Integrating the Police Ride-Along as an Experiential Learning Strategy in Criminal Justice Courses

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Learning is a dynamic and complex process. Instructors of adult college students increasingly find it challenging to make both course material and delivery methods relevant to today’s students. As Jarvis (1987) observed, “Learning is intimately related to the world and affected by it” (p. 11). Traditionally, the teaching-learning transaction in post-secondary education has been largely instructor-centered. Instructor-center approaches consist of the instructor transmitting course content primarily in the form of a lecture with minimal participation on the part of the student. The instructor reserves full pedagogical authority and is at the center of the teaching-learning transaction. In essence, the instructor makes all decisions about what is to be learned, how it will be learned, and when it will be learned, thus leaving to the student only the submissive role of following the direction of the instructor (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). Consequently, students

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Greetings fellow ACJS members! It is my privilege to serve as your President during 2012-2013. I hope you are all enjoying your Fall semester and looking forward to the upcoming holiday break. Some turkey and some quiet sounds really good to me right now.

The theme of this issue of ACJS Today is “criminal justice education.” Obviously this is a pretty broad, open-ended theme, one which will bring to mind different issues depending on the perspective of the individual. For me, it brings to mind what I believe is the most important part of our job—teaching students about justice. Research on the causes of crime, and on society’s response to criminal activity, is of course important and can occasionally inform policymaking, but I think that where each of us, regardless of what type of school or program we work in, can have a significant impact on criminal justice is in what we teach our students about what “justice” means.

Every department, be it criminology, criminal justice, or justice studies, teaches students the basics—the theoretical explanations for criminal behavior; how police, courts and corrections agencies operate; and so forth. Where we can and should focus our energies beyond providing this core knowledge is on teaching our students what is right and wrong. I don’t mean what is legal and illegal—we cover that already. And I don’t mean ethics alone. What sometimes gets short shrift, in our discussions of abstract theories or the mundane details of the criminal justice system, is that “system” and “justice” are terms that do not necessarily go together seamlessly.

We need to spend less time on how the system works and more time on how it should work. We should move beyond observation and cataloging, and into advocacy of what is right, of what will bring about real justice, for everyone in the criminal justice system. We, as educators, should strive to teach our students not just how it is done, but how it should be done, so that they will be able to go out there and get it done. That is what criminal justice education should, and can, be.

Moving on to ACJS-specific matters, I would like to remind everyone that the next annual ACJS meeting will take place March 19-23, in Dallas. My Program Chair, Lorenzo Boyd, and the members of the Program Committee have put together an outstanding slate of panels, roundtables, and events. The conference theme is “The Politics of Crime and Criminal Justice” and we will have a number of panels that highlight a “Conviction Integrity Unit” tasked with
this theme. Scheduled speakers include Dallas District Attorney Craig Watkins, who established reviewing claims of wrongful convictions. Also speaking is noted attorney David Dow, who has represented, on appeal, a number of death row inmates in Texas and who has written several books on the issue. Another speaker is Rachel Toor, who writes a regular column on writing and publishing for the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (as well as a column on long distance running for *Running Times*).

In addition to these speakers, we will be featuring some panels in each topic area by placing them in rooms near the Exhibit Hall. These panels will include paper presentations and roundtable discussions; what makes them a bit unique is that each was solicited by a Program Committee topic area co-chair. This is an idea I borrowed from Jeff Walker, who did something akin to this for the 2007 conference in Seattle.

Other interesting events will include a display commemorating the past presidents, as well as a past presidents panel. There will be a number of professional development panels and roundtables. We have not forgotten our environs; there will be tours of the Sixth Floor Museum (2013 also marks the 50th anniversary of the assassination of president John F. Kennedy), a tour of the new Dallas Cowboys stadium, and tours of some other institutions.

The 2013 meeting will mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. To commemorate this special occasion, every person who preregisters for the conference will be given a both a book on the history of ACJS (written by ACJS Historian Will Oliver), and a t-shirt noting the 50th anniversary. Those who register at the conference will also be given one of each of these items, so long as supplies last. So please try to preregister, to be guaranteed this “swag”!

The 2013 annual meeting will be the first ACJS meeting without a printed program. We are “going green” and providing the program electronically. It will be available on the ACJS website, as one document and, just prior to the conference, as multiple, smaller documents with each day serving as a stand-alone document. This should make it easier for people to download the program to their computers, netbooks, and/or smartphone. I realize that going paperless for the conference program is a significant change, but I believe it is the right thing to do, and hope you will bear with me as we work through the kinks that invariably accompany a major change in procedure.

One of the responsibilities of the ACJS President is to represent the organization at regional, national, and international conferences. I was able to attend four of the five regional conferences, missing only the Midwest meeting (my home region), as that conference was scheduled at the same time as the Southern meeting and I had to choose between Chicago and Florida. Not as easy a choice as my fellow Midwesterners may think! I really enjoyed the opportunity to attend these regional meetings and see how folks do things in their part of the country. Each conference was impressive in its own right, and I got to talk about ACJS and criminal justice with a lot of good people.

In other ACJS news, I am pleased to report that we are moving ahead with the creation of the Public Policy committee. This has been an ad hoc
committee for several years; if the ballot measure passes it will become a standing committee. Members of this committee are tasked with developing ways to “get the word out” about what we criminologists and criminal justicians do—to create linkages with state and national policymakers to enable them to use our research to inform their decision-making, and to provide a resource for journalists and others seeking information about a particular criminal justice topic. The committee will work with ASC on behalf of all of us in this field.

In my last column, I asked you to think about what you can do to improve ACJS. This time, in the spirit of the election and the upcoming holidays, I will ask each of you to think about what you can do to improve this world, starting with your own community.

And, of course, I will leave you with a quotation from Bruce Springsteen that reflects this concern:

We are alive
Oh, and though we lie alone here in the dark
Our souls will rise to carry the fire and light the spark
To fight shoulder to shoulder and heart to heart

Bruce Sprinsteen, “We Are Alive” on Wrecking Ball (2012)

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Upcoming ACJS Annual Meetings:

2014 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
2015 Orlando, Florida
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listen to lectures, memorize information, and process just enough content to be able to recite the information back on an examination. Knowles (1990) referred to this as the empty vessel theory because instructors saw themselves as filling empty vessels of students from their own reservoirs of content.

Criminal justice educators have frequently questioned the effectiveness of instructor-centered approaches. Both Robinson (2000), and Wolfer and Baker (2000), have recommended that criminal justice educators use active student-centered learning approaches in the classroom. Reinertsen and Hedges (1988) suggested that criminal justice educators should increasingly incorporate into the classroom principles of adult learning, especially the emphasis on experiential and cooperative learning. Similarly, Greenberg (1989) proposed a program that incorporates experiential learning into the teaching of criminology, juvenile delinquency, social deviance, and related subjects. Greenberg (1989) reported, “Students invariably regard their participation in the program as worthwhile, above all, the students appreciate the authenticity of the experience” (p. 335).

With experiential learning strategies, adult college students become more actively involved in the learning process when compared with traditional instructor-centered education. For example, participating in a police ride-along and learning through observation and interaction with the police is experiential. This is in contrast to only reading and discussing the police in a classroom. We propose that experiential learning when coupled with formal classroom learning complement each other producing a more effective teaching-learning transaction.

Moreover, we contend that many criminal justice courses in higher education can be enhanced through experiential learning, and that such an approach may better prepare students to address the complexities of the crime and justice.

Despite the proliferation of literature that centers on how adult students learn best, there has been insufficient previous work that investigates the effectiveness of methods and techniques that can be used to incorporate in post-secondary criminal justice courses, specifically the use of the police ride-along as a venue for experiential learning. The purpose of the study is to describe students’ experience of experiential learning during a police ride-along and to determine whether the experience benefits the learning of formal course content. Specifically, we were interested in how students were able to conceptualize what they learned from an observational police ride-along and relate their experience back to the course content.

Methodology

This project did not begin as a research study, so typical research methodology was not established. We began by simply attempting to improve the criminal justice education process for our students by providing opportunities to engage in “real world” experiences as a supplement to the classroom. Ninety-eight (98) students enrolled in our criminal justice courses in both Kansas and Florida took advantage of opportunities to earn extra credit by completing a 12 hour observation ride-along with the police. At the conclusion of their ride-along, the participants were asked to complete a reflection journal detailing their experience. Specifically,

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ACJS 2013 Annual Conference

“The Politics of Crime and Criminal Justice”

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the participants were requested to write about what they learned during the ride-along and how experiential learning assisted them in conceptualizing formal classroom content. Students were also asked to critically reflect on how the ride-along contributed to their learning formal course content and to record these reflections in their journals. As we began to read the reflection journals, we realized that the results could be systemized and the findings might have value for others attempting to make their criminal justice courses more relevant.

