

Police Forum

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From the Editor

Happy 2018 to our readers.

The current edition of *Police Forum* includes an article written by our section chair on his experiences developing and teaching a capstone course in criminal justice. Instructors will find it useful in reflecting on their own approach to teaching generally and for thinking about teaching similar courses.

You'll also find information about the fast-approaching Annual Meeting of ACJS in New Orleans, as well as a call for you, our active members, to submit your policing articles, any police/policing-related announcements, essays, book reviews, job openings, etc. for inclusion in future issues. We have a varied and large readership that will benefit from your additions. You may email your submissions to acjspoliceforum@gmail.com.

The Police Section Executive Board continues to seek approval and support for a peer-reviewed section to be included in *Police Forum*. Thank you to those who have agreed to join the editorial board and to those who have shown great interest in submitting for peer-review. We promise to give you an opportunity for engaging with the Police Section in ways you find more fulfilling. Contact me at Michael.jenkins@scranton.edu if you would like to discuss this or anything else.

Enjoy a warm winter season, an early Spring, and a happy reading of *Police Forum*!

Michael J. Jenkins
Editor, *Police Forum*

From the Chair

Hello everyone,

Like so many things we get involved with, our *Police Forum* Winter edition was a bit delayed, as we are volunteers, with much on our plates during the semester.

As we get ready for a trip to New Orleans, we have a few things to mention about the Police Section. As one of the largest sections in ACJS, we are still looking to grow. Please spread the word to your colleagues both in academia and in the field.

We are awaiting the final results of our Police Section elections. This year we were seeking a Vice-chair, two Executive Counselors, and ratification for adding a Student Representative. We also put forth several proposed changes to the Police Section Constitution and By-laws. Thanks to Jeff Smith for his help in the development of this document!

In 2018, the Police Section will hold their business meeting in New Orleans. Please join us at that meeting. Please consider getting involved in your Police Section. Also, scan the field and give thought to potential nominees for Police Section Awards. We consider nominees for the O.W. Wilson Award, the inaugural Founders Award, and the Police Section Service Award.

We are also working to establish several regional Practitioners Award. Working with the five regional associations, we hope to co-sponsor regional awards. The five awardees would be considered for a national Police Practitioner Award, to be awarded at the annual ACJS Police Section business meeting.

We also hope to begin publishing this newsletter with a peer-reviewed article section. Our communication with the executive board of ACJS over the next few months should allow *Police Forum* to start publishing peer-reviewed articles in 2018. Thank you for your continued support.

We are hoping to add another venue for you to share your work with the field and colleagues.

We encourage your efforts to conduct action research with partners in the field. Please consider *Police Forum* as an outlet for your research and findings.

Please reach out to any Police Section Executive Board member if you have any questions or ideas to advance the practice and study of policing.

My best to you!

Steve Morreale - Worcester State University

Chair, ACJS Police Section (2017-2019)

A Teaching Approach to the Criminal Justice Capstone

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Abstract

This paper describes and discusses an approach to a Criminal Justice (CJ) Capstone course at a northeast public university. The Capstone is seen by the Association of American Colleges and Universities as a High Impact Educational Practice (HIP). This paper describes and discusses an approach to a Criminal Justice (CJ) Capstone course. In looking to help students prepare for the future and apply their learning, the use of the Capstone can be used to assess the learning over the life of a university CJ major.

This approach engages students in introspection, reflection, and writing, to help them gain an understanding of what they got out of the college experience, what they missed, and where they can go with their education. This culminating course is intended to help students become introspective and reflective to assess their learning since beginning their college journey.

Keywords

College Capstone, Keystone course, Criminal Justice Capstone, Assessment of learning, Senior Seminar, culminating learning experience, reflection of learning, personal growth, application of learning, integrative learning, student development, learning portfolio.

A Teaching Approach to the Criminal Justice Capstone

Background

Following a change from General Education requirements to a Liberal Arts and Sciences Curriculum (LASC) a Capstone course was mandated at the university. The Worcester State University CJ Program adopted a CJ Capstone. This culminating course is intended to help students become introspective and reflective to assess their learning since beginning their college journey.

While there are various models to select for a Capstone experience, this approach engages students in introspection, reflection, and writing, to help them gain an understanding of what they got out of the college experience, what they missed and where they can go with their education. In 2011, Worcester State University Criminal Justice Program began a pilot Senior Seminar course. This course helped to inform the Department Curriculum Committee in their efforts to develop the Criminal Justice Capstone Seminar.

In 2014, the CJ Capstone was approved and became a required core course. The Capstone is open only for graduating seniors, and only after all other required courses have been completed. I am constantly reflecting on whether this approach is theoretical enough, rigorous enough or if the teaching approach reaches students in meaningful ways. Since the Capstone is found to be a High Impact Practice by American Association of Universities and Colleges (AAUC), the approach does appear to provide meaningful learning experiences, allows for the growth of students through their reflection, written, interpersonal, oral, critical thinking, and presentation skills. The feedback provided by students in the class is validating and rewarding, as many feel it may be one of the more meaningful classes they have taken.

