

Research Article

SAGE ON THE STAGE OR GUIDE BY THE SIDE?: A PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTAL PATHWAY FOR POLICE EDUCATORS

Brett Shipton **

Within the broad field of educational research, good teaching is viewed as guiding students through deeper learning processes in what is often termed a “learner-centred” approach. This approach is contrasted with being “teacher-centred,” which essentially views the teacher as a “sage on the stage” whose role is to pass on knowledge to students in a generally didactic manner. Police educators, like educators generally, often view themselves as a sage early in their teaching career but with effective development they can move towards a more sophisticated and effective learner-centred conception, where they act increasingly like a “guide by the side.” Developing a learner-centred teaching conception is becoming increasingly more valuable within the police education context as policing organizations make greater use of innovative teaching approaches such as problem based learning (PBL). Referring to recent research on teaching conceptions, this paper outlines a potential pathway for police educators to develop from sage to guide.

Keywords: Police education, teaching, staff development, phenomenography, problem based learning.

INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on sworn police as well as civilian educators in Australian police academies. Its title is derived from the work of Stinson and Milter (2006). As such, the discussion is limited to these institutions and an emphasis on classroom teaching. Therefore, while the teaching conceptions highlighted cannot be directly attributed to other police educators—such as police field trainers or lecturers on graduate programs—it is suggested that the findings

** Corresponding author: bshipton@csu.edu.au

remain broadly relevant to teachers and trainers working in the broader field of police education.

Police educators in academies are expected to develop in their role via a range of formal and informal strategies similar to teachers in other educational contexts. Historically, police educators have often received only minimal preparation and development for their teaching roles (Berg, 1990; McCoy, 2006; Shipton, 2011). This is also true of the Australian policing context, with the minimum qualification for teaching police recruits only recently incorporating the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. However, even this qualification has been questioned in relation to its adequacy in providing a suitable standard for teachers in the vocational education and training (VET) sector (Clayton, Myers, Bateman & Bluer, 2009).

Inadequate teaching standards have led to a range of criticisms in relation to teaching approaches in police academies across the world that suggest police educators are overly teacher-centred and need to make greater use of adult learning principles to improve the learning outcomes of policing students (Birzer, 2003; Cleveland, 2006; McCoy, 2006; Doherty, 2012; Sims, 2012). In response to these concerns, many police academies across the world are making increasing uses of adult learning principles within their classrooms, with problem-based learning (PBL) being one of the more prominent examples.

Initially, this paper will examine some of the traditional assumptions of teaching and their development from the broader literature. The discussion will then focus more specifically upon how police educators see themselves as teachers based on the limited research in this area. This discussion will then form the basis for sketching a potential framework or developmental pathway that police educators will journey through as they strive to become more effective teachers. Essentially, this pathway will highlight the concepts police educators become increasingly aware of as they move from being teacher-centred or a sage on the stage, to being more learner-centred, or a guide by the side. While it is not the purpose of this paper to suggest a detailed developmental program, some key issues informing this transitional process will be highlighted.

TEACHING CONCEPTIONS AND STUDENT LEARNING

Studies of conceptions teachers hold in relation to their role have identified two broad categories that Kember (1997) characterised as teacher-centred/content-

oriented and student-centred/learning oriented. These conceptions will simply be referred to in this paper as “teacher-centred” and “learner-centred” respectively. A teacher-centred approach places the teacher at the centre of the learning environment, transmitting information in the form of isolated facts and skills to students, who assume a relatively passive role that is dependent upon the teacher’s actions and knowledge. This is in contrast to a learner-centred approach, which assumes a significant focus upon student learning needs, the development of deeper conceptual understandings via active learning and an assumption that students tend to be more proactive and self-directed in their learning approaches (Åkerlind, 2007; Conti, 1989; Kember, 1997; Ramsden, 1992; Trigwell, Prosser & Waterhouse, 1999).

Essentially, a teacher-centred conception is seen as less sophisticated or limited because it mostly views teaching as a process of simply passing information on to students for them to remember. However, a learner-centred conception recognises teaching and learning is much more than passing information to students and emphasises the importance of understanding the complexities of human learning and applying effective teaching strategies that meet their learner’s specific needs (Biggs, 1999).