The students were from a variety of academic majors. Fifty-one (n=51) were criminal justice or criminology majors. The remaining 47 students represented a wide range of majors, including accounting, theatre, computer science, sociology, social work, business, anthropology, psychology, biology, and political science. The police agencies involved included local municipal police and sheriff’s departments in both Kansas and Florida. Students were allowed to select the law enforcement agency they wished to ride with and were required to obtain permission from that agency as well as to provide releases of liability for both the law enforcement department and the university.

Analysis of the Data

The data consisted of the reflection journals produced by the students. Almost all of the participants described their experiences in rich detail. We made use of rich, thick descriptions provided by the participants to illustrate how they experienced and ascribed meaning to learning during the ride-along. These descriptions were taken verbatim from the participants reflection journals. From the 98 reflection journals, 182 significant statements were extracted. The 182

significant, statements reflected how participants experienced learning during the police ride-along. In order to determine if a statement was significant, we followed a suggestion offered by Hyener (1985). Hyener suggests judging a statement significant if it “directly responds to and illuminates the research question” (pg. 284). Thus, we judged a statement to be significant if it directly illuminated if the police ride-along was beneficial for the student in the learning of formal course content.

Findings

Learning for many students occurred suddenly. Something would happen during the ride-along and the student would suddenly realize why the police perform a prescribed way in a given situation or behave in a certain way. Participants often reflected on the classroom material when they observed something during the ride-along. They conceptualized what they learned from the formal classroom or textbook to the firsthand experience of the ride-along. Students portrayed the ride-along as a reinforcement mechanism for learning classroom and textbook material. Students suggested that they would not have discovered through the textbook or classroom discussions about the police, the bureaucracy, red tape, and paperwork they deal with. The ride-along seemed to transform learners into thinking about the police in ways they had never done before. The students appeared to have had a transformative learning experience about the police. Participant responses to the experience appeared to cluster into four main themes: (1) sudden learning epiphanies; (2) reality of police tasks; (3) police officer as human; (4) the bureaucratization of police work.
**Theme One: Sudden Learning Epiphanies**

Fifty-seven students (58%) spoke of sudden learning epiphanies during the ride-along. Students noted that as they observed a police task during the ride-along they suddenly realized why the police do what they do in a given situation. We named this theme “sudden learning epiphanies.” For example, read what this participant wrote in his reflection journal:

I learned about why the police do the things they do in a given situation. We investigated a shoplifting and the suspect had to use the bathroom. The officer made the suspect use the bathroom with the door open as the officer watched. … I asked the officer why he watched the suspect use the bathroom. The officer explained to me that there have been cases where a suspect was hiding a weapon or drugs in their trousers. So it was for officer safety. When the officer told me this, it all made sense to me.

The following participant makes the point that the ride-along assisted her in clarifying classroom material. She writes:

The ride-along showed me why the police do the things they do. This really clarified a lot of what we learned in class.

Another made the following comment:

I remember reading about crime statistics and about some of the new crime mapping techniques in the textbook, but I had no idea the extent that the police rely on these. The officer I rode with explained to me that she spends about 40 hours a month studying crime mapping trends. I saw her working with crime mapping on the computer.

One student, a criminal justice major, revealed that the ride-along made her realize the kind of work that police do and that this differed much from the Hollywood version. She also comments on how reading the textbook along with the ride-along experience assisted her in learning and understanding the police role.

By doing the ride-along, it made me realize what kind of work is actually involved in being a police officer. What also helps is having read the textbook. While the book explains it all, seeing it through your own eyes backs up what you have read and allows you to really see what police officers do. I have never really thought about this before and then it just kind of all came together.

The revelation by participants that the ride-along clarified classroom presentations is salient. This is closely related to Wright’s (2000) thesis where she argued that experiential learning is an effective tool for helping students make connections to the subject matter at a depth that cannot be gained through books and lectures alone.

**Theme Two: Reality of Police Tasks**

A second theme that emerged in this study is one we named the “reality of police tasks.” Forty-five (45) of the participants expressed that the ride-along provided participants with the
realization that the police perform many service related or non-law enforcement tasks during a tour of duty. Participants indicated that as a result of the ride-along they now have a more comprehensive view of the reality of what the police do. Many of them reflected back to the textbook and classroom discussion which we think indicates that their ride-along experience was well integrated with classroom learning. Participants pointed out that they realized the police perform far more service activities when compared to law enforcement activities. For example, one participant reflecting on the many service related tasks of the police:

I expected more action. We spent a lot of the time doing service activities. We helped look for an elderly man who had wandered off from a nursing home and responded to a call where a woman had fallen and needed help. Her neighbors were there but they could not pick her up. The officer helped her get back on her feet and called EMS to come check her out before we left.

For many participants it was difficult to conceptualize the great amount of time spent on service related functions perhaps due to popular media portrayals of the police. The media routinely reports the serious law enforcement police functions while not reporting what the police do the majority of the time, service related tasks. One participant recalled reading in the textbook about the Wedding Cake Model presented by Samuel Walker (1985). Walker presented the criminal justice system processes in the shape of a Wedding Cake. At the top of the cake are the celebrated and serious felonies while towards the middle and bottom of the cake are the cases that you rarely hear about (lesser felony and misdemeanor cases). He explained:

I remember reading about the Wedding Cake Model in the textbook, and I can see now after this ride-along that it is true, only the celebrated cases get most of the attention while the misdemeanor and lesser felony cases don’t really get the attention, and that’s the majority of calls that the police deal with.

Another reported that he was amazed at the kind of calls for service that police officers deal with. He reflected:

The police are called to many service calls. I did not realize just how many. It seemed like that was much of their jobs, the service calls. For example, we got a call from a screaming parent who wanted the police officer to make her five year old go to school.

**Theme Three: Police Officer as Human**

The third master theme centers on the participants view of police officers. Prior to the ride-along, 55 (56%) of participants viewed the police as cold, rigid, cynical and uncaring. The ride-along appeared to resolve many of the participants previously negative held views of the police. We named this theme “police officer as human.” Before the ride-along experience, there was a sense among participants that police officers were very autocratic individuals who possessed rigid personalities. One participant explains:

I didn’t realize that officers could text, eat and listen to music on the radio while patrolling. I thought that was neat, and it made them seem a lot more down to
Earth, like normal people rather than big scary officers of the law.

We discovered that participants often reflected back to classroom discussions of the police personality but that they seemed to have never fully conceptualized this issue. Moreover, participants indicated that classroom discussion and textbook coverage nurtured their views held of the police officer being a person with an autocratic personality with a cynical outlook on life. One participant explains:

This was much different than I read in the book, all in all, my ride-along with the officer helped change my mind about what I thought about policing and police officers. He proved that police officers could be polite and civil people.

Again, the ride a-long seemed to help participants discover the police officer as human, persons who have families and who experience many of the same problems that every citizen experiences. As one participant described:

We have talked and read about the police personality in class. I now realize that police officers, just like anyone else, are people. In fact, policing is just their job, it may be hard, but hey somebody’s got to do it. Not all of them are control freaks who are trying to bring everyone down.

Another wrote:

I always expected the police to be very stern. I did not think they have laid back personalities. As I waited on my assigned officer in the substation, I talked to several officers who appeared to be very nice and laid back. I did not expect this. My views of the police started to change even before I started the ride-along.

In this sense, participants were actively engaged and exploring for themselves the issue of police personality and it appeared to enhance the textbook and classroom presentation. Another participant wrote:

I learned that police officers are not scary mean guys, they are nice and most of them were pretty laid back. They are just normal persons except for the fact they carry a badge and a gun.

**Theme Four: The Bureaucratization of Police Work**

The fourth theme that emerged was the realization by participants that police work is highly bureaucratic. We named this theme “the bureaucratization of police work.” Sixty-six (67%) participants wrote about the enormous amount of paperwork police officers are required to complete. They wrote about observing the police chain of command and the rigid procedures used when booking a suspect into the jail. To some participants it seemed overwhelming. One participant wrote, “For every call the police officer makes, there is almost always forms to fill out and paperwork to complete.” Another participant wrote, “With every ticket came quite a bit of paperwork.” Yet another participant wrote, “It didn’t take long for the man to get himself arrested, but the paperwork took forever, and I had to sit there and watch them fill out paperwork for at least an hour.”

