

Maximising PBL in police education: Why understanding the facilitator role is a key factor in developing learning for police problem-solving

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Historically, police educators delivering academy programs have overused traditional or teacher-centred methods as part of an authority driven command and control culture. In addition to being educationally unsound, this teaching approach has limited the development of the critical thinking skills needed for effective reform in the community policing era. Problem-based learning (PBL), a teaching method linked to social constructivist theory, has been widely advocated in recent years as an alternate teaching method in police academies to promote deeper and integrated learning of content, with the benefit of also developing problem-solving and teamwork skills. However, implementing learner-centred methods such as PBL can be challenging as it runs counter to traditional teaching cultures. Recent research into the teaching and development experiences of police educators by the author has discerned aspects of the facilitator role that can inform and maximise the impact of methods such as PBL. This paper synthesises an understanding of the facilitator role as described in these experiences with the underlying learning theory of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD). This theoretical discussion is then applied via a proposed model of police learning to highlight the

facilitation's role in developing problem-solving within a policing context.

Keywords: *police education, police academy training, community policing, teacher development, problem-based learning*

Introduction

Policing is a profession that requires diverse skills and the application of a wide range of topic areas as recruits learn and develop in their new career. Ideally, these recruits should become self-motivated and independent learners beyond their police academy learning, operating with discretion and making operational decisions in pressurized situations. Traditionally, police academy programs have tended to be teacher-centred and operate in an authority dependent context, which is problematic by inhibiting effective learning and failing to encourage proactive attributes from students (Birzer, 2003; Oliva & Compton, 2009).

This discussion paper initially backgrounds the learning needs for police recruits and the need for change in police education and training to incorporate learner-centred methods such as PBL. The theoretical foundations of PBL in relation to the ZPD, postulated by Vygotsky (1978), are discussed to analysis the application of PBL within the policing context. Attention is drawn to the facilitator's role in encouraging problem-solving through guided facilitation to extend and apply the research by Shipton (2020) into a practical model and makes explicit the type of facilitation required. As part of this discussion, there will be consideration of how the teacher-centred skills of police educators can be built upon and used to compliment facilitation skills required in learner-centred methods, rather than being considered as diametrically opposed along a continuum of practice.

Learning needs for 21st century policing

Prior to the late 20th century, policing tended to take a narrow and reactive approach to crime. The advent of policing approaches informed by an emerging community policing philosophy, encourage police organisations to become proactive via community interaction and address

the underlying causes of crime with relevant stakeholders (Braga, 2002; Peak & Glensor, 1999). This emerging community policing era has seen calls by academics and stakeholders for police to have a more considered approach to cultural diversity, communication, crime prevention and problem-solving in collaboration with their communities when compared to traditional policing (Kelling & Moore, 1988; Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990). These values in policing remain relevant considering contemporaneous developments around police misconduct and violence, with McLean, Wolfe, Rojek, Alpert & Smith (2020) emphasising the need for police to adopt a ‘guardian’ rather than ‘warrior’ mentality to maintain the public trust so important to effective community policing.

Community policing creates a need for police to have more advanced problem solving and collaborative abilities in comparison to those traditionally fostered among recruits in police academies (Chappell, 2008; Birzer, 2003; Peak & Glensor, 1999). It should also be noted that this transition remains problematic and cannot be considered complete, with more work required to change police structures, culture, and education to facilitate further implementation (Bartkowiak-Théron, 2011; Cleveland & Saville, 2007). As such, police education needs to develop beyond traditional teaching approaches equating learning to filling an empty vessel with water or what Freire (1970) refers to as the “banking” concept of education. However, whilst academy learning programs historically prepared police recruits to undertake the basic mechanics of police work, they do little to help them understand their broader role in a democratic society or the inherent complexities of policing (Dantzker, 2003; Goldstein, 1999; Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazoglou, Creighton & Kaye, 2019).