There has been a body of research developing since the early 1990’s examining the conceptions educators hold in relation to their teaching that suggests a pathway along which they develop in this role. Prior to this time, staff developers tended to limit their focus to specific teaching strategies and methods rather than the underlying conceptions teachers held about their teaching practice (Trigwell & Prosser, 1996). Kember (1997), in a review of key studies in this area of research, highlighted the need to understand and recognise teaching conceptions in order to improve staff teaching approaches and therefore enhance the quality of student learning. The importance of understanding teaching conceptions can be seen in the impact they have on teaching practice and the flow through effects on student learning as highlighted in Figure 1.

Essentially, it is suggested that teachers will not develop their knowledge and skills beyond the limits of their teaching conceptions and this limitation will in turn lead to less effective learning (Trigwell & Prosser, 1996; Kember, 1997).

Stinson and Milter (2006) in their description of teaching skills required to utilize PBL, describe the more traditional or teacher-centred approach as being akin to a sage on the stage. This analogy describes the sage or expert as being at

the front of the classroom transmitting information and knowledge to students who remain mostly passive participants.

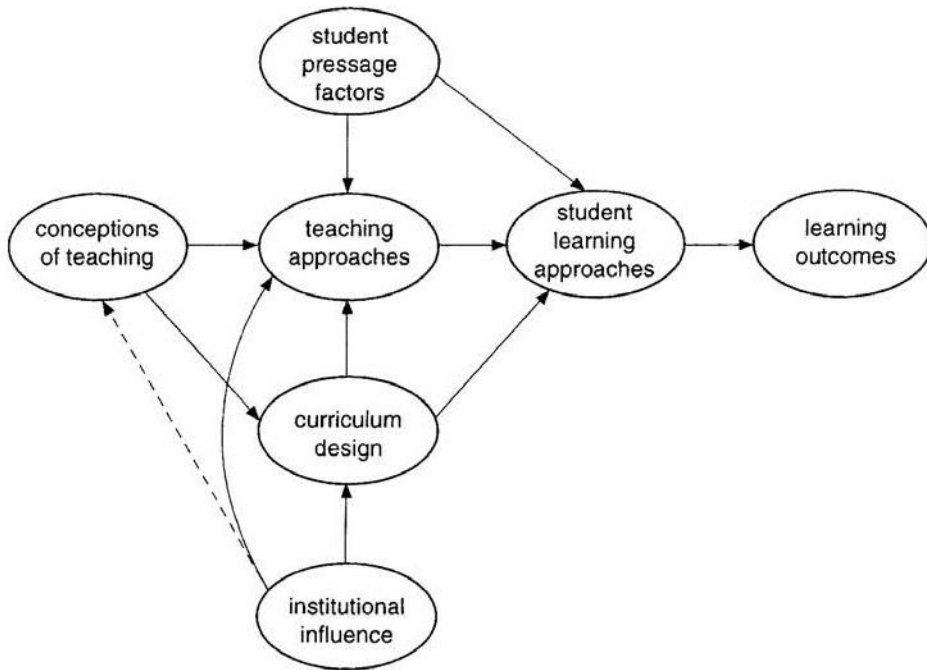


Figure 1—Adapted from Kember 1997, p. 269.

In this context, knowledge is seen as something that is handed from teacher to student, with the latter assumed to be an empty vessel waiting to be filled with knowledge. Stinson and Milter suggest however, that teachers will require a paradigm shift in their understanding of what teaching and learning is in order to successfully facilitate a learner-centred approach like PBL. In becoming more learner-centred, Stinson and Milter suggest a teacher should act more like a guide by the side. In this role, there is an increasing need by the teacher to demonstrate listening, coaching and facilitation skills and recognise that the learner constructs their own knowledge based on previous knowledge and experience in ways unique to each individual.

Importantly, there has been a general consensus amongst authors that conceptions ranging towards a more learner-centred practice, with an emphasis upon conceptual understanding and student learning, represent a more sophisticated and effective model of teaching because it promotes deeper

learning (Biggs, 1999; Kember, 1997; Åkerlind, 2007). A study by Trigwell, Prosser and Waterhouse (1999) suggested that teachers using a teacher-centred approach were more likely to encourage less effective surface learning approaches in their students. There was also a converse, but slightly weaker, relationship indicating teachers who adopted a learner-centred approach encouraged deeper learning approaches in their students. Studies by Kember and Gow (1994) reported similar findings, with a knowledge transmission orientation (teacher-centred) causing less desirable learning and a learning facilitation orientation (learner-centred) encouraging more meaningful learning.