Participants also reported observing firsthand how, as one student wrote, “the system
works in a bureaucratic fashion.” We provide the following snapshot of what one participant described as the “red tape” of the criminal justice system taken verbatim from his reflection journal. This is very representative of this theme. For example:

I learned about what happens when the police officer makes the initial report. I learned about how the system works and how detectives receive the report from patrol and perform a follow-up investigation. If they have enough evidence to identify a suspect, they may make an arrest. Next, they approach the district attorney’s office. The district attorney’s office decides if the person will be charged. It seems like a lot of red tape to go through but that’s the system. The police are at the front end of this process.

Implications for Practice

The participants in this study revealed that the ride-along with the police enhanced their learning of classroom material as well as gave them new perspectives on the police role in the community, police procedures and bureaucracy, police personality, and the like. Collier (2000) argued that as instructors of adults move their learning experience from the classroom into the real world, some kind of transformation of the student will occur. Our research found evidence to support this notion. For example, participants wrote about not respecting the police because of their perceptions that the police were out to “hurt you more than help you.” The majority of these participants changed their perceptions of the police after the ride-along. As we carefully read through the reflection journals, the transformation on the part of participants became very salient.

Moreover, the formulated meaning and the clusters of common themes bore out many accounts of transformative learning on the part of the participant. One of the leading philosophers of education, John Dewey (1960), believed that if experience was made conscious, it had the ability to be transformative. Dewey believed that if learning was to be effective it should shift from the memorization of a body of knowledge to a process of inquisition, knowing and understanding.

Many college and university criminal justice degree programs offer internship programs as an elective or required course. Likewise, many internship courses restrict enrollment only to students in advanced senior status. Our data seem to suggest that the police ride-along was beneficial to students in the learning of formal course content. These findings suggest that criminal justice instructors should consider incorporating opportunities for experiential learning into their instructional strategies. We think that experiential learning approaches such as a police ride-along when used in criminal justice courses, may foster students’ readiness to learn. Knowles (1980) argued that adults are ready to learn those things they need to know in order to cope effectively with life situations and that adults are motivated to learn to the extent that they perceive it will help them perform tasks they confront in their life situation. This study strongly suggested that the ride-along experience with police had actually motivated participants to want to learn. One student’s reflection journal entry illustrates this:

Before the ride-along I really didn’t have any desire to learn about the police. The ride-along really sparked my interest, and now I would like to learn more about the
police. The learning experience of riding along with a police officer, one of the people I usually try to avoid, was thrilling.

As many of our colleagues may agree, teaching can be a challenging endeavor. It is important that instructors of adult college students find the right niche to make course material and learning relevant to a dynamic criminal justice field, and relevant to the changing college student who increasingly demands more varied modes of learning. We submit that experiential learning strategies provide a dynamic learning context which can more effectively facilitate the transition from instructor-centered to student-centered learning in many criminal justice classrooms.

References


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CRIMINAL JUSTICE GOVERNANCE POLICE SCIENCE

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In Memoriam: Norman Johnston

Dr. Norman Johnston, 91, Arcadia University Professor, author, scholar and good friend to many students and colleagues, considered by many to be the foremost international expert on the history of prison architecture, died while at the Artman Lutheran Home in Ambler, on Oct. 6, of complications from a series of strokes.

Dr. Johnston was the author or editor of eight books and numerous articles on criminal justice and on prison architecture, both in the United States and abroad, and he appeared in several television documentaries focusing on those subjects. Dr. Johnston researched the history of punishment, imprisonment, and the evolution of prison architecture worldwide. These interests led to his long time association and board service with the Pennsylvania Prison Society and the Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, the latter of which he was instrumental in developing.

Born in Marion, Michigan, in 1921, Dr. Johnston was the only child of Henry Dean Johnston and Lila Madison. He did his undergraduate work at Central Michigan College, receiving the bachelors of arts (summa cum laude) in absentia, as he had enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1943, before the official college commencement. After World War II, he entered graduate school at the University of Chicago and completed his masters of arts with honors. Dr. Johnston began his professional career working in a state prison in Illinois for three years, and then entered the Ph.D program in sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, where he was given an assistantship and began teaching in 1952. He completed the Ph.D in 1958 and his dissertation was published as The Human Cage.

Dr. Johnston subsequently studied abroad on a Fulbright Award. In 1962 he was hired at Beaver College (now Arcadia University) as an Associate Professor and Chairman of the Sociology Department where he spent his academic career. He was considered an outstanding teacher/scholar, and was dearly loved by many students for whom he was a teacher, as well as a mentor, and a friend. Soon promoted to full professor, he continued to teach full time until 1992, after which, as Professor Emeritus, he taught part time while pursuing his scholarly work for another two decades. In his later years, he became a beloved figure on campus and appeared to be much like a “Mr. Chips” at the University. A memorial celebration for Dr. Johnston was held on Nov. 18, 2012 at, noon in the Castle at Arcadia University, Glenside Pennsylvania. Johnston is survived by his cousins from Michigan. The family asked that contributions be made to Arcadia University for a memorial in both his honor and his memory.

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Walking Along with *American Criminal Justice Policy*: From Book Review to Inter-state Team Teaching

Jeremy Olson, Seton Hill University*

Suggestions for book reviews are not in short supply at peer-review journals. Although page space significantly limits the number of reviews that can be published, there are reasons for reviews finding their way into the volumes. One of these reasons is that the editorial staff believes the book will make a significant contribution to the Academy. Such was the case with Mears’ (2010) *American Criminal Justice Policy: An Evaluation Approach to Increasing Accountability and Effectiveness*.

While working under the editor of *Criminal Justice Policy Review* (CJPR), I was given a copy of Mears’ work by a colleague and asked to consider sending it to a reviewer. Having a background and interest in evidence-based policy, I glanced at the work myself to see if it was worthy of a review. Reading the pages, I quickly decided this book should be reviewed and that penning the review was a task for editorial staff. I set out to read the work, make notes and write the review. I did not know at the time that, collectively, these were the first steps leading to the development of “Walk-Alongs,” a semester-long classroom project that would also spawn a foray into inter-state team teaching.

Fast forward to Fall 2011. The criminal justice curriculum where I teach does not include a recurring course on evidence-based practice, a rather hot topic in the discipline. So, while helping to decide the upcoming Spring schedule, I chose to teach policy and program analysis as the special topic. Since this was the first time I would be teaching this course, I knew I would need some assistance. Recalling the counsel of Hersey’s (1969) fictional Senator Mansfield that “the best way to get to the end in a hurry is to begin at the beginning,” I took a shot at emailing the author of the text I would be using for the course to see if he could offer any input. Though his time was limited, Dr. Mears quickly agreed to assist in this endeavor. We next set out to be sure the course material would accurately cover the text.

**The Hierarchy**

For those unfamiliar with the structure of *American Criminal Justice Policy*, Mears (2010) lays out a five step hierarchy for evaluating the effectiveness of criminal justice policies and programs. Much like the stage-development theories of psychology (e.g., Erickson’s and Freud’s personality theories), Mears suggests that these steps be followed in order to assure the most effective and efficient growth of policy. The five evaluations, in their ordered steps, are Needs, Theory, Implementation, Outcomes/Impact and Cost-Efficiency. According to Mears (2010), Needs evaluations will identify the existence and severity of
problems and assess whether the same require criminal justice intervention. Theory evaluations will then explore whether an idea for intervention in the problem is tied to theory and whether that foundational theory has empirical support. Implementation evaluations then determine if the ideas were put into practice as envisioned and whether obstacles had to be overcome in the paper-to-street journey. Outcomes/Impact evaluations can then be undertaken to measure the success or failure of the policy in achieving its goals and to uncover any unanticipated effects—good or bad—arising from the policy. Finally, Cost-Efficiency evaluations will help weigh monetary, time and effort benefits garnered from the policy.

By themselves, the full scale of these ideas may be somewhat abstract, even for some of us professors. The students in my first analysis class were going to be a mix of freshman to seniors, with a wide array of exposure to requisite tone-setting knowledge. How could we best offer to pass these ideas on to my students, some of whom have never been exposed to theory, research methods, statistics and critical analysis?

