

Winter 1940

Police Instruction (A Measurement of Its Effectiveness)

John D. Leonard

H. D. Telford

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/jclc>

 Part of the [Criminal Law Commons](#), [Criminology Commons](#), and the [Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

John D. Leonard, H. D. Telford, Police Instruction (A Measurement of Its Effectiveness), 30 *Am. Inst. Crim. L. & Criminology* 757 (1939-1940)

This Criminology is brought to you for free and open access by Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology by an authorized editor of Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons.

POLICE INSTRUCTION

(A Measurement of Its Effectiveness)

JOHN D. LEONARD* AND H. D. TELFORD†

The Chicago Park District Police Training School recently inaugurated a short-answer testing program in order to measure the effectiveness of its training course in which more than 700 police officers participate.¹ This training course has been in existence since 1936 for all men below the rank of Captain. Each officer attends school two hours a week for alternating months between September and June. The school recesses during the summer months when the demand for police service throughout the park system is at its heaviest. The men go to school while they are off duty, and the time spent by them in school is returned to them by their commanding officers at the convenience of the service. Instruction is given separately to fourteen groups, each comprising fifty-five officers. The officers attending the school range in periods of service from recent induction to forty-two years. Attendance is compulsory until a man is sixty-four years old; at sixty-five he is automatically retired from the force.

During the first three years of the school's existence, emphasis was placed on covering the field of police knowledge and securing competent lecturers who were sufficiently well known in their respective fields to compel the respect of the officers. The revolver range was set up and marksmanship standards developed; every officer was given the American Red Cross standard first aid course until each man had successfully passed his test and received a certificate; considerable time was devoted to military drill, uniform inspection, and weaponless self-defense.

In the school's early curriculum, the subject of arrests was covered by a professor of criminal law from one of the local law schools. Several members of the staff of the Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory (formerly of Northwestern University, now of the

* Senior Lieutenant, and Director of the Police Training School of the Chicago Park District Division of Police.

† Personnel Technician, Chicago Park District.

1.[The chief function of the Chicago Park District Division of Police, one of Chicago's two police departments, is to patrol the city's boulevards, parks, and playgrounds.]

Chicago Police Department) lectured on ballistics, firearms identification, the detection of deception, document examination, micro-analysis, police photography, the care and preservation of evidence, and the legal status of scientific evidence generally. A representative of a fire fighting equipment company gave a series of talks and demonstrations on fire causes, fire prevention, fire-fighting, and the function of policemen at fires. A representative of the Automobile Protective and Information Bureau lectured on methods used in stealing cars, and on the admissibility of evidence in criminal cases. Members of the Chicago Park District law department lectured on the function and jurisdiction of the courts, the officer's liability, the officer as a witness, and the officer's appearance and conduct while in the courtroom; they also gave a review of supreme court decisions affecting the park police. The Director of Safety lectured on safe and unsafe police practices, the use of safety equipment in police work, and police contributions to a safety program. The Director of Employee Relations lectured on personal hygiene, public relations, the necessity of good health in police work, and the relationship of police credit ratings to community prestige. Members of the traffic engineering section spoke on the relationship of traffic engineering to police work, of the relationship of enforcement to traffic accidents, of modern highway construction, laning, and lighting, and of the value of police accident reports to future traffic planning. A private industrial concern contributed sound motion pictures on school boy patrols, the training of police horses, various methods of traffic control the world over, methods of accurate measurement, and the proper handling of a motor vehicle. The Director of the Police Training School lectured on communication as it applies to police work, the possibility of social service work by police, crime prevention, criminal investigation, homicide investigation, methods of arrest, proper methods of search, discipline, courtesy, the writing of police reports, information on local points of interest, relationships with other law enforcement agencies, the pursuit of fleeing felons, the lawful and unlawful use of firearms, the officer at the scene of a riot, and the care and treatment of witnesses and defendants. This list is merely suggestive of the great range of detailed material covered by the lectures.