Importantly, these studies highlighted the need for staff development activities to encourage the adoption of learner-centred teaching approaches in order to improve the student experience and the quality of their learning outcomes (Kember & Gow, 1994; Trigwell & Prosser, 1996). This line of research has demonstrated the need to develop teachers towards being more learner-centred or a guide on the side with an increasing focus upon the student and their learning. However, at this point it is important to clarify that standing in front of a classroom of students is not necessarily wrong or inappropriate. As we will see, a learner-centred teacher will often incorporate strategies used by a teacher-centred practitioner but as a subset of a range of broader strategies. Essentially, a teacher-centred conception does not allow a teacher to be aware of this broader range of strategies, or more importantly, understand the reasons behind their use.

DEVELOPING STAFF TO ENCOURAGE LEARNER-CENTRED TEACHING

Developing teachers' conceptions is not necessarily a simple switch from teacher to learner-centred thinking. While highlighting two broad orientations, Kember's (1997) review indicated that a range of previous studies of this topic suggested that there were a number of stages differentiating teachers' conceptions along a teacher-centred to learner-centred continuum (see Figure 2, below). Kember suggests the lower level of this model highlights a number of transitional stages teachers progress through to arrive at a more advanced understanding of teaching practice. The model indicates that transitions within the broader domains, for example, from Imparting Information to Transmitting Structured Knowledge, are relatively easy; however, moving from the Teacher-centred to Student-centred domain is a more difficult and complex conceptual shift.

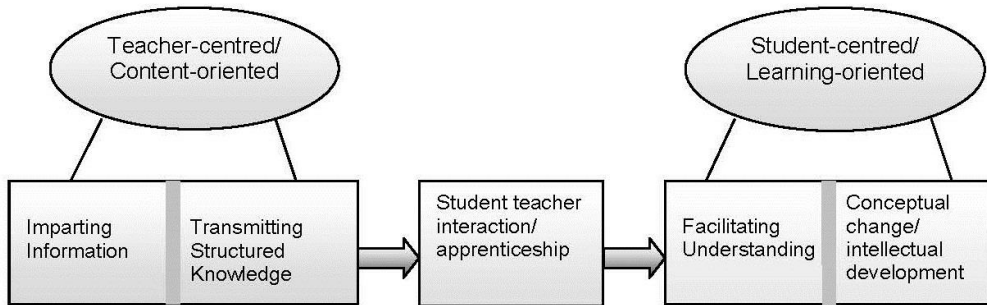


Figure 2—Adapted from Kember, 1997, p. 264.

This model has been refined over the past two decades, with further studies questioning the existence of the middle or transitional stage. However, what remains is the need for staff development activities that promote changes in teaching conceptions or beliefs in order to assist teachers in transitioning through these stages from teacher-centred to more learner-centred approaches (Kember & Kwan, 2000).

A range of studies in the area of teaching conceptions and approaches have also used phenomenographic research including Martin and Ramsden (1992), Prosser and Trigwell (1999), Åkerlind (2003) and McKenzie (2003). There are some key ontological differences between phenomenography and cognitive perspectives used by authors such as Samuelowicz and Bain (2001) and Kember (1997), with the latter taking a different perspective on conceptual development. From a cognitive perspective, development is seen as conceptual change, which implies teacher-centred and learner-centred conceptions are independent of each other along a continuum of development (Åkerlind, 2008). When viewing this development within Figure 2, a person is seen as replacing one system of belief (teacher-centred conception) with another (learner-centred). This contrasts with the phenomenographic perspective, where conceptions are seen as related within a hierarchy of inclusiveness, implying that development towards a more learner-centred understanding is the result of conceptual expansion (Åkerlind, 2008).

An example of a phenomenographic research approach demonstrating expansion within a hierarchy of inclusiveness can be seen in the study by Åkerlind (2003). This study established ways university practitioners viewed their role as teachers. Four qualitatively different conceptions emerged to include:

- 1) A Teacher Transmission Focus;
- 2) A Teacher-Student Relations Focus;
- 3) A Student Engagement Focus; and
- 4) A Student Learning Focus.

These conceptions, which are similar to those reported by Kember (1997), represent the increasing awareness of variation from an initial teacher-centred focus (didactically imparting information to passive students), to more complex and sophisticated learner-centred views of teaching (encouraging students to think critically and emphasising the learning process). This phenomenographic assumption recognises that each category builds upon and subsumes the understanding and skills within earlier categories, as teachers gradually become more aware of the wider variations in their practices (Trigwell & Prosser, 1996; Åkerlind, 2007).