The overwhelming assertion from the literature is that police teachers are overly teacher-centred in tightly controlled classrooms, leading to student passivity, and inhibiting the development of problem-solving skills and deeper learning (Birzer, 2003; Shipton, 2020; McCoy, 2006; Chappell, 2008; Oliva & Compton, 2010; Basham, 2014). It is suggested that police organisations possess a substantial militaristic or command and control culture that has negatively influenced the educational approach of police academies generally (Chan, Devery & Dorn, 2003; Ryan, 2006; Makin, 2016). As part of a broader reform to policing, a range of authors suggest police education should adopt adult learning principles that encourage learner-centred approaches and promote critical thinking skills relevant to policing duties (Birzer, 2003; Basham,

2014; Cox, 2011; Chappell, 2008; Makin, 2016). A recent systematic review of police recruit training by Belur, Agnew-Pauly, McGinley and Thompson (2019) indicated that learner-centred teaching was more effective than traditional teaching at promoting police recruits' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, whilst adding the police teaching role was crucial with the integration of theoretical and practical skills.

Traditional educational approaches and organisational attitudes in police education align with the dominant but outdated educational philosophy of behaviourism (Birzer, 2003; Cox, 2011; Basham, 2014). Behaviourism is an educational philosophy equating humans to machines, suggesting learning is based upon new behavioural patterns being repeated until they become automatic (Mergel, 1998). This kind of teaching has been the historical norm in police academies, with mechanistic and uniform approaches such as the memorisation of key terms or weapons drills (Birzer, 2003; Doherty, 2012). This is not to say that behavioural learning strategies are never appropriate; they can be beneficial in certain circumstances and provides a useful approach when teaching some aspects of policing (Chappell, 2008; Pearce, 2006), however, it remains a weak foundation on its own for comprehensive education programs (Birzer, 2003; Mergel, 1998; Palinscar, 1998).

It is argued the adherence to behaviourism in police education is exacerbated by a range of factors, including police organisations not having education and training as their primary focus and possessing a militaristic and insular subculture that actively seeks to promote traditional values in ways that resist reform (Chan et al. 2003; Oliva & Compton, 2009). There is also an assumption that policing experience is all that is needed to teach police students, with minimal developmental effort required for teaching skills (Spencer, 2002; Shipton, 2011). Moving beyond traditional and behaviourist assumptions in police education and developing an awareness of how and why learner-centred approaches work is therefore an important first step by police organisations wishing to transform learning programs.

The relevance of learning paradigms and PBL to the facilitator role

Despite the barriers to educational development, there are growing numbers of police organisations and individual educators seeking to expand their awareness of teaching beyond the confines of a

behaviourist epistemology to include educational approaches informed instead by constructivist philosophies. Constructivism has underpinned both the developing field of adult education and change within school-based learning over the past century. Constructivists suggest learning should not be simplified or restricted to the transmission of decontextualised knowledge but instead viewed as a social process of knowledge co-construction (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Palincsar, 1998; Mergel, 1998). This perspective has been a key factor in developing a range of learning theories, with the more prominent including humanism (Rogers, 1969), andragogy (Knowles, 1980), critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970), experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, including the ZPD. Each of these theories places the learner and their needs at the centre of a learning situation, encouraging them to be active and self-directed whilst being guided by peers and a teacher who acts mostly as a "guide on the side" rather than limiting themselves to only being a "sage on the stage" (King, 1993, p. 30).

Applied within the classroom, a constructivist approach encourages assisting learners in constructing their knowledge within relevant contextual situations (Biggs, 1999). It could be argued that policing as an occupation provides many practical opportunities that can be transferred to academy learning situations in a constructivist manner. PBL is one of a range of similar constructivist methods that can be used effectively in this situation and is increasingly used in police education (Croal, 2006). Whilst PBL is broadly constructivist, Loftus and Higgs (2005) established a substantive theoretical framework for PBL within this paradigm, based around Vygotsky's ideas and research. Vygotsky's work rests within the social constructivist sphere but is more specifically termed sociocultural, centred on "... his explanation of the dynamic interdependence of social and individual processes" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 192). This concept emphasises how people construct knowledge in social situations rather than relying upon memorisation, with this process being fundamental to learner-centred methods (Loftus & Higgs, 2005).

Vygotsky's ZPD is a key theory underpinning the facilitation process, including the scaffolding of learning to construct knowledge. The ZPD is defined as,

The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Vygotsky 1978, p. 86).