During the first year the school was conducted by the lecture method. No tests were given on marksmanship, and the attending officers were marked subjectively on such factors as appearance, conduct, attitude, and adaptability. During the second year the

lecture type of instruction was abandoned in favor of a conference method. The subject was assigned to the group in written question form and individuals were selected at random to discuss the subject. This procedure constituted an improvement from the point of view of maintaining class interest and eliciting group discussion.

It was clear by the end of the second year that the group was well informed on some subjects and relatively uninformed on others. Investigation was needed to determine which subjects needed further attention and what parts of each difficult subject were understood least. The Director requested the assistance of a personnel technician experienced in test construction. It was decided to work out a series of true and false questions to measure the effectiveness of the teaching program. However, many of the officers, especially the older men, were unaccustomed to such tests; therefore, in order to have a practice period in which they could familiarize themselves with true-false tests, a start was made with objective material which the officers could study. The Police Record Bureau, with its extensive change in the manner of writing police reports, had just been inaugurated, and each man had a copy of the Bureau's eleven procedures, outlining in detail the new methods in reporting. This seemed to be the most suitable material for starting the testing program.

In this case, where intensive training was necessary in order to install a complex program with a minimum of confusion, intensive use was made of the "laws of learning" in order to raise the retention curve of the group. A person forgets a large part of new material within twenty-four hours after learning it. If he relearns the same material, he retains more, and after each relearning period he retains still more, until the law of diminishing returns obviates further study. A portion of the material was assigned to be studied, after which it was discussed by the group conference method and given as a test. The next study assignment included all previous assignments on the same topic, and the group conference and the test included all of this material. This was repeated until the group as a whole reached the desired level of retention.

Each test contained about seventy-five questions, and in order to minimize the effect of discussion among the men four sets of parallel difficulty were prepared for each topic.² The set to be used

²In order to see whether or not the tests were well-balanced, a frequency distribution was prepared for each group. They showed the tests to be of uniform difficulty, all having approximately the same range and all being at about the same

for a given group was decided on at the last minute. After each test was given, it was analyzed for question-difficulty. If the group had little or no difficulty with a question, it was dropped from consideration, except that the correct answer was announced. If the group had more difficulty, the correct answer was given and elaborated upon, so that the reasoning back of the question could be made clear. If the group had considerable difficulty with a question, the correct answer was given, the theme was further explained, and the question repeated in the following tests until the group ceased to have difficulty with it. In addition, the validity of each question was determined by ranking the scores of each set of papers—dividing them into a high ranking third, a middle third, a low third—and then tallying the success attained on each question by officers in the three groups. That is, if the low group missed a question more frequently than any other group, and the high group missed it least frequently—with the intermediate group scoring between the two—the question was held to have been properly presented. If the high group missed it most frequently, the question was either thrown out or revised. If the question was missed equally by all three groups, it was searched for ambiguous qualities; if none were found, the topic was relectured. After each topic had been assigned, lectured, tested, relectured, and retested, a review test was given, composed only of items with which the groups had had difficulty. As might have been expected, the group had little or no difficulty with this final battery.

This form of instruction and testing produced several gratifying results: (1) Increased interest on the part of officers attending the school; (2) Decreased administrative difficulty in conducting the school; (3) Prevention of friction between officers and the staff of the Police Record Bureau; (4) Greater understanding by officers of the aims and problems of the Police Record Bureau; (5) Increased facility on the part of the officers in taking an objective examination.³

The initial success of this objective testing program as a meas-

level. This indicated either that the men discussed individual items very little or else that they retained very little of the information thus obtained. (Probably the former.) In no case did a man fail to make a score; in no case did a man obtain a perfect score. Marks were high, but since the questions were not corrected for the guessing element this was to be expected. Making such a correction (subtracting the "wrongs" from the "rights") would have meant getting a normal instead of a skewed distribution, but it was decided against because the men tended to think in terms of how many questions they answered correctly rather than in terms of percentiles.