Despite the differences in the assumptions of cognitive and phenomenographic perspectives, findings from both perspectives suggest teachers do transition through a number of qualitatively more sophisticated stages in order to develop towards learner-centred conceptions of teaching. Crucially, this development of more sophisticated teaching conceptions is necessary in order to change the way teachers approach their practice, as they are unlikely to utilise approaches that extend beyond the sophistication of their current conceptions (Trigwell & Prosser, 1996). Therefore, encouraging learner-centred approaches requires the broadening and developing of underlying conceptions of what teaching and learning means (Kember & Gow, 1994; Irby, 1996).

This approach requires a move beyond traditional staff development approaches that simply highlight various teaching strategies and step by step guides to their use and the assumption that teaching staff will simply start using these, to more sophisticated approaches that challenge current understandings and help participants become more aware of wider variations in teaching and learning (Trigwell & Prosser, 1996; McKenzie, 1999; Åkerlind 2007). While these findings provide significant insight into the direction of staff development programs, changing teacher conceptions remains a challenging task (Irby, 1996; Trigwell & Prosser 1996). In this regard, the focus of further discussion will be on the conceptions police educators hold towards their own teaching rather than

an examination of organisational approaches to teaching within the policing jurisdictions studied.

EMERGING ISSUES IN POLICE RECRUIT EDUCATION

As indicated at the beginning of this paper, there has been considerable criticism of teaching approaches used in police academies and the need to improve the design and delivery of various police recruit learning programs (Birzer, 2003; Bradford & Pynes, 1999; Cleveland & Saville, 2007; Doherty, 2012; Oliva & Compton, 2010). These authors commenting upon the North American situation suggest police educators are overly teacher-centred, inhibiting the development of problem-solving skills and deeper learning by police recruits. Similar comments were also made in relation to police recruit education in the United Kingdom, where Pearce (2005) and White (2006) suggest contemporary adult learning techniques are only marginally adhered to due to the current teacher-centred methodology. Similarly in Australia, there has also been criticism of police education via inquiries including the Fitzgerald Inquiry (Queensland) and the Wood Royal Commission (New South Wales), both of which criticised the narrow law enforcement focus and insular nature of police education programs (Fitzgerald, 1989; Wood, 1997; Cox, 2011).

While there appears to be a consensus amongst academics in the area of police education about these findings, there is limited research in the specific area of teaching approaches and conceptions amongst police educators. One of the initial studies on the teaching styles of police educators' was conducted by Berg (1990) in the United States. While this ethnographic field study did not determine whether police educators were teacher or learner-centred, it did categorise participants into various typologies which highlighted a range of issues in relation to the staffing of police academies. Berg in particular, was critical of the lack of teaching qualifications and the preparation of police for their teaching roles.

The first specific study in relation to the variation of teaching styles of police educators was conducted by McCoy (2006), who found that police academy staff were predominantly teacher-centred in their approach. His analysis did indicate doubts by a number of participants about whether these traditional teaching methods were appropriate. However, McCoy suggested these participants did not possess the required training and development in teaching to fully articulate and demonstrate learner-centred methods. Research

similar to McCoy (2006) was conducted by Werth (2009), who compared the teaching styles of staff at two US police academies in the process of implementing PBL.

Interestingly, the staff at these academies, despite having received specific PBL training and experience facilitating PBL, still recorded scores indicating teacher-centred styles similar to those found by McCoy (2006). However, Werth (2009) highlighted a number of possible reasons for this relating to how PBL was being implemented and the time needed to break down resistance in the police sub-culture. Finally, a survey of police educator teaching approaches by Shipton (2011) supported the findings of McCoy (2006) and Werth (2009), indicating that teaching staff in an Australian police academy were overly teacher-centred in their approach and not adequately prepared for their teaching role. Shipton (2011) suggested these findings underlined the need for future staff development to change the underlying conceptions police educators hold in relation to their teaching in line with the broader higher education sector (Trigwell & Prosser, 1996; Kember & Gow, 1994; McKenzie, 1999; Åkerlind 2007).

A PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTAL PATHWAY FOR POLICE EDUCATORS

Studies conducted to date into teaching approaches by police educators have lacked a research approach that provides a more detailed pathway or continuum of conceptions towards teaching. As such, the author of this paper is currently undertaking research into the conceptions of teaching and growing and developing as teachers of police educators from across a number of Australian police academies. While it is not the intention of this paper to discuss the findings of this research or its method in depth, some preliminary findings in relation to teaching conceptions will be shared to shed some light on the developmental pathway of police educators. The credibility of these findings is supported by fact they align closely with the teaching conceptions already described above by Kember (1997) and Åkerlind (2003) in their studies of university teachers.