When a learner can easily solve a problem by themselves, they are often working within a zone of current development (ZCD) (See Figure 1 below), however, Vygotsky would advise this kind of activity does not lead to development and that, “The only good learning is that which is in advance of development” (1978, p. 89). In other words, teaching activities should be positioned ahead of students’ development and not lag it. As such, the learning situation or environment is one in which the student is placed in a potentially uncomfortable or challenging situation where they must draw on the support or scaffolding around them to learn. In the context of PBL, scaffolding students within their ZDP requires a skilled facilitator to use a range of contemporary learning techniques such as co-operative groups, guided facilitation, assessment rubrics, metacognition, and problem-solving frameworks. Across all these strategies, a student works with their peers and facilitator to make sense of concepts in advance of their development, they would otherwise struggle with on their own (Loftus & Higgs, 2005).

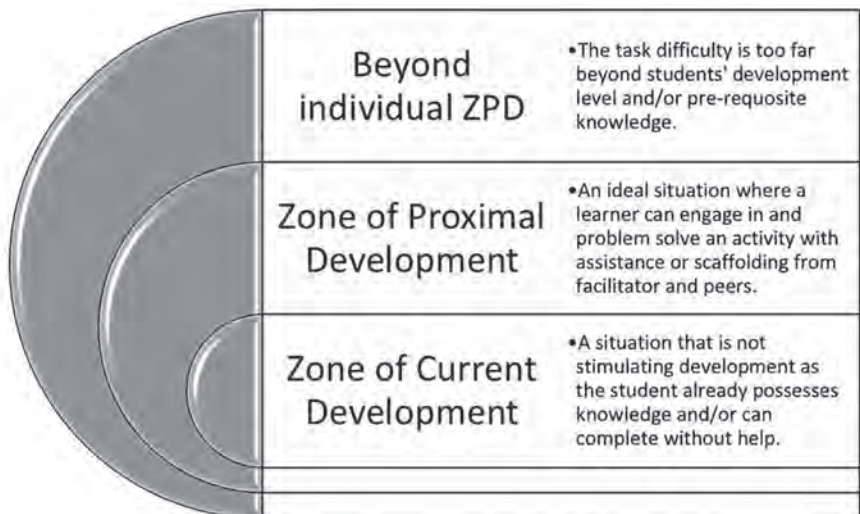


Figure 1: Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development.

Critical to facilitating PBL within the ZPD, is the role of the teacher, who supports and guides students' thinking about a concrete learning issue to promote deeper learning, where students construct meaning relevant to their professional context and develop transferable problem-solving skills (Biggs, 1999).

The effectiveness of PBL has been established in a range of studies, including a relatively recent meta-analysis (Walker & Leary, 2009) and meta-synthesis (Strobel & van Barneveld, 2009). PBL was designed for use within medical education by Howard Barrows to improve learning beyond the mass memorisation of information evident in traditional programs and to help students transfer clinical problem-solving skills to their medical practice (Barrows, 1996). While PBL has been a method employed to improve learning in police education and assist its application in the workplace, it is also aligned with the problem-solving approaches required for community policing. As such, Doherty (2012), Basham (2014) and Cleveland and Saville (2007) suggest PBL is an improved learning model in contrast to traditional teaching approaches and provides a crucial problem-solving perspective relevant to the application of community policing. Doherty (2012) points out this amalgam between learning theory and police problem solving in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). This move towards PBL has also been encouraged by a range of academics and experts in the field of police education who view it as a more relevant learning model, especially given the transition to community and problem-solving policing (Cox, 2011; Chappell, 2008; Doherty, 2012; Basham, 2014).

Distinctive teaching experiences in policing and their relevance to PBL

In considering how PBL might be applied by police academy teachers as a learner-centred method, it is first important to consider what this method entails and the range of skills underpinning its effective application. This understanding is crucial because there are often misconceptions about what being learner-centred is or is not, particularly when comparing the role of facilitator with a more traditional lecture or direct instruction approach. A naïve perception is to simply view these roles as exclusive or diametrically opposed and that is certainly something I have experienced anecdotally. Certainly, some of these misconceptions have been seen at an academic level, with Kirschner, Sweller and Clark (2006) being critical of PBL, stating it only provided minimal guidance to learners. However, in

reply to Kirschner et al. (2006), Schmidt, Loyens van Gog and Paas (2007), emphasised the facilitator role in PBL had scope for significant guidance and scaffolding of learning, including direct instruction where required. The range of these supports in a policing context have been elaborated by Shipton (2009) and agree with Schmidt et al. (2007) that facilitators are significant in evaluating and guiding the learning process. Unfortunately, some police educators have mistaken the term learner-centred, to mean that students are simply handed a problem or learning activity for completion on their own accord, without the facilitator providing answers. Whilst students should ultimately possess the skills and knowledge to do this, the PBL process requires facilitators to initially provide significant guidance and only fade this support once students can take greater initiative in their learning (Barrows, 1996; Cleveland & Saville, 2007).