³ As to the clerical time involved, one civilian junior clerk had sufficient time to mark the papers, make the statistical analysis, and keep the school records.

urement of instruction indicated the desirability of extending the same technique to subjects previously covered in the school. As may be seen from the sample test reproduced at the end of this article, a situation common in policing was used as the subject of a number of true-false questions. Several such situations and the related questions constitute a half-hour test. Since all of the material used had been the subject of previous lectures, the tests were given without announcement or advance preparation. The papers were then reviewed by the Director who based his analysis on the above described process. The technique of preparing four similar tests on each topic was abandoned in view of the desirability of discussion among the officers. It is proposed in the future to return the papers to the men, on the theory that if the men learn the answers and remember and can apply them, their value as officers will be increased to that extent.

On the basis of the test results the Director is in a position to determine which subjects of instruction have been adequately covered and which need more extensive treatment in subsequent lectures. The program, therefore, can be adjusted from time to time to meet the needs of the group. Moreover, after an analysis of the test results over a period of time, the instruction program may be revised by temporarily excusing from the school the men with the highest scores so that the level of the lower groups may be raised by more individual instruction for the less advanced officers.

Unforeseen gains accrued from this testing program. Although originally designed for testing purposes only, it resulted in the development of a new technique of instruction. Whereas before it was necessary to secure the services of guest lecturers who were required to discontinue much of their regular work for a two-week period in order to repeat a two-hour lecture fourteen times, the Director can now, with the assistance of a technician versed in test analysis, present the subject matter by himself. Although previously the Director or lecturer had constantly to review his lectures in order to present similar material to each of the fourteen groups, he is now able to come before each group with a fresh mind, with no tendency to leave out valuable material. And although the amount of time needed before to cover a subject effectively was a matter of guesswork, it can now be determined accurately. True, the construction of each test is time-consuming work, but less so than the preparation of a two-hour lecture that must constantly change from week to week, from year to year.

The outstanding advantage is that the tests reveal the weaknesses of the teaching program more searchingly than anything else we have found. Effective teaching is immediately apparent; poor teaching is readily discovered and may be remedied the following week. The instructor may think he is leaving the group with a certain impression, while the test may show that the men have received an entirely different one. The group conference the following week reveals the thinking done by the officers and develops many of the subjects in ways unexpected by the instructor. By this method the group itself gains flexibility, and a means is afforded whereby the instructor can always keep his finger on the pulse of thought in the school. Moreover, since each officer is given his test mark to compare with the frequency distribution of the marks for the group, an element of competition is introduced—thereby bringing suspense and interest into a hitherto passive audience. The ultimate result is more intelligent questions and discussions and a far greater degree of enthusiasm on the part of the men receiving instruction by this technique.

EXAMPLES OF TRUE AND FALSE QUESTIONS USED IN TESTING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT POLICE TRAINING SCHOOL

Chicago Park District

Division of Police Training School

Name.....Star No.....Rank.....Section.....Date.....

Instructions: Answer each question by placing a circle around the T or the F; each question relates only to the situation and does not relate to any other question.

SITUATION 1

A police officer sees a motorist go through a stop sign.

- T F 1. The police officer always has the legal right to commandeer a passing car for pursuit.
- T F 2. The police officer may properly ask for the assistance of a motorist.
- T F 3. If the officer stops the car but the driver does not have an acceptable local address, the officer may properly accept the driver's written promise to appear.
- T F 4. If there is an escaping felon in the car, the Illinois Statute authorizes the officer to get help from any motorist.
- T F 5. In pursuit of a felon, an officer may legally force an assisting motorist into a position of danger to his life.
- T F 6. If the officer is legally entitled to commandeer a car, the motorist must be male and above eighteen years of age.
- T F 7. If the officer commandeers the car in an illegal manner and the car is accidentally demolished, the officer is liable for damages.