The study in question involved interviewing 25 police and non-police teachers across five Australian police academies involved in the initial training and education of police recruits. Two of these academies conduct their programs in partnership with a university within the higher education (HE) sector, while the other three operate as registered training organisations within the VET sector.

However, at least at face value, each of these academies appears to operate on quite similar standards in terms of content delivered and student outcomes. Regarding content, this includes but is not limited to the law, investigations, communications, ethics, officer safety and physical training.

The research approach utilised for this study was phenomenography. A key emphasis with this methodology is establishing conceptions that represent a collective understanding of a given phenomenon. The conceptions highlighted below thus represent the beliefs of varied numbers of teachers from across different academies, teaching on different subjects and across both HE and VET sectors. As phenomenography is not a quantitative method, there is no attempt to compare or contrast different categories of teachers, institutions or delivery systems but instead represent a collective conception of teaching.

In terms of method, semi-structured interviews of around an hour in length were utilised. The aim of the interview was to focus on the research participants' beliefs or conceptions in relation to teaching. The data analysis consisted of an iterative process, where the interview transcripts were read and re-read to highlight similarities and differences in order to establish variations in how police educators conceive of their teaching role. In establishing a phenomenographic outcome space, the different meanings or variations on a collective level are established and then at some stage in this process, the structural aspects of these meanings are also constructed. As this study is only partially complete and for the sake of simplicity, only the conceptual meanings are represented below.

The preliminary conceptions from this study, ranging from less to more sophisticated, suggest police educators see teaching as being one or more of:

1. Transmitting Policing Knowledge

In this category, the teacher is seen as simply 'covering' content by passing on basic information and/or structured policing knowledge to their students. A teacher in this category predominantly uses lecture methods of teaching but also considers a variety of other strategies such as visual media and role plays, but with the general intention of assisting students to remember subject content and reproduce this for their assessments. Students are seen as passive recipients of this knowledge, with the teacher maintaining control over delivery as the centre of attention and expertise in the classroom. Their

focus is upon the subject content, with minimal consideration of learning processes or the student's role within that process.

2. Teacher and Student Interaction

The aim of teachers in this category is to interact with their students in a way that helps them feel more confident and enthused about their learning. In addition to relying upon the methods described in Category 1, there are attempts to promote interaction between teacher and students. This is achieved via teacher directed questions towards students to check their understanding or memory of what is considered to be the right answers in relation to the subject content. In this regard, the right answers often consist of repeating structured information or actions, perhaps in the form of verbal answers, written answers or a role play but with limited analysis or deeper engagement with the topic. Teachers in this category will tend to utilise practical policing scenarios, often from their own experience, but still control how students engage with these situations, usually by directing interaction from the front of the classroom.

3. Facilitating Understanding

This category demonstrates an increasing focus on students engaging in meaningful learning activities to promote a deeper understanding of the topic when compared to Categories 1 and 2. There is less reliance upon the teacher to cover content, with a greater emphasis upon actively guiding students towards finding their own answers. By finding their own answers and justifying these to their teacher and peers, there is an increasing expectation that students will think more about why they are important and how they are applied in policing situations. Rather than simply directing activities from the front of the classroom, the teacher makes increasing use of practical scenarios and/or learning groups that can assist in developing teamwork and communication skills in addition to improving their understanding and application of the subject content. Teachers in this category often describe being more didactic in terms of their teaching method at the beginning of their subject, in a way similar to Categories 1 and 2 but with the intent of gradually removing this support or scaffolding as the students become more confident in dealing with their learning tasks. However, teachers in this category still maintain a reasonable degree of control or structure in the classroom and do not explicitly encourage the

development of learning processes beyond what is required for the immediate learning task.

4. *Learner Development*

The emphasis in this category is on student learning and development in the classroom and beyond the classroom into their future policing practice. Teachers in this category place an increasing emphasis upon learning processes that engages police students in critical thinking and problem solving activities in relation to the subject content. In this regard, there is an explicit focus on both content and learning processes. This approach is often achieved via holistic and increasingly more complex scenarios than seen in the preceding categories. Teachers in this category also believe it is important to gradually cede control of learning in the classroom to their students by encouraging them to reflect upon their learning and take greater responsibility for their own development. They do these things to foster more autonomous or lifelong learning approaches that students can take from their academy experience and utilise in the field as police. They see the students benefiting by this on a personal and professional level and ultimately see a benefit to the wider community due to more effective policing.