Consequently, the facilitation role does not mean abandoning traditional lecturing skills or subject expertise many police educators have developed. Rather, this knowledge and skills form a foundation on which effective facilitation can be developed, leading to a more aware and effective teacher. Recent research by Shipton (2020), interviewing 25 teachers across five Australian police academies, provides a broad framework of police educators' teaching experiences that range from less to more sophisticated practice. The categories of experiences described in this research provide a developmental pathway that illustrates how police educators can potentially expand awareness from being teacher-centred to also include learner-centred practice. Essentially, this study emphasises how learner-centred practice is built upon or inclusive of the skills initially developed in teacher-centred practice.

Briefly, the four categories of teaching experiences derived from this research, from less to more sophisticated or learner-centred practice, represent the teacher as a:

1. *Presenter*, passing on policing knowledge and experience, predominantly using a lecture method to get their 'message' across to students who are mostly passive recipients of subject content.
2. *Conversationalist*, establishing a rapport with students via a question-and-answer process checking the transfer of subject content. Students remain mostly passive but feed their knowledge back to the teacher via questioning.

3. *Guide*, helping students to share and discover their own answers from subject content, with students' being more active and collaborative in their learning. Teachers here are beginning to use simple scenarios in group learning situations that promote some student-to-student interaction.
4. *Problem-solver*, engaging students with increasingly complex policing scenarios developing underlying thinking skills in addition to content knowledge. Students' problem-solve and justify their solutions, with the facilitator using their content knowledge to encourage autonomous thinking like police practitioners. They are flexible in their actions based on constant evaluation of students' learning.

These categories are represented below in Figure 2, which highlights the hierarchically inclusive nature of these experiences and the expanding awareness from less to more complete or sophisticated practice. This reasoning is consistent with a range of studies examining teaching experiences utilising a phenomenographic research approach (Entwistle & Walker, 2000; Trigwell & Prosser, 1996).

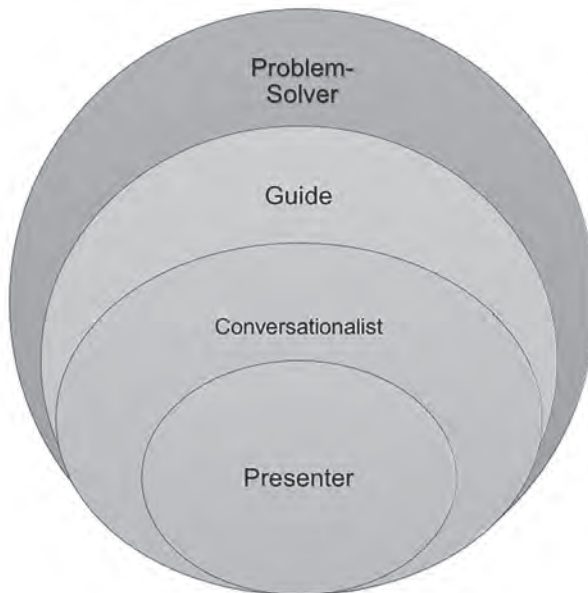


Figure 2: Hierarchically Inclusive police educator teaching experiences (Shipton, 2020).

The first two of these categories are representative of teacher-centred experiences, with the teacher being the centre of attention in the classroom and students being mostly passive in their learning. The second category sees the early development of an interactive process, albeit being limited to a question-and-answer process checking knowledge retention. The third and fourth categories can be considered learner-centred, with the teacher taking on a more facilitative role, with an explicit focus on developing learning and thinking skills in the fourth category. It is crucial to note that each category is built up or subsumes the lower categories in an inclusive hierarchy. For example, a teacher consistent with the *problem-solver* category makes use of the lecture skills of the *presenter*, the questioning skills of the *conversationalist* and the facilitation skills of the *guide*. However, the *problem-solver* is also adept at evaluating the learning situation and is mindful of encouraging critical thinking about content in an operational context.