Walk-Alongs

When looking past all the pomp and circumstance, academic growth has strong parallels with personality development. We start with a gooey-glob of academically untouched freshman brain matter, bombard it for four to six years with the best we can offer in pedagogy and then hope that the end result is a relatively stable pattern of socially appropriate cognition and behavior. Closely monitoring any such development in any single 15-week semester can help us to encourage desired growth and to avert potential disaster. I developed the idea of Walk-Alongs to permit such observation in this course, utilizing the metric of Mears’ policy evaluation process. Dr. Mears and I then refined this idea into a workable project.

Simply put, Walk-Alongs require that students apply the five steps of the evaluation hierarchy to a single criminal justice policy. Students choose a policy or program of interest to them and then perform Needs…Theory…Implementation…Outcomes/Impact…Cost-efficiency evaluations. The academic process is relatively simple.

In the first week of class, students were informed of the requirements for the project and were given the instruction sheets which include the grading rubric. They then found, read and submitted two articles giving empirical attention to their policies. This allowed both the students and me to be sure that their chosen policies had received some level of academic review. Once the policies were approved, the students began their evaluations. To this end, I assigned a five to seven page paper detailing the students’ findings at each step of the hierarchy. Students were also required to present their findings to the class for one step of the hierarchy. In alternating weeks, I presented the text chapter as I would any other material and followed this the next week with student presentations of findings, beginning with the Needs evaluation.

Here, students used the literature to determine what problems their policies were designed to resolve, researched the severity and impact of the problems and then made a decision as to whether the problems required criminal justice intervention. Next, in the Theory evaluation, students connected their policies with the criminological theories at their base and performed a literature review to offer an informed opinion as to whether or not the theories had been validated. Third was the Implementation evaluation. Students determined if their policies were put into practice in the same manner as they were
envisioned. Next was the Outcomes/Impact evaluation, when students informed on whether their policies had achieved stated goals and whether there were unintended consequences. Finally, students engaged the Cost-Efficiency evaluation which allowed them to consider financial, time and effort savings of their policies. If there was not empirical evidence available for any step, students identified the ways in which they would seek the information necessary to make an informed decision for that step.

Pedagogical Benefits

While time and space limit a full discussion of the benefits gleaned from projects like these Walk-Alongs, the most relevant can and should be discussed. I start with student engagement. I believe that one of the most common obstacles encountered in higher education classrooms is the lack of student engagement. Projects like the Walk-Alongs work to solve this issue. The Walk-Alongs require that students self-select a topic and carry it through all five steps of the hierarchy. Because it becomes evident at the Theory evaluation step that later work is heavily dependent on earlier effort, students are nearly-instantly confronted with the necessity to invest appropriate time and effort at all steps.

Projects like this also deepen and expand student cognition. The earliest effort students exert to these projects is simply to remember, understand and apply the text materials. As they work through the steps with their policies, they become more and more critical in their analyses. When they determine that they cannot find needed information to answer the questions posed, students must synthesize ways to garner that information. All the while, they are working at evaluating contemporary programs. The astute reader will have now recognized that these projects require students to process information at all six steps of Bloom’s Taxonomy (Education, 2007).

Students are also able to immediately connect coursework with what is going on “out there.” Because self-selected policies must be in contemporary practice and have some level of empirical support before the professor will accept their use in this project, students are immediately aware that the words on the page have some relationship with current prevention efforts, intervention techniques or research studies. Whether my undergraduate students plan to enter the discipline or go on to graduate school, the Walk-Alongs have real-world consequence for them, now and in the future.

By carrying one policy through all five of the steps, students effectively become “undergraduate experts” in their chosen policy. They also build greater literature review skills as they begin to differentiate relevant from irrelevant articles when selecting for appropriateness at each step for their own policy. Additionally, at the end of this project, students have a good start on a database of articles which can be used for projects in future courses.

These are just a few of the benefits of this kind of project. For a mere $36.00 (USD paperback new, or $15.95 USD eBook) and some time on the library’s research database, students are able to gain expertise, learn to critically evaluate criminal justice interventions and engage themselves in the academic process. Professors willing to read this entire dialogue and correct a few dozen five to seven page papers over the course of a semester can add all these benefits to their own courses for free. Heck, if you email me and request it, I will even send you my full instruction sheet and grading rubric, without additional shipping or processing charges. Of course, readers can modify or revise this project to match their teaching styles and classrooms. It is a
Lessons Learned

While I continue to evaluate the successes of and potential revisions to this project, I can offer that the Walk-Alongs have been successful in allowing me to observe student growth and understanding of evidence-based research. The initial struggles with an abstract topic applied to a distant policy faded one by one and were replaced with the “Aha” look on most students’ faces as the steps became clear and the material became manageable. As this happened, students became more and more vocal in discussing their policies’ successes and failures as well as their own achievements and frustrations in the evaluation process. Despite my initial fears, my student evaluations in this course were among the highest I have received, with comments indicating that students appreciated both the hard work required in this class and the knowledge that they came away with.

Having the benefit of these vocalizations and hindsight, a suggestion for offering this course at the 300-level or even 400-level is warranted. Students who have already acquired knowledge and skills in research methods, statistics, literature reviews, academic writing, theory and critical thinking will be better prepared for the intensity of a project like this. Still, this is not a requirement. I also believe that “setting the tone” for an undergraduate academic career by using projects like this will greatly increase student engagement and learning; and, maybe even retention. As a single case example, I had one brand new freshman in this course consistently scoring right along the top of the class on all Walk-Alongs. Considering that I had emailed her prior to the start of the semester to express some concern for her status as a new student in this particular course, her success was a pleasant surprise.

I do not want to leave you with the impression that everyone achieved everything. I did experience some flight of students from this course. As only one of these students spoke with me prior to withdrawing, I cannot speak to all the reasons for their leaving. Yet, evidenced by the informal competitions that broke out among several students to earn the highest score, then the first “100” on any one Walk-Along, and supported by not having found brain splatter on the walls, I am counting this initial endeavor a success. Finally, given that Dr. Mears and I were able to collaborate throughout this project more intensely than either of us anticipated at the outset and having done so without meeting in person or leaving our respective home states, we strongly encourage you to undertake your own attempts at “inter-state team teaching.”

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to Daniel Mears for his unequivocal contributions to the creation of the Walk-Along project discussed herein and for his time in reviewing and commenting to earlier versions of this dialogue. It is an understatement to say neither would exist without him. Dr. Mears is in no way responsible for any errors found within; they are solely my doing.

References


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ACJS TODAY IS GOING TO THE MOVIES IN MARCH

Lincoln, Django Unchained, Hyde Park on Hudson, The Master, Flight, Argo, The Surrogate, Silver Linings Playbook, and Zero Dark Thirty, among others. These are only a handful of films for 2012 which will most likely be nominated for (and probably receive) an Oscar.

Are you interested in writing a scholarly analysis of one of these films? Or, perhaps you have another idea in mind. All ideas are welcome. For more information, please contact ACJS Editor, Robert M. Worley at:

worley_r@ct.tamus.edu

Student submissions are strongly encouraged!
Membership in professional associations has been a staple in the education of graduate students and the development of junior scholars. For criminal justice education, the main professional association is the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) which began in 1963. The founders were a few members of the American Society of Criminology (ASC), who concluded that ASC did not serve their interests sufficiently, namely, the meaningful involvement of, and service to criminal justice practitioners (Morn, 1995). While ACJS membership has increased, the criminal justice practitioners have largely defected from ACJS for practitioner-based organizations in their specialties. ACJS has evolved into looking like ASC, although it maintains its unique focus on criminal justice education and it has a greater policy advocacy bent than ASC. Yet, the numbers of criminal justice educators who are members of ACJS is less than might be expected given the proliferation of criminal justice programs. ACJS membership was 1,447 in 1979 (Morn, 1995). It peaked at 2,860 in 2009, then decreased to 2,661 in 2011 (ACJS Office), possibly reflecting recession effects.