- T F 8. If the officer commandeers a car in a lawful manner and the car is accidentally demolished, the officer is liable for damages.
- T F 9. If the officer commandeers a motorist in a lawful manner, the motorist has legal recourse.
- T F 10. If the officer commandeers a motorist by force in an illegal manner, the motorist may charge the officer with assault and battery.

SITUATION 2

An officer sounds his siren and commands a car filled with tough-looking persons to pull over to the curb. The car fails to stop and travels on at an excessive rate of speed.

- T F 1. The officer should take steps to stop the car.
- T F 2. If the squad car succeeds in stopping the speeding car, the officer should take all of the occupants in custody on suspicion and book them on an "open" charge.
- T F 3. If the officer stops the speeding car and the driver locks himself up in it and refuses to come out or to accompany the officer, the officer may lawfully force the door open and take the driver to the police station.
- T F 4. If the escaping car outdistances the squad car, the officer should get the license number and later get a capias for speeding.
- T F 5. If the squad car gradually loses the chase, the officer should continue until the car is out of sight.
- T F 6. The officer should shoot at the tires of the escaping car if necessary in order to stop the car.
- T F 7. If the car gets out of sight, the squad car should continue the chase for two or three miles.
- T F 8. If the officer shoots at the car and accidentally kills one of the occupants, he is criminally liable if the person is an ordinary citizen.
- T F 9. If the officer knows one of the occupants of the car to be an escaping felon, he may legally shoot at the car.
- T F 10. If the officer shoots at the car and kills an escaping felon, he is criminally liable.
- T F 11. If the men in the car start shooting at the squad car, the officer may legally return their fire.
- T F 12. If the men in the car start shooting and accidentally kill a bystander, they are legally guilty of murder.

SITUATION 3

Certain hedges at street corners are accident hazards, but the property owners refuse to trim the vegetation. There is no ordinance requiring them to do so.

- T F 1. The officer should arrest the property owners for maintaining a traffic hazard.

- T F 2. The officer should point out to the property owner the danger of such a condition and solicit his cooperation in an effort to reduce accidents.
- T F 3. Because of the apparent danger to life and property, the officer has a legal right to trim the hedges without the consent of the property owner.
- T F 4. Even though the condition involves a danger to life and property, in the absence of a law governing the situation, the police have no legal right to compel the property owners to act.
- T F 5. The officer should recommend to his superior that a law condemning such traffic hazards be passed.

SITUATION 4

A parade is scheduled in the Chicago Park District, a permit is issued, and notices of the parade are printed in the paper.

- T F 1. Notices should be posted along the route of the parade notifying automobile drivers of the parking regulations affecting the parade.
- T F 2. The police have a legal right to remove any cars that interfere with the parade except emergency equipment, using a tow truck if necessary.
- T F 3. The officer should insist that all male spectators take off their hats as the national flag passes them.
- T F 4. The officer may lawfully strike a pedestrian with a baton to prevent him from crossing the street through the parade.

SITUATION 5

An officer is informed by a motorist that a Buick sedan, license number 00010, was driven at the rate of 55 miles an hour in a 35 miles an hour zone. While receiving such information, the officer observes the aforementioned car pass at a lawful speed.

- T F 1. The officer should commandeer a car and pursue the Buick sedan.
- T F 2. The officer should stop the Buick sedan and reprimand the operator for speeding.
- T F 3. The officer should stop the Buick sedan and give the driver an Arrest Notification for speeding.
- T F 4. The officer should tell the informant that he is unable to arrest the operator of the Buick sedan because the violation was not committed in the officer's presence.
- T F 5. The officer should tell the informant that he may appear before the Traffic Court and request a warrant for the operator of the Buick sedan.
- T F 6. The officer has a legal right to make an arrest for a traffic violation not committed in his presence as long as his information comes from a reliable source.