The teaching attributes of the *problem-solver* are ideal when utilising a method such as PBL. In any PBL situation, students are asked to learn from an integrated and ill-structured problem relevant to their learning (Barrows, 1996). In policing, this problem may relate to any number of scenarios, but it should not be overly simplistic and could have multiple approaches or levels to the problem. For example, we could have a situation where police attend an assault at a licensed premises. It could be complicated by the fact an offender is not readily identified, there is a crowd hostile to police or potential witnesses may be intoxicated. Overlaying this job may be issues relating to ongoing problems with these premises and community tensions that have never been adequately resolved. Whilst asking the students to address the immediate problem, there could also be expectations to address the broader issue evidenced in this situation. Therefore, the scenario is an integration of content areas because the students need to consider and learn about a range of issues including, communications, law, policy, investigations, community issues, ethics, and officer safety. It is ill-structured because there is no easy up-front solution and the scenario needs to be worked by students, with guidance from the facilitator and peers, before one or several solutions might be understood and presented by the learning group.

The limitations of teacher experiences when applied to PBL

To scaffold students in their ZPD during PBL, students are guided through several steps. These steps may vary depending on the context but a common one recommended by Cleveland and Saville (2007) in policing programs is:

Ideas – students brainstorm a range of *potential* actions and solutions.

Known facts – students outline what is known to consider what they need to know.

Learning issues – is a list of topic areas the students learn to address the problem.

Action plan – based on their learning, students propose and justify key actions.

Evaluation – students consider the effectiveness of their plan and learning process.

Students often take several attempts at using this model before they become comfortable with it, particularly as they step into their ZPD, so course designers and facilitators will also need to provide additional scaffolds until their students become more skilled with their learning (Schmidt et al., 2007). There is also the expectation that each PBL case and the content learnt, will build upon previous learning. For example, before undertaking the ill-structured problem described above, students would have likely learnt some basics about communications, legislation, note taking and policing powers. Additionally, supporting tutorials could also be provided throughout the PBL process, which may take place over a week, to provide just in time learning of content related to the case. However, none of this preparation of curriculum or support for students will work without a facilitator possessing the correct skills and understanding of the method. Returning to the four teaching experiences outlined above, we can consider how each might facilitate students through the PBL steps described.

When facilitating the ideas step, there is a need to encourage students to brainstorm a range of ideas about what the problem is and they as police, might go about dealing with it. For our *presenter* and *conversationalist*, who prefer the transmission of information, there may be some uncertainty around facilitating this step. It is up to the

students, in their groups (usually four to five is a good number) to generate these ideas based on the scenario and their previous learning. Therefore, these teachers would need to refrain from giving their own ideas, with the *conversationalist* needing to encourage lateral thinking rather than questioning for recall. The guide and *problem-solver* would be more effective because they are used to not simply handing over information or ideas. In particular, the *problem-solver*, would tend to focus on prompting students to think critically or broadly about the problem. For example, the students may ignore ideas relating to communication and instead focus on investigation so our facilitator might prompt what communicating effectively with potential witnesses might do in encouraging new avenues of investigation through rapport building. Essentially, the facilitator wants to encourage the students to think like police but give only enough guidance for the students to rationalise their answers.

The known facts step tends to be more straightforward, with students highlighting key facts stated in the case. This is where good curriculum design is important because there needs to be enough detail for students to identify key learning issues and solve the problem. The teacher needs to be aware of not simply directing the group/s of students to these key facts but prompting their thinking. For our *presenter* or *conversationalist*, this step may again be difficult for them as they are used to imparting information rather than guiding students' thinking about subject content.

The third step of students identifying learning issues is crucial, as it will determine what the students' learning before constructing an action plan. The teacher will likely have a model list of learning issues, but they should only guide this self-directed activity. Developing this skill is important because police need to be independent thinkers throughout their career. Our *problem-solver* would be the only teacher from the four categories to fully appreciate the importance of developing their students' skills in this area. Conversely, our *presenter* may be tempted to simply tell the students what to learn because they view students as blank slates to be filled (Cleveland & Saville, 2007). Students can become quite adept at generating a good list of learning issues, however, if they are not generating all possible learning issues, the facilitator should resort to skilful questions to prompt thinking. For example, whilst the students might consider topics around the interviewing of an offender, they may not fully consider their intoxication and what

impact that could have on any interview process. Again, some careful questioning may prompt students to now consider and explore this issue. As our *problem-solver* understands, the facilitator is modelling critical thinking skills and teaching students *how* to think like like police. Simply giving students information does not encourage the development of problem-solving skills (Vygotsky, 1978). Managing the group work process is a key facilitator skill in helping students develop their communication and teamwork skills.