What ACJS Offers

The primary goal of ACJS is to foster professional and scholarly activities among persons in criminal justice via criminal justice education, research, and policy analysis. It offers an opportunity for researchers, professors and practitioners to communicate and collaborate. This is largely through its annual conference and sections within ACJS. The sections are: Community College, Corrections, Critical Criminal Justice, International, Juvenile Justice, Law and Public Policy, Minorities and Women, Police, Restorative and Community Justice, Security and Crime Prevention, and, Victimology. Also important to the Academy, as evidenced by its facilitation of the concurrent Alpha Phi Sigma conference at the ACJS annual meeting and other ACJS student programming and awards, is student development. Additionally, ACJS membership offers prompt access to the Journal of Criminal Justice Education and Justice Quarterly, which have academic relevance. Indeed, ACJS’ Code of Ethics (ACJS, 2000) is highly indicative of the organization’s audience as it largely references students and faculty, with lesser mention of practitioner activities.

Markedly, ACJS is not an advocacy group. In lieu, it’s sections function more socially and from this, research collaborations and casual mentorships among criminal justice educators emerge. It is also not an accrediting body although recently, it began an optional program certification. Unlike other topic areas that do certification, ACJS does not facilitate or coordinate individual continuing education credits. As the organization advances, it seeks to increase diversity and to include more persons from a multidisciplinary orientation. These interests influenced the goals of this research: To describe current and past members of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences.
Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) given membership data for a seven year period; to examine reasons for membership and non-membership; and to offer recommendations toward increasing the membership.

Research Design

The present mixed methods effort began with studying spreadsheet data from the ACJS Office. The data contained descriptive information on ACJS members for a seven year period (2005 to April 2011). Additionally, an online survey was conducted using NSurvey. The sampling was done in two phases. First, a quota sample of non-members was selected through Google searches of criminal justice and criminology departments from each of the 50 states. For each state a four-year institution and a two-year institution were chosen, at each site one male and one female criminal justice instructor/faculty were chosen (except in a few cases when not available) who were not listed in the ACJS membership database from 2005 to 2009. The Community College Section assisted with identifying potential community college participants. Second, all student members in 2007, all Community College Section members in 2009 and two rounds of systematic random sampling of each 10th participant at the 2008 annual meeting were sampled.

Survey Sample Demographics

The survey solicitations were sent out at the beginning of December, 2009, to February, 2010, resulting in 108 completed surveys or approximately a 20% response rate. Persons not involved with ACJS were largely unresponsive, so modal responses were largely from 76 members. Thirty-one (31) persons identified as non-members, of whom, 23 claimed to have been past members and nine claimed they have never been members. While the sample size is small, the open-ended responses are rich in detail. Sixty-four respondents were male; 43 were female. Ninety-two percent of the respondents were White; three percent Black; three percent were Latino or Hispanic; and one percent was Asian; and two percent Other. The age distribution had a median of 35-44 years and a mode of 25-34 years. Sixty-five percent held doctorates. Almost a half of the respondents (49%) indicated an income of over $70,000 per year. Seventy-one percent of the respondents identified themselves as faculty; 14.3% were students and less than 4% were practitioners.

Analysis

NSurvey facilitated cross tabulations. Data were exported for further descriptive analyses that included chi square comparisons. The text responses were qualitatively analyzed by examining codes, themes and patterns in the responses. There were limitations. The spreadsheet data provided were incomplete for the early years, thus not facilitating much comparison over the first five years of interest. We were also cautioned about duplications in the dataset. The survey sample was not totally random although we made efforts initially in this direction. Initial low response rates and some technical difficulty required that the researchers abandon random sampling for quota sampling. There was some subjectivity in interpreting the open-ended text responses; nevertheless, the researchers strived for objectivity.

Findings

Data from the ACJS Office revealed that in recent years, the Northeast (Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, as well as the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec) has been the largest region (831 members in 2011), followed by the
Southern (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia (and Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands) (614 members in 2011). Third in size was the Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin, as well as the Canadian provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan (511 members in 2011). The Southwest (Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas) had 380 members; and the Western/Pacific (Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming, as well as the Canadian Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia) had 259 members in 2011.

From 2006 to 2010, the largest section within ACJS remained the Police Section. In 2011, Restorative Justice outnumbered the Police Section by two. From 2006 to 2011, Police had a 19% membership decline. The other sections with marked declines were Minorities and Women (-26%), International (-19%) and Community College (16.4%) (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Section Membership Changes from 2006 to 2011, (numbers provided by ACJS Office)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>-19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minorities and Women</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>-26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Justice</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>+1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrections</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>+11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Criminal Justice</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>+29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law and Public Policy</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>+90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>-19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>-16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restorative Justice</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>253</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security and Crime Prevention</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>+1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victimology</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>110</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall, the Academy membership has been increasing over the past nine years, with a slight decrease in 2005. Most of the regular members in 2009 (per available ACJS Office data) were from New York (206), followed by Texas (192), Pennsylvania (179), Florida (156), Ohio (128) and California (109). Most of the student members in 2009 were from Texas (55), followed by New York (53), Florida (40), Pennsylvania (37), then Ohio (28).

There were 86 international members on the April, 2009, membership roster (this excludes one person from the US territory Puerto Rico). Most were from Canada (35), followed by Slovenia (11), then Australia (6), Japan (6) and Germany (5). Other countries or regions included Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Netherlands, West Indies, Thailand, Taiwan, China, Korea, Macao, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Ireland, Austria, Israel and Switzerland. Notably missing, given their large population demographics, was India.

The survey respondents were largely faculty (71%). Most of these persons appear to have a high level of commitment to ACJS and their decision to complete the survey might be indicative of this. The modal membership was over 15 years. Members of the Academy largely provided consistent themes for membership including professional development; networking and collaborations, especially international opportunities; opportunities to publish; and access to journals. Many described the organization as inviting and friendly, and were appreciative of the opportunities that conferences provide for bringing researchers and practitioners together. Another consistent theme for membership was the connection to career advancement. Many indicated that membership was a job requirement for tenure or promotion, and some thought that it might help them to improve their instruction of students and foster their professional development. Finally, several professors suggested that ACJS helped to focus student development within the discipline.

The most consistent theme among non-members for their non-membership was that the cost of membership was prohibitive. Some noted that membership costs were not reimbursed by their department, and the cost became an out-of-pocket expense. Another common comment was that the delivery of services or tangible benefits did not outweigh the cost of membership (for example, journals could be accessed without membership and persons could attend the conference and enjoy those benefits without membership). A number of retirees also responded. For the most part, these persons expressed an interest in remaining involved, but lamented that the organization did not seem particularly interested in them. The few practitioner respondents indicated that the conference did not offer much in the way of practical information that they might use in their work.

Non-members who had previously been members presented a theme that questioned the quality of the conferences and the presentations. There was speculation that there might be inattention or lack of concern paid to whether individuals attended to present as scheduled and some wondered whether there was any follow up on presentations. ACJS was also compared to the American Society of Criminology (ASC). Some of these respondents suggested that ASC provided more prestige within the field and so was their preference for a conference. Finally, there were several non-members who did not choose Academy membership because they believed that their expertise (Sociology or Criminology)
was a better fit in a different professional association. Suggestions for improvement in criminal justice were also gathered through the survey. Current members were again more descriptive than non-members. Regarding improvements in the discipline, the suggestions included more input on what gets rewarded and the direction of the discipline, as well as certification and eventually accreditation. It was also suggested that, within ACJS, members strive for greater undergraduate, community college, practitioner and retiree involvement, as well as creating specializations/divisions within the Academy that reflect the discipline.

Regarding ways that ACJS might improve, the suggestions included: pursue accreditation, actively seek wider involvement, use more affordable conference sites, offer more value for money (such as workshops, training, policy advocacy, information that practitioners might use on the ACJS website), avoid leadership by criminologists, publish more applied works, improve the quality of conference presentations, greater leadership sensitivity to members’ conference concerns and experiences, limit e-mails, keep constant meeting dates, and continue to encourage civility within the organization.

Finally, recommendations for improving the ACJS annual conferences included better conference sites, greater variety, more affordable rooms, more conference publicity, and keeping meeting dates constant.

Also, many respondents suggested improving the quality of the presentations, requiring papers, and including more esteemed scholars on the programs. A few persons mentioned improving attendance at sessions and that leaders should not appear insensitive and disinterested about the experiences that individuals have while attending the conference.

**Conclusion**

The ACJS Office membership data are limited. This could be improved by adding a few optional questions about age, gender, race/ethnicity, income level, current position/rank, and highest degree earned to the membership form. ACJS might also offer greater value for money. As one person elaborated – the organization might be more than about two journals and a meeting once per year. It need not be a replica of ASC, but it might market itself as a place where teaching, students, ideas and researcher-practitioner collaborations develop. To involve more practitioners, researchers might be encouraged to craft their presentations as documents that practitioners might use. Various sections might lead the efforts to make the practitioner-researcher communications as productive as possible including appropriate advocacy. In all this, ACJS would be well served in doing what it can to maintain its reputation as an inviting and friendly group.