It is important to remember that like the findings of Åkerlind (2003) described above, these beliefs by police educators about their teaching represent an expanding awareness of teaching, so each higher category also includes aspects of lower categories, but not *vice versa*. For example, a teacher in Category 4 may at times utilise a lecture method seen in Category 1, questioning methods highlighted in Category 2 or guide learning groups similar to Category 3, however, they will use these methods in a more selective manner than the lower categories and more importantly, with the intention of promoting deeper learning and developing their student's learning autonomy. In this regard, a teacher in Category 4 has the advantage of being aware of the beliefs and approaches of all four categories.

Returning to the previously discussed analogies described by Stinson and Milner (2006), Category 1 most clearly represents the sage on the stage, with the teacher in control at the front of the classroom and acting as the font of knowledge to be imparted to their students. Category 2 starts to see the sage become slightly less teacher-centred by interacting more with their students, but

in many ways they still remain on the stage by maintaining control over this process. Category 3 then sees our sage taking increasing opportunities to move from the stage and act more of a guide for students who are undertaking active learning tasks that begin to promote a deeper and more effective understanding of their topic.

Finally, with Category 4, our teacher spends most of their time being a guide on the side, although occasionally returning to be a sage on the stage when required at key points of the learning process. Importantly, part of being a guide within Category 4 now requires our teacher to develop their students' ability to learn for themselves, which not only facilitates a deeper understanding of the topic, but also provides an ability to continue learning and developing as police practitioners beyond the immediate learning situation. Essentially, Category 4 represents and applies the principles of adult education that police educators should see as their goal.

Crucially, these categories are not strictly differentiated by what methods are used, although the higher categories do tend to use what are considered more learner-centred methods, such as PBL. Rather, it is how they are utilised and the intention towards a certain kind of learning that highlights the differences. Essentially, each of these categories represents *qualitative* differences in a teacher's understanding of teaching rather than a *quantitative* increase in knowledge. This perspective also assumes that less sophisticated understandings should not be regarded as wrong, rather as incomplete (Åkerlind, 2008).

What these conceptions represent is a potential pathway for police educators' development as teachers; however, as highlighted earlier in this paper, developing more sophisticated teaching conceptions is a challenging task. Åkerlind's (2003; 2007) research in this area has shown that teachers with learner-centred conceptions of their role will also tend to have more sophisticated conceptions of their development in this role. In other words, our Category 4 police educator will seek teaching development that will improve their ability to promote student reflection, facilitate group learning and make learning processes explicit for students. For a Category 1 teacher, their developmental choices would be limited to acquiring better ways of presenting to students, such as improving their knowledge of the topic or improving their PowerPoint presentations.

Again, these actions of the Category 1 teacher would not be necessarily wrong, as teachers in the higher categories might also choose to do these things, especially in relation to content knowledge. The problem is that Category 1 teachers' lack of awareness limits their understanding of developmental choices and as such, they might often reject attempts to develop their skills and knowledge in learner-centred approaches. This situation is also exacerbated by the inclination of police educators to maintain control of teaching in the classroom similar to the way control is required in operational policing situations (Shipton, 2008).

While the author's thesis will explore development in greater detail, a brief anecdotal example will be discussed to highlight the importance of this limited awareness and its implications for staff development. This example relates to a recent induction workshop conducted at the New South Wales Police Academy for operational police seconded to assist with academy teaching. The two day workshop was the first stage of a standard developmental program and in many ways attempted to provide some of the teaching skills and knowledge that could be associated with what has been described above in Category 3 and perhaps to some extent Category 4. During the course and in its post evaluation, however, a number of participants voiced concerns that the workshop did not properly prepare them for their imminent teaching role, as there was no consideration given to the subject content they were to teach.

While aspects of content knowledge were considered in other parts of the induction process, it still became clear that many of the participants were sceptical about being taught various facilitation skills. In this case, an explanation for this reaction could be that many of the participants had little or no experience as teachers and as such would most likely have less sophisticated Category 1 or perhaps Category 2 conceptions. Having these beliefs would give participants the impression that teaching is about being the sage on the stage, therefore their main focus of development would logically focus upon content knowledge and lecture methods to transmit this in a quantitative manner to students (Åkerlind, 2007). Again, there is no suggestion being made that these approaches are not important but a teacher limited to these conceptions will struggle to promote deeper learning (Biggs, 1999).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Police educators across Australia, most of who are serving police, tend to only have minimal teaching standards, often in the form of a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. Formal development within police academies is also limited, especially with the issue of tenure affecting some jurisdictions. While a case could be made for increasing the amount of staff development in relation to teaching, including the completion of university level teaching qualification, this paper additionally highlights the need to structure developmental processes around the conceptions police educators hold towards their teaching. In doing this, there should be several considerations made in relation to this approach.