The learning issues step now continues as the students embark on learning relevant content, involving scaffolds such as supplemental resources, online tutorials, or revision of previous classes. The facilitator remains an additional resource for students, who may provide specific content knowledge or point students towards resources based on their evaluation of the students' progress. Certainly, there are times when a facilitator can provide answers, however, it is ideal if students arrive at answers for themselves. In this regard, the skills of our *presenter* remain useful, but lecture skills alone are certainly inadequate in properly facilitating this step of PBL. Certainly, the *problem-solver* has the skills to constantly evaluate students' learning and make appropriate decisions about teaching to keep learning focussed. In this sense, the facilitator is problem-solving the learning process, adjusting teaching actions to ensure scaffolding within the ZPD.

The penultimate step of the *action plan* sees students presenting and justifying their proposed actions to address the problem. As with the preceding steps, responsibility is given over to the students to manage their presentation, assisting in the development of their organisational skills and initiative, which are important for any police officer. In this step, the facilitator needs to evaluate their students' presentation and debrief with constructive feedback. If multiple groups are presenting, the facilitator also needs to draw together the learning of all groups but crucially, by drawing these insights from the students themselves, in a way that encourages reflection on learning. Again, our *problem-solver* and to some extent the *guide* should be familiar with these skills but may be quite challenging for the *presenter* and *conversationalist*.

The teacher should be constantly evaluating the students' progress and learning to provide feedback but crucially, they should develop their students' reflective thinking, perhaps through the use of a reflective journal.

Reflection can be supported by providing pointed questions and modelling constructive feedback on their written work. The problem-solver is best suited to facilitate this task because of their strong focus on promoting underlying thinking skills, including metacognition, towards the problem.

In summary, Figure 3 below highlights key teaching actions to promote learning as part of the guided facilitation process. The POLICE acronym is used to represent the range of policing topics integrated into an ill-structured problem used to stimulate learning. This acronym serves as a guide for both students and facilitators to ensure a holistic response to the problem. The facilitator is required to skillfully provide a level of guidance or scaffolding to maintain students within their ZPD as they work through the problem in what is described here as Slow-time or appropriate time and space to learn and give a considered response. Once the PBL process is complete, students in a police academy context could be asked to transfer or operationalise their learning to a practical simulation or a Real-time policing task, for example, attending a licensed premises in pairs, replicating operational practice, to investigate an assault. The facilitator observes the activity, which may be subject to intervention if learning goes off track and is debriefed to provide formative and/or summative assessment.

