and post testing although other types of evidence could conceivable be developed.

3. Conclusions

For effective Road Traffic Law Enforcers training programs to work, it should be clear what law enforcers should accomplish when it's over. After all, the only reason to train people is to help them meet specific objectives. It can't be afforded to leave those objectives unstated or to delegate deciding your training objectives to others. A good objective will be actionable, for example "increase trust between community members and law enforcers." A bad objective often describes knowing something rather than doing something, for example, "gaining more offender knowledge." Lecturers must be able to decide whether a performance deficiency is really a training problem. The classic instructional designer's test is to ask, "If the law enforcer had any options? Was this the best option a reasonable Law enforcer would have taken in the same situation?" If the answer is yes, you're facing a problem of motivation, not a training problem. If you do have a training problem, you must explicitly describe the behaviours you expect after training.

- To make sure the message is clearly understood, trainees must be told how they are expecting to perform at its conclusion. For example, trainees in the training program are told that, "When you have completed this module and the corresponding classroom experience s, you will be able to:
- Profile the full range of needs during community interactions, paying particular attention to road traffic and transportation needs.
- Explore commuter's behaviour's and movement in the area
- Determine appropriate communication method with the different transport modes being used
- Identify high risk areas e.g. where high volumes of people come together
- Convince road users to participate in a safe manner within the road traffic environment
- Handle issues to effectively problem solving techniques
- Participate effectively in joint meetings with community leaders and members
- Representatives to facilitate problem solving and to attain reduction in road traffic accidents and injuries.
- Follow up with key community members to confirm results and expand the relationship"
- You cannot predict the outcome of Road Traffic Law Enforcement development, all that can be done, like a farmer, is create the condition under which Road Traffic Law Enforcers can grow and develop to reach their full potential. In other words Road Traffic Law Enforcers will discover, under the right circumstances they do, in fact, learn. Training for Road Traffic Law Enforcers is not a one off deal; it's a process. Positive behaviours must be reinforced if they are to be retained.

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Author's Contributions

All authors discussed the results and contributed to from the start to final manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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