**References**


A Modest Proposal for an ACJS 12th Section: The Importance of Criminal Justice Education

Martin A. Greenberg, Miles College*

This article concerns the establishment of a new Section for Teaching, Learning and Scholarship (TLS) within the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. The purpose of such a proposed new section would be to bring together Academy members to serve as a multifaceted resource to assist faculty, practitioners, staff, personnel, administrators, and students in their integration of innovative teaching and learning techniques, and the scholarship of teaching within the field of criminal justice education and training. The proposed TLS Section's primary goal would be to support the growth and development of the field of criminal justice by providing general instructional and assessment design assistance, and promoting a climate for faculty, trainers, practitioners, staff, administrators, and students in their pursuit of lifelong learning. A major secondary goal is fostering government, academic, and community partnerships.

The TLS Section would include a board composed of leading faculty, practitioners, and administrators dedicated to: a) promoting communities of learning and the scholarship of teaching; and b) promoting and disseminating the teaching and learning efforts of criminal justice faculty throughout the world.

The new section is needed because, while most faculty choose to teach because of their quest for knowledge, concern for students, and an innate need to transfer their knowledge to students and various specialized groups, many college faculty and practitioners have not been educated in the art and science of teaching. By encouraging and motivating faculty and trainers to examine their teaching methods and relationships, the new section would be cultivating faculty and practitioner development and student learning. Mentoring, collaborative, and active learning are a few of the strategies to enhance this process. A positive consequence of such practices is to focus attention on teaching the "whole person."

The recent 2010 COPS funded program known as the "Teaching Police Department Initiative" (TPDI) involves a unique collaboration between a police department and several educational institutions. One of its main purposes is to promote professional training and leadership development, combined with formalized exchange programs, fellowships, and internships. Such undertakings are precisely what the proposed new section would also seek to encourage.

The measurement of program quality and effectiveness is a critical aspect of the self-study report for ACJS degree program certification. For example, Section H.3 of the ACJS Certification and Assessment Standards states that "The program demonstrates that students completing courses in non-traditional time periods and modalities, in different divisions, and at satellite or branch campuses acquire levels of knowledge, understanding, and competencies comparable to those expected in similar programs offered in more traditional time periods, modalities and locations."

Possible
ways to satisfy this standard involve using of the same measures/strategies for assessing student learning outcomes in both the traditional and non-traditional modalities and by sharing course syllabi and rubrics. The proposed new TLS Section would be able to foster the sharing of such materials and related experiences.

Both criminal justice practitioners and faculty who are interested in the improvement of teaching, training should be interested in joining this proposed section. In addition, staff members who serve at various faculty development centers throughout the nation should find membership worthwhile (a comprehensive list of such centers is available at http://www.wfu.edu/tlc/resources/other-centers.php).

Members of the ACJS who are interested forming such a new section should contact the author.

Notes

1This two-year pilot program is led by the Justice System Training and Research Institute (JSTRI) at Roger Williams University and the Providence Police Department, with assistance from: Brown University Medical School in Providence, Rhode Island; the Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence in Providence, Rhode Island; and John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York, New York. See: http://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/November_2010/TPDI.asp

*Martin Alan Greenberg is an Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Miles College (Birmingham, AL). He was formerly an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Virginia Union University, Associate Professor and Director of the Criminal Justice Graduate Program at Point Park University, and Chair of the Criminal Justice Department at the State University of New York at Ulster (1988-2003). While serving as a Criminal Justice Instructor/Coordinator at the University of Hawaii at Hilo, he was a Police Science/Criminal Justice U.S. Military Base Education Consultant in the Pacific Command for a period of 4 1/2 years.
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James Q. Wilson’s Practical Humanity and Contribution to Criminal Justice Education

use the methods and nomenclature of various fields without succumbing to the intellectual blinders that so compartmentalize academic research. Compared with you and me, Wilson, who taught at Harvard, the University of California at Los Angeles, and Pepperdine University, simply had more tools in his toolbox. And boy did he know how to use them.

While many, myself included, may disagree with some of Wilson's more politically conservative leanings, one cannot question the intellectually honesty from which they came. Undoubtedly a few will be quick, too quick, to dismiss or embrace Wilson as some conservative warrior in the Great American Culture Wars. The label doesn't stick.

Inasmuch as Wilson was conservative, he represented a more genteel, even old-fashioned type of conservatism much lacking among those who claim the mantle today. Wilson was driven to his beliefs by a deep-felt desire to help society's less fortunate. In a career of superlatives, one should note the impressive list of authors, who span a broad spectrum of theoretical and ideological beliefs, in volumes edited by Wilson.

Yes, he believed in the power of culture, and he was a brave and all too rare academic willing to buck ideological trends. But he was not a paternalistic finger-waver. And he was never an ideologue. When Wilson wrote about culture, he went against the grain of many entrenched beliefs. Most recently, he wrote in *The Washington Post*:

"The problem facing the poor is not too little

Peter Moskos*

James Q. Wilson made me a cop, even though I never met the man. I think I heard him give a conference talk once. Many say that Wilson, who died Friday at 80 after a battle with leukemia, was a kind and nurturing soul. Indeed, I hope he was. But to me his compassionate nature was exemplified by his commitment to broader society. More so than any other academic, and over the course of many decades, Wilson influenced intelligent American public discourse inside and outside academe.

I cannot be the only one who finds it difficult to comprehend the intellectual world as I know it without Wilson’s ideas. I knew him primarily through his contributions to policing, but his legacy spans political science, criminology, sociology, philosophy, and economics. Most impressively, that intellectual breadth did not limit his contributions to each field. Quite the contrary. Wilson was able to
money, but too few skills and opportunities to advance themselves." Implicit in that controversial statement is the assumption that economists alone cannot identify, much less solve, the problems facing America's most needy.

I know Wilson's work primarily through his writings on policing and what he may be most remembered for, his Broken Windows theory: That aggressive police enforcement of community standards could help neighborhoods rise from a spiral of fear, crime, and despair. When I entered graduate school in 1995, the great American crime drop was well underway, at least in New York City, where a 50-percent reduction in homicides over six years accounted for more than half of the nation's otherwise modest eight-percent decline. And yet the party line within the ivory tower remained stubbornly fixated on "root causes." Crime would not go down, it was said, and said repeatedly, until we first address the social and environmental causes like poverty, racism, bad housing, poor education, inequality, etc. Many people with far more distinguished careers than mine wrote (and some continue to do so) about the basic irrelevance of police vis-à-vis crime prevention.

In the preceding decades, police were quick to latch on to the "root causes" theory of crime. That's ironic—since police generally hate the idea—but not surprising. During a time of rising crime, academics were basically absolving police departments from their primary duty to prevent crime. Police patrol became a matter of staying out of trouble and answering the radio. Those criminals on the corner? "Society must have messed them up," police would say, sounding every bit as sarcastic as the Officer Krupke song in West Side Story. They're depraved on account of being deprived. They're sociologically sick. Policing was reduced to little more than picking up the pieces of broken windows, and lives. Wilson's ideas turned that around.

In graduate school I took a class from George Kelling, Wilson's Broken Windows co-author. It was the first and (please, don't tell my students) only criminology class I ever took. Like so many before and since, I was thunderstruck not just at the idea's lucid profundity, but by its contrarian force and real world grit. "Now this," I said, "is worth studying." A couple of years later I was a Ph.D. research-gathering uniformed police officer patrolling the streets of Baltimore. Thank you, Professors Wilson and Kelling.

The goal of Broken Windows policing is to allow a neighborhood to police itself and reduce crime. The role of police is to reduce fear through foot patrol, maintaining order, and the judicious use of officers' discretion. As Wilson and Kelling ask, "How can the police strengthen the informal social-control mechanisms of natural communities in order to minimize fear in public places?" The foundation of Broken Windows is neither conservative nor liberal; it is certainly not "zero tolerance" (which remains the antithesis of Broken Windows, despite what somewhat intellectually dishonest critics often say). In truth, Broken Windows rests primarily on little more than the stout shoulders of Jane Jacobs's urban concepts of eyes on the street, diversity of public use, and identifying and encouraging what makes a neighborhood work. The goal, and this is Jacobs's word, is to keep the "barbarians" from winning.