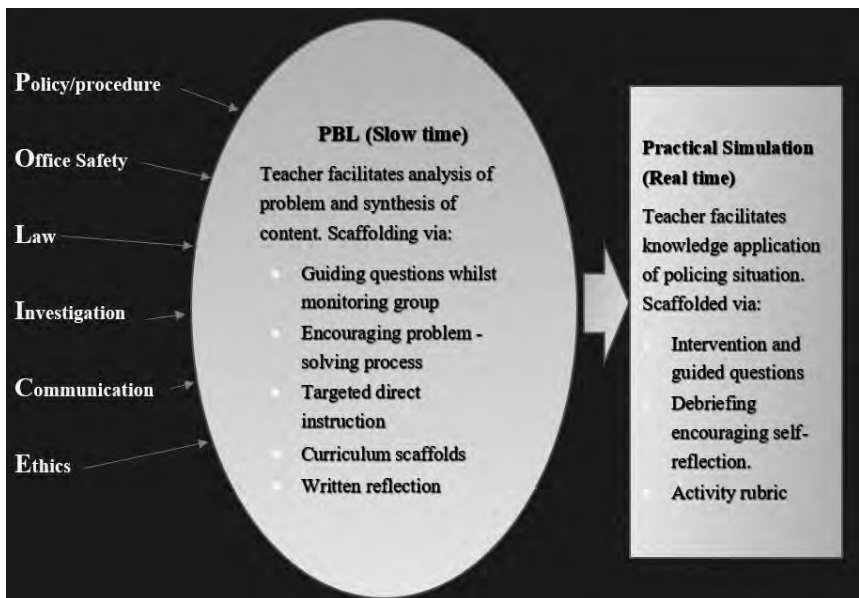


Figure 3: Police PBL facilitation model

Conclusions

As described by Schmidt et al. (2007), a PBL facilitator should provide substantive guidance as they constantly observe and evaluate their students' learning and interactions to gauge teaching decisions and interventions. As such, the teaching role is not one of following a script or simply relying upon direct instruction, which Vygotsky criticised as only leading to memorisation, without promoting deeper conceptual understanding (Bakhurst, 2007). Instead, the facilitators' role is multifaceted, using a variety of tools to scaffold learning in a dynamic and fluid environment. The *problem-solver*, when compared to other police educator experiences, has a wider range of skills to evaluate and manage this situation and draw on the right tool at the right time, which may include some direct instruction if required, particularly given the need to develop autonomous learning and practice beyond the classroom.

Implementing PBL, therefore, requires careful curriculum planning and teacher development in addition to what traditional academy programs provide. However, the benefits of more effective learning and improved problem-solving, teamwork and communications skills are potentially significant, so the additional effort should be considered by academy managers. The learning model outlined in Figure 3, with PBL as its centrepiece, can integrate disparate content areas into an authentic learning situation that promotes "functioning knowledge" (Biggs & Tang, 2011, p.81), which is vital for vocational professions such as policing. Whilst police academies have increasingly made use of simulation or scenario-based training for students to practice their policing skills in a controlled environment, these kinds of learning activities can be overly linear, requiring students to simply mimic actions they do not fully understand or appreciate (Pearce, 2006). PBL can provide a bridge between the range of relevant content areas and simulation training, assisting police students to understand key concepts and develop functioning knowledge specific to common policing tasks. This functioning knowledge in turn becomes a scaffold for students' application of this learning to a real time policing scenario and ultimately policing practice.

When considering how police academies can maximise this kind of PBL model, it is essential to invest in appropriate teacher development, particularly given the traditional and teacher-centred nature of police

academies. However, from the range of police educator experiences, the *problem-solver* experience demonstrates promise as a teaching model given its inclusive range of teacher and learner-centred skills (Shipton, 2020). One limitation of the qualitative nature of this study was an inability to generalise the proportions of each experience across the field of policing, however, the *problem-solver* experience likely only represents a relatively small number of practitioners based on research on similar categories across the broader field of adult education (Gonzalez, 2011). Regardless, the *problem-solver* experience demonstrates the range of skills to ensure the appropriate degree of facilitator support within an interdependent learning environment so important to maintaining students within their ZPD. Importantly, these skills include an ability to evaluate a dynamic learning situation and apply appropriate teaching strategies, whilst also complementing the learning of subject content with the development of critical thinking skills so important to effective community policing (Doherty, 2009; Cleveland & Saville, 2007).

Crucially for police academy managers, it is not a matter of simply prescribing a new method to teach, as teachers are reluctant or unable to utilise novel approaches that do not correspond with their current conceptions of teaching (Entwistle & Walker, 2000; Trigwell & Prosser, 1996). As such, it is important to realise that police educators' professional knowledge and experience of academy teachers remains relevant, as they need to expand their awareness of learner-centred practice beyond being teacher-centred, rather than simply switching to learner-centred practice (Shipton, 2020). As part of the development process, a focus on learning theories like the ZPD and associated scaffolding are important in assisting police educators to understand the reasoning behind learner-centred practice and how it should work. To underpin this learning approach, academy managers must be willing to encourage greater student autonomy in the learning space rather than defaulting to an authority dependent environment.

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About the author

Brett Shipton is a former police officer with the NSW Police, with a career in police education across several organisations spanning the past 30 years. He has been a lecturer with Charles Sturt University (CSU) at the School of Policing studies since 2006, during which time he completed his doctoral study in police educators' experiences of teaching and teaching development. Brett also has a particular interest in authentic and practical teaching methods such as problem-based learning and other signature police pedagogies. He has only recently been appointed to the position of lecturer in policing and justice studies at the CSU Centre for Law and Justice Studies.

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