Firstly, while police educators are expected to develop in their role via a range of formal and informal strategies and develop specific teaching methods and approaches, there should also be a focus on expanding teachers underlying conceptions (Trigwell & Prosser, 1996, Kember, 1997; Åkerlind, 2007). If a police educator has a Category 1 conception as described above, they may be unwilling to accept new training in learner-centred approaches, such as PBL. In fact, in instances such as this, there are many examples of police educators actively undermining attempts to implement learner-centred changes to curriculum (Cleveland & Saville, 2007). Åkerlind (2007) therefore suggests that development should be tailored to individual teacher's intentions and understanding either by limiting the aims of development to suit their conceptions or by providing specific strategies to expand their conceptions into higher categories. This may also entail grouping teachers based on their current conceptions and tailoring courses to meet the specific needs of those groups.

Secondly, developing more sophisticated learner-centred conceptions takes time. Undertaking initial training programs or completing tertiary qualifications in teaching are an important first step but alone are often not enough and in fact, over the short term, these programs may result in increased uncertainty by teachers about their role (Lindblom-Ylänne, Trigwell, Nevgi & Ashwin, 2006). Thus, the suggestion is that any change process will need to consider an ongoing developmental process within the workplace to encourage the conceptual expansion required (Trigwell & Prosser, 1996; Shipton, 2011).

Thirdly, specific courses and developmental programs to expand teaching conceptions should be structured so teachers examine their own experiences and those of their students (Trigwell & Prosser, 1996). This approach can assist

participants to see variation amongst different teachers and learners and gradually bring into focus the higher conceptions of teaching. This allows teachers to progress at a reasonable pace through the different stages or conceptions, rather than expecting a dramatic move from lower to higher stages. Also, it is not suggested that teaching specific skills is not appropriate. Rather, it is suggested that skill development should be incorporated into the process of broader conceptual development (Paakkari, 2012). Essentially, this is a holistic teaching approach that is consistent with the learner-centred principles of contemporary adult education theory that introduces police educators to appropriate teaching approaches at the very beginning of their career in a manner that is consistent with internal and external teaching development programs.

REFERENCES

- Åkerlind, G. (2003). Growing and developing as a university teacher – Variation in meaning, *Studies in Higher Education*, 28(4), 375–390.
- Åkerlind, G. (2007, February). Constraints on academics' potential for developing as a teacher, *Studies in Higher Education*, 32(1), 21–37.
- Åkerlind, G. (2008, December). A phenomenographic approach to developing academics' understanding of the nature of teaching and learning. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 13(6), 633–644.
- Berg, B.L. (1990). Who should teach police: A typology and assessment of police academy instructors. *American Journal of Police*, 9, 79–100.
- Biggs, J. (1999). What the student does: Teaching for enhanced learning. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 18(1), 57–75.
- Birzer, M.L. (2003). The theory of andragogy applied to police training. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 26(1), 29–42.
- Bradford, D., & Pynes, J. (1999). Police academy training: Why hasn't it kept up with practice? *Police Quarterly*, 2(3), 283–301.
- Clayton, B., Myers, D., Bateman, A. & Bluer, R. (2009) Practitioner expectations and experiences with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104), National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Research (NCVER), Australian Government.
- Cleveland, G. (2006) Using problem-based learning in police training. *The Police Chief*, December 2006. pp. 16–24.