As a criminological theory, Broken Windows came from left field. And yet when so many were saying crime couldn't go down, wouldn't go down, practitioners who liked Broken Windows got their hands dirty, and, guess what, crime went down. While one must never assume
that correlation equals causation, if it wasn't the latter, then a few very chosen people have an amazing ability to be in the right place at the right time. Regardless of the fundamental efficacy of Broken Windows, the concept at the least got police back in the crime-prevention game. That was a seismic shift, nothing short of a law-enforcement scientific revolution.

Wilson loved good hard data, but was never a slave to quantitative analysis. He understood that certain problems in American society—particularly problems of race, poverty, and crime—go beyond our crude ability to regress statistically significant correlations. Through lucid prose and an ideal that academics can and must serve both the academy and society, he advanced policing in America, and America itself. Wilson saved lives, and isn't that the essence of humanity?

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Book Review


*Travesty of Justice: The Politics of Crack Cocaine and the Dilemma of the Congressional Black Caucus* provides an in-depth look into the events leading to federal sentencing law for crack cocaine. Though this law has recently been amended to reflect an 18:1 ratio with powder cocaine, the original disparity was 100:1. This book sheds light on the involvement of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) in the creation of the law. Their involvement included the balancing act of being beholden to the public and the justice system simultaneously. Constituents of the CBC were pushing for “tough on crime” decisions, which negatively impacted those same constituents with the creation of a law resulting in many family disruptions in minority communities.

Many sentencing guidelines have reflected the reduction of drug sentencing mandates (state and federal), particularly with regard to methamphetamine, but crack cocaine mandates remained the same for approximately 25 years. The authors researched public documents, including transcripts of Congressional proceedings, to find the truth behind the large sentencing disparity mandated for crack cocaine when pharmacologically speaking it is the same compound as powder cocaine. Once this evidence is presented, racial and economic motivations behind the 100:1 law are apparent. Also, it is increasingly apparent how helpless the CBC was in standing against the tide of public fear and political maneuvering.

Chapter One is an overview of the book, as well as a summary of the explosive impact of mandatory sentencing laws on African-American communities. Gang violence, car-jackings, and other crimes were sensationalized in the media to portray the “angry, black man.” As stereotypes grew, so did fear. In response, members of Congress began trying to “out crime” each other in an effort to be seen doing something to protect the American people – even if it was the wrong thing. Chapter Two takes a more in-depth look at the Congressional Black Caucus. The changes in members’ background (i.e. urban, homogeneous areas to more widespread, heterogeneous areas) are discussed with the history of the CBC’s development and voting behavior. The mission and its subsequent conflicts with the overarching Congressional goals are discussed at length.

Chapter Three analyzes the long-standing relationship between the CBC and the Democratic Party. During campaigns, both Democrats and Republicans use racially charged issues to sway voters, which makes the CBC’s racial composition another conflict for them as members of Congress. The CBC cannot simply focus on representing African-Americans, but on the success of the Democratic Party. Chapter Four delves into the machinations of some Congressional members and committees to get crack cocaine/powder cocaine laws on the agenda. The authors
discuss congressional activities, such as, meetings, votes, and agenda setting. These activities ultimately led to a law with significant racial impact. An impact illustrated by an 88.3 percent African-American and a 95.4 percent non-white composition of those sentenced for crack cocaine in 1993.

Chapter Five looks deeper into the impact of the crack cocaine mandatory sentencing laws on the African-American community specifically. Disenfranchisement has taken many forms including exclusion from housing, voting, educational opportunities, and welfare benefits. Also, family structures deteriorated under the strain of so many parents being removed from homes and communities. This, in turn, had problematic implications for the foster care system, particularly after it became increasingly difficult to reunite with children placed in foster care.

Chapter Six focuses on the overall impact of crack cocaine mandatory sentencing laws on crime rates and the prison system. In 2010, the 100:1 disparity was reduced to 18:1 in direct response to these effects. It is now commonly accepted that one in six African-American males will be incarcerated, in large part due to drug charges. Also, African-American women are five times as likely as white women to face incarceration. There are important changes needed within the CBC in order to increase their influence law-making and prevent further disenfranchisement of African-Americans. All of these are outlined and discussed in Chapter Seven. Future needs of the criminal justice system are discussed in Chapter Eight. Once incarcerated (and disenfranchised), offenders have to overcome huge obstacles when re-entering the community. Helping with this transition is one considers the masses of people currently incarcerated in the United States. Also, the system must develop equal laws in regards to drugs, particularly crack versus powder cocaine sentencing laws.

The last two chapters summarize the players in mandatory sentencing laws and how many of them have realized their error. Sensational media portrayals helped shape fear in the American public, and it took nearly two decades for law-makers to realize this happened and to begin working toward a correction. Finally, the book makes use of a series of three types of interactive exercises at the end of each chapter. These exercises allow the reader to apply his/her knowledge gleaned from the chapter as well as think outside the book in terms of “implication(s).”

In terms of application, this book has been used in various courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. As an example of the impact it has had on some students, it was used in an, upper-level undergraduate course, (Crime and Behavior), in which the travesty of what happened inspired awe, fear, surprise, and outrage at the lengths to which some will go to get a law passed. Not only is the book informative and easy to read, reactions of readers demonstrate the impact of learning and understanding can have on individuals. I recommend this book as appropriate for courses in criminology, sociology, history, political science, and, of course, for general reading on the topic.

Jennifer M. Miller
University of Arkansas at Little Rock
**ACJS Executive Board at the 2012 Mid-Year Meeting in Dallas, Texas**

2012-2013 ACJS Executive Board: Standing from left to right: 1st Vice President James Frank (University of Cincinnati), Invited Guest ACJS Historian Willard Oliver (Sam Houston State University), Region 3 Trustee Brad Smith (Wayne State University), Immediate Past President Melissa Barlow (Fayetteville State University), President Craig Hemmens (Missouri State University), Region 4 Trustee David Montague (University of Arkansas at Little Rock), 2nd Vice President Brian Payne (Georgia State University), Trustee-at-Large Nicole Piquero (University of Texas at Dallas), Region 1 Trustee L. Edward Day (Penn State Altoona), Trustee-at-Large Jill A. Gordon (Virginia Commonwealth University), Treasurer David Owens (Onondaga Community College), Region 2 Trustee Alexis Miller (Northern Kentucky University), Trustee-at-Large Philip Reichel (University of Northern Colorado).

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**A Note from Editor Robert M. Worley**

In this special issue of *ACJS Today*, the contributing authors examined a variety of important topics related to criminal justice education. Also, just as a reminder, March of 2013 will be an Oscar-themed issue where contributors write scholarly analyses of recent films which have won Academy Awards. If you would like to participate, kindly send me an email with your idea. Enjoy the rest of your semester!
GREETINGS!

The current Editor of ACJS Today, Robert Worley, asked me to orient this month’s column toward the theme of the issue: Criminal Justice Education. That actually worked out well, as I have been working on a new project that should be completed by the 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting next year in Dallas, Texas. I was asked a year ago by the ACJS Executive Board to write a brief history of ACJS for the website, presented in short chapters and to be made available online in 2013. Having done both primary and secondary data collection in the 2011-2012 academic year, this past summer I completed a draft of the history. I then asked all of the past presidents of ACJS to serve as peer reviewers of the manuscript, and I presented the draft before the current ACJS Executive Board in September.

At that meeting, it was decided that in light of the fact there is no longer a conference program (it will be available on the web and an ACJS memory stick), a special 50th Anniversary Commemorative publication will be presented to all conference registrants featuring the ACJS History as well as the Past Presidents’ Project that I am currently working on (more on that in next month’s Historian’s Corner). After the 50th Annual Meeting of ACJS, the ACJS History will then be available on the website in a PDF format. The second chapter of the ACJS history details the beginning of criminal justice education. Berkeley Police Chief August Vollmer launched a school that would become officially sanctioned by the university in 1916, marking the beginning of criminal justice education. So, in recognition of this month’s ACJS Today theme, Criminal Justice Education, here is a preview of the forthcoming ACJS History, Chapter Two.

Chapter 2

August Vollmer & the Origins of Criminal Justice Education

We are not thinking about today, we are looking out into the future to twenty or thirty years hence, when from the small beginning established here there will grow a great public service, including the professional training of policemen, research in the field of administration of justice, and public service, when needed.