SITUATION 6

An officer is sent to the scene of an automobile accident which resulted in serious injury to a pedestrian to make a general investigation and to take statements. He arrives at the scene immediately after the injured person has been taken to the hospital but before any other action has been taken.

- T F 1. This accident must have been the result of some human or physical failure.
- T F 2. The officer should test the brakes of the car at or as near to the scene of the accident as possible.
- T F 3. The officer must obtain the permission of the operator of the car involved to test the brakes.
- T F 4. The officer should take the car to some place where brakes may be tested and have the brakes tested.
- T F 5. The operator of the car may properly object to having the car driven to a place where brakes are tested.
- T F 6. It is necessary to have similar road and weather conditions to determine brake efficiency in order that the result be admissible as evidence.
- T F 7. An officer can safely estimate the approximate speed and distance in determining the brake efficiency of an automobile.
- T F 8. The officer should take actual speed and street measurement when determining brake efficiency.
- T F 9. The law is specific as to the braking requirements of each type of motor vehicle.
- T F 10. It may be impossible, because of the results of the accident, to adequately test the brakes of a car.
- T F 11. The officer may properly require each witness to make a statement, either orally or in writing, even though the witness does not desire to do so.
- T F 12. If a witness refuses to make a statement, the officer may properly book the witness for disorderly conduct.
- T F 13. The witness has a legal right to refuse to make a statement concerning the accident.
- T F 14. If the officer compels the witness to sign a statement against his will, the witness can proceed against the officer legally.
- T F 15. The driver of the automobile may lawfully be compelled to give evidence against himself that later may be used against him in a legal proceeding.
- T F 16. If the driver of the automobile is willing to make a statement detrimental to his own best interests, the officer should permit him to do so.
- T F 17. If the operator of the vehicle is physically able, he is required to send a written report of the accident to the Department of Public Works and Buildings of State of Illinois within 76 hours.
- T F 18. If the driver is physically incapable of making the necessary accident report, some other occupant of the vehicle should make the report if he is physically able.

SITUATION 7

A police officer stops a man who is driving an automobile and demands to see his driver's license.

- T F 1. The motorist may properly refuse to show his driver's license unless the law specifically states that he must.
- T F 2. The motorist may properly refuse to show his driver's license unless he is involved in an accident or a traffic violation.
- T F 3. The state law requires the motorist to show his license when requested.
- T F 4. Before the driver can be charged with operating an automobile without a driver's license, the officer must witness the fact that the person drove a car.
- T F 5. The motorist is subject to arrest if he tells the officer that although he does not have his driver's license with him he has one at home.

SITUATION 8

A police officer signals a driver to the curb for making a left turn at an intersection where left turns are prohibited by ordinance.

- T F 1. The officer should reprimand the motorist and warn him that a repetition of the act will result in arrest.
- T F 2. The officer should courteously request the driver's license and give him an Arrest Notification if he has an acceptable address.
- T F 3. The officer should have the driver get out of the car and then search him for concealed firearms.
- T F 4. The officer should inconspicuously observe the motorist's condition in an effort to determine his suitability to operate a car.
- T F 5. If the motorist is argumentative, the officer should calmly give him an Arrest Notification, avoiding discussion if possible.
- T F 6. If the driver's identification is of a questionable nature, the officer should take him to the police station and book him for the violation.
- T F 7. If in addition to the left turn violation the driver does not have a driver's license, the officer should take him to the police station and book him on two charges.
- T F 8. If in addition to the left turn violation the driver does not have a driver's license, the officer should give him two Arrest Notifications and permit him to drive away.
- T F 9. If the officer observes that the driver is under the influence of intoxicating liquor, the officer should issue the Arrest Notification for the left turn violation after taking him to the station and booking him for driving while intoxicated.
- T F 10. If the motorist ignores the officer's instructions to stop at the curb and increases the speed of his car, the officer should commandeer a car and pursue him.