- Cleveland, G., & Saville, G. (2007). *Police PBL, Blueprint for the 21st century*, Community-Oriented Policing Services, US Department of Justice and Regional Community Policing Training Institute, Wichita State University. Retrieved January 1, 2011, from <http://www.pspbl.com/pdf/PolicePBLBook2007.pdf>
- Conti, G.J. (1989). Teaching styles and the adult basic educator. In M.C. Taylor & J.A. Draper (Eds.), *Adult Literary Perspectives* (pp. 311–317). Toronto, Canada: Culture Concepts.
- Cox, D. (2011) Educating police for uncertain times: The Australian experience and the case for a ‘normative’ approach, *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 3–22.
- Doherty, D. (2012) *Problem Based Learning links to Community Policing and Professionalization in Police Education*, PBL Interim Evaluation Literature Review for Charles Sturt University, School of Policing Studies.
- Fitzgerald, G.E. (1989) Report of a Commission of Inquiry Pursuant to Orders in Council, Queensland Government, Brisbane.
- Irby, D.M. (1996). Models of faculty development for problem-based learning, *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 1, 69–81.
- Kember D., & Gow, L. (1994). Orientations to teaching and their effect on the quality of student learning. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 65(1), 58–74.
- Kember, D. (1997). A reconceptualisation of the research into university academics’ conceptions of teaching. *Learning and Instruction*, 7(3), 255–275.
- Kember D., & Kwan, K. (2000). Lecturer’s approaches to teaching and their relationship to conceptions of good teaching. *Instructional Science*, 28, 469–490.
- Lindblom-Ylanne, S., Trigwell, K., Nevgi, A. and Ashwin, P. (2006) How approaches to teaching are affected by discipline and teaching context, in *Studies in Higher Education*, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 285–298.
- McCoy, M. (2006). Teaching style and the application of adult learning principles by police instructors. *Policing: An International Journal of Policing Strategies & Management*, 29(1), 77–91.

- McKenzie, J. (2003) *Variation and change in university teachers' ways of experiencing teaching*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Technology, Sydney.
- Oliva, J.R. & Compton, M.T. (2010) What do police officers value in the classroom?: A qualitative study of the classroom social environment in law enforcement education, *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, Vol. 33 Iss: 2, pp. 321–338.
- Paakkari, L. (2012) *Widening Horizons, A Phenomenographic Study of Teachers' Conceptions of Health Education and Its Teaching and Learning*, PhD dissertation.
- Pearce, R.J. (2006) Probationer training for neighbourhood policing in England and Wales: fit for the purpose? *Policing: an International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, Vol. 29, No. 2.
- Prosser, M., & Trigwell, K. (1999). *Understanding learning and teaching: the experience in higher education*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Ramsden, P. (1992). *Learning to teach in higher education*. London: Routledge.
- Samuelowicz, K., & Bain, J.D. (1992). Conceptions of teaching held by academic teachers. *Higher Education*, 24, 93–111.
- Shipton, B. (2008) Exploding Some Myths in Police Education: Reflections on the Police Problem Based Learning Course, *Australian Police Journal*, December 2008, pp. 181–186.
- Shipton, B. (2011). Expanding Police Educators' understanding of teaching, are they as learner-centred as they think? *Journal of Learning Design*, 4(2), 1–19.
- Sims, B. (2006) Creating a Teaching and Learning Environment in Criminal Justice Courses that Promotes Higher Order Thinking, *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*; 17, 2, pp. 336–399.
- Stinson, J.E. & Milter, R.E. (2006) Problem-based learning in business education: Curriculum design and implementation issues, in *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, Vol. 1996, Iss. 68, pp. 33–42.
- Trigwell, K., & Prosser, M. (1996). Changing approaches to teaching: A relational perspective. *Studies in Higher Education*, 21(3), 275–284.

- Trigwell, K., Prosser, M., & Waterhouse, F. (1999). Relations between teachers' approaches to teaching and students' approaches to learning. *Higher Education, 37*, 57– 70.
- Werth, E.P. (2009). Problem-based learning in police academies: Adult learning principles utilized by police trainers. Unpublished Doctor of Education dissertation, Liberty University.
- Wood, J. (1997) Royal Commission Into the New South Wales Police Service, Final Report, Volume II: Reform. NSW Government.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brett Shipton was a sworn police officer with the New South Wales Police Force for fifteen years. During his career he worked in general duties, highway patrol, and as a police academy instructor. While completing the degrees of Bachelor of Education and a Master of Education, Mr Shipton became increasingly involved in curriculum design and assisted with staff development activities. In 2001, he left the police force and spent some time working as an education officer in corrective services, and teaching justice studies with a Queensland college of Technical and Further Education (TAFE). In 2005, he returned to the New South Wales Police Academy when he works as a lecturer for Charles Sturt University on the Associate Degree in Policing Practice, teaching on several law related subjects and problem-based learning. Currently, Mr Shipton is completing a PhD that focuses on analysing the conceptions police educators hold towards their teaching and their development in this role.

- o O o -