-University of Chicago President Robert Maynard Hutchins to August Vollmer, 1929

Twentieth century America was ushered in on a wave of political reform and social activism that came collectively to be known as the Progressive Era. Rejecting the endemic corruption and deplorable conditions of the late Nineteenth century, local reform groups began to expose the corruption of the political machines, implement governmental reforms, and apply scientific methods to professionalize, and thus modernize, American institutions. Public education, the legal profession,
medicine, and industry, to name a few, experienced these progressive changes. The former was marked by movements to professionalize the police, including the establishment of the International Association of Chiefs of Police in 1893, and New York Police Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt’s attempts at cleaning up the New York City Police Department. The latter was influenced by the movement toward establishing the social sciences and making them scientific, moving away from the amateur author to the more specialized academic researcher publishing in scholarly journals and academic presses. It was one Progressive, however, who would push for reforms in both policing and higher education, ultimately linking them forever, and that was Berkeley, California, Police Chief August Vollmer.

August Vollmer, known to his friends as “Gus” and those that worked for him as “Chief,” was born on March 7, 1876, in New Orleans to German immigrant parents. His father died at an early age, and his mother, unable to run the family grocery store, sold out, and moved back to Germany to live with her parents. Having grown accustomed to American life, she returned briefly to New Orleans with the family, but decided to move to San Francisco. At this point, Gus was enrolled in a business clerical school, and the family waited to move until he completed the course. This was to be his last formal education. Moving to San Francisco, Gus wanted to find a job as a stenographer, but finding no jobs available in that field, he became a shipping clerk. His mother moved across the San Francisco Bay to Berkeley and encouraged Gus to join her. He held out for another year, but eventually moved there, where with his best friend, he opened up a successful feed store and helped to organize the North Berkeley Volunteer Fire Department. In 1898, when America declared war on Spain, Gus enlisted in the California Volunteers, and after receiving an abbreviated training, he was sent to Manila, in the Philippines. There, he was involved in the taking of Manila and, in the immediate aftermath, helped to police the streets. As the insurgency in the Philippines began to grow, Vollmer’s unit was assigned to a river patrol-boat, the Laguna De Bay. Vollmer found himself involved in over two dozen engagements, until his return home in late 1899. Returning to Berkeley as a decorated war hero, he was given a patronage job with the Post Office as a postal deliveryman, typically serving in the relief position. As a result, he delivered mail throughout all of Berkeley and came to know the citizenry.

In 1905, a runaway rail-cart loaded with construction supplies was heading down a Berkeley hill toward the railroad tracks on Shattuck Avenue just as a loaded passenger train was passing by. The construction crew attempted to throw bricks behind the wheels of the train to stop it, but the momentum was already too great. Vollmer, delivering the mail that fateful day, saw the situation, dropped his mail bag, chased down the cart, climbed aboard, and pulled the break in time to prevent an accident. Hailed as a local hero, the editor of the local newspaper, the Berkeley Gazette, called Gus and said he would like to interview him. Vollmer met Friend Richardson (later Governor of California) the following day, whereupon he learned that Richardson wanted him to run for
town marshal to replace the current town marshal who was corrupt and taking bribes from the local gamblers. Vollmer decided to run, and, with his popularity, heroism, and good looks, he won by a landslide.

Assuming the role of town marshal, Vollmer began implementing a number of innovative changes, including the adoption of uniforms, an all-bicycle patrol, the red-light recall system, and crackdowns on the local gamblers.\(^\text{15}\) He was outwardly successful but personally frustrated by the number of cases that he lost in court due to a lack of evidence. Despite this, he was reelected in 1907 to another two year term. It was the following year, however, that he had the most significant case of his career.\(^\text{16}\) A postal clerk had found a dead body with a vial of poison that was believed to have been clutched tightly in the deceased’s hand. The case was ruled a suicide, but Vollmer had his suspicions based on several interviews and circumstantial evidence. He sought the assistance of the faculty at the University of California, who plied him with textbooks on poisons. The type of poison supposedly used would not have allowed the deceased to hold onto the vial since it relaxes the muscles; hence, he concluded, the case was most likely a murder. He pursued this case all the way to trial, only to lose the case when the first responding police officers could not verify that the vial of poison had been in the deceased’s hand or was simply lying nearby.

Despite losing the case, Vollmer was determined to educate himself on investigative practices, the sciences as they applied to policing, and criminal psychology. He began reading widely, anything he could get his hands on, from the *National Police Gazette* to books on police investigation. He was enamored with Hans Gross’s *Criminal Psychology*, as well as the writings of the Italians’ Cesare Beccaria and Cesare Lombroso.\(^\text{17}\) Within a year, he had a better working knowledge of police sciences, but he realized it was worthless unless his police officers had the same knowledge. In order to educate his officers, he first set out to create what became known as the Friday “Crab Sessions.”\(^\text{18}\) During those mandatory sessions, officers could voice any disagreements with each other, including the chief, and then they were educated on policy and procedures, as well as a new topic each week. This, in many ways, became the first in-service police training.

Next, Vollmer, working with the police chief in Oakland, California, established the first police academy in 1908 to train police officers in investigation practices, interview and interrogation techniques, how to testify in court, and the preservation of evidence.\(^\text{19}\) Yet even this was not enough, for Vollmer wanted his officers to experience the same benefits of higher education that he had received when he sought out the faculty at the University of California. Thus, beginning in 1908, local faculty began teaching his officers on an informal basis. From 1908 through 1915, he experimented with different faculty and different subjects, ranging from chemistry (poisons) and biology (a la Lombroso) to first aid and safety, and the ideas began to germinate for an actual degree program for his police officers in higher education.\(^\text{20}\)

Working with Professor Albert Schneider, Vollmer developed a plan for a police school at the University of California.\(^\text{21}\) The courses would be offered to police officers during the summer months; ultimately these officers could work toward a college
degree in policing. The program began in the summer of 1916; which marks the year in which criminal justice education was born.\textsuperscript{22} The program consisted of classes in physics, chemistry, biology, toxicology, criminal psychology, criminology, public health, police methods and procedures, and the course taught by Vollmer himself – police organization and administration. This program continued to run until 1931, only missing one summer (1927) due to budget constraints.\textsuperscript{23}

In 1909, Berkeley switched to a city charter, and August Vollmer became police chief.\textsuperscript{24} He served as the president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police in 1922, and for one year (1923-1924) he took a leave of absence from Berkeley and served as the police chief in Los Angeles. Because of his work in police education, Vollmer was asked to join the faculty in the Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago in 1922, as a professor of police science.\textsuperscript{25} Once again, he took a leave of absence from Berkeley and became the first professor of police administration. At this same time, he was asked to join the Wickersham Commission, President Herbert Hoover’s National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, for which he was lead author on volume 14 – *The Police*.\textsuperscript{26}

Although he enjoyed his time at the University of Chicago, his wife longed for a return to the hills of Berkeley, so in 1931, he returned to Berkeley as the police chief.\textsuperscript{27} It was at this time that the University of California began to consider hiring Vollmer for a similar post. In 1932, after retiring as the police chief and taking an around-the-world tour of police departments, Vollmer joined the faculty at the University of California.\textsuperscript{28} There he continued to teach his courses in policing and authored several books including *The Police and Modern Society*.\textsuperscript{29} Forced to retire in 1937 due to health reasons, Vollmer encouraged his former police officer and mentee O.W. Wilson to take over his position at the University of California at Berkeley, in the hopes that a School of Criminology could be advanced.\textsuperscript{30}

Wilson accepted the position and in 1939, the Bureau of Criminology was established in the Department of Political Science.\textsuperscript{31} By 1941, because a number of Vollmer disciples were teaching in higher education, there was some discussion about creating a small association. Vollmer decided to call for a meeting in his living room at 923 Euclid Avenue in Berkeley on December 30, 1941, and it is there that both the American Society of Criminology and, in a sense, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, were born.\textsuperscript{32}

### Endnotes

\textsuperscript{1} As remembered in a letter from August Vollmer to O.W. Wilson, March 7, 1936. August Vollmer papers, BANC MSS C-B 403, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.


16 August Vollmer papers, BANC MSS C-B 403, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.


19 August Vollmer papers, BANC MSS C-B 403, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.


August Vollmer papers, BANC MSS C-B 403, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.


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In Memoriam

In Memoriam