Literature Review

According to Durel (1993) a Capstone, Keystone or Culminating Experience is “the rite of passage” intended to tie learning together in the senior year of college and university students. The course can be used as an assessment of learning that has occurred over their length of enrollment within a college degree program.

An American Sociological Association (ASA) report on improving Sociology curriculum suggested incorporating a “Capstone” course aimed at integrating the “diverse elements of the coursework into a coherent and mature conception of sociology as an approach to inquiry and to life.” (ASA 1990, p.16) Capstone courses are aimed at integrating learning over the college experience.

Capstone courses serve as a “synthesis – reflection and integration – and a bridge – a real-world preparatory experience that focuses on the post-graduation future.” (Fairchild & Taylor, 2000, and Rhodus & Hoskins, 1995, cited in Kerka, 2001, p. 3) They look backwards, to students’ prior learning; and forward, to their future jobs and careers and, for that reason, are an academic rite of passage (Durel, 1993, p. 223). These courses are the last step from novice to expert; but a crucial

step, as it is often the last opportunity for university education to add value to the students' learning and career options. (Gardner, 1998, p. 6)

The idea of using the Capstone to allow for integrative learning is growing. With the focus on assessment of learning, the Capstone may be the one place an institution and program can gain insight into the learning over the span of time that students attend an institution (van Acker & Bailey, 2011).

According to Jervis and Hartley (2005) in order to effectively end a college career and begin a professional one, capstone courses should:

- Promote the coherence and relevance of general education.
- Promote connections between general education and the academic major.
- Foster integration and synthesis within the academic major.
- Explicitly and intentionally develop important student skills, competencies, and perspectives that are tacitly or incidentally developed in the college curriculum.
- Improve seniors' career preparation and pre-professional development, that is, facilitate their transition from the academic to the professional world.

According to Pausch (2008):

“In the end, educators best serve their students by helping them be more self-reflective. The only ways any of us can improve — as Coach Graham taught me — is if we develop a real ability to assess ourselves. If we can't accurately do that, how can we tell if we're getting better or worse?” (p. 112)

Healey (2014) feels that students should be partners in their learning. Students as partners is a concept which interweaves through many other debates, including assessment and feedback, employability, flexible pedagogies, internationalization, linking teaching and research, and retention and success. Healey (2014) indicated that the Senior Capstone must result in some form of summation, closing project or final product that puts closure to the students' experience.

Birzer (2004) advocated the use of adult learning principles for teaching Criminal Justice Courses. He felt that using andragogical, learner-centered methods provided more meaningful learning experiences for adult learners. Adult learning is based upon comprehension, organization, and synthesis of knowledge rather than rote memory. There are seven Principles of Adult Learning: 1. Adults must want to learn; 2. Adults will learn only what they feel they need to learn; 3. Adults learn by doing; 4. Adult learning focuses on problems solving; 5. Experience affects adult learning; 6. Adults learn best in an informal situation; 7. Adults want guidance and consideration as equal partners in the process (Kolb 1984, Knowles 1989).

Discussion

From the outset, the approach for this CJ Capstone course is to immerse students in reflecting and reviewing their learning over the past several years. In this course, the instructor assumes the role of facilitator. Hmelo and Barrows (2006) found that collaborative learning can be fostered

with a facilitative approach by the instructor. The facilitation allows for questions to be posed, which prompt reflection, debate, and reconsideration of previous points of view. Students grow by listening to the views of their classmates and engaging in further exploration.

This approach applies the andragogical approach to the classroom. Since students are seniors, utilizing adult teaching methods is well suited for the Capstone course. The course is generally populated with 20 to 25 students. The first few weeks are focused on instructor-led and student-driven discussion. This helps the class create a comfort and rapport on which to build relationships and openness in the classroom.

In the course, students are instructed to print out a copy of their degree audit (or up-to-date transcript) and review their coursework, regardless of where the courses were taken. They are asked to identify 12-14 courses they feel were the most meaningful, or courses that surprised them with the knowledge they gained; half from their major courses and the other half chosen from electives and general education requirements.

The course is writing intensive and a Learning Portfolio helps students integrate their learning. The Portfolio allows for iterative writing that is introspective, retrospective and prospective. Over time, students recognize the growth they experience during their time on campus, and the semester through open and honest reflection, discussion and writing. The writing is completed in an iterative manner. A series of smaller written pieces form the basis for the portfolio. Intermittently, in-class peer review is conducted. Discussions focusing on previously written sections lead to student sharing. This leads to ideas that other students use in their rewrites.

As the class begins, I set the stage for safety and openness by asking questions and seeking active participation. I work to explain the expectations of the course, the importance of focusing on personal growth during the college years and the value of reflection. The course takes a holistic review of learning over time. It helps students reflect, consider mistakes and identify opportunities ahead for them.

The Capstone is intended to be the topping of the cake for a student's educational experience. Saved for the last year of college, a capstone is intended to incorporate learning over time. In one class, a student said the Capstone had been "a marketplace for ideas!"

We talk of building a puzzle. Many start with the frame and then look for pieces to match a picture. As the students look at their own puzzle, this building process helps to frame their life before, during and after college. They will find a few pieces to fill the puzzle holes, and should recognize where the voids are that may need attention in their lives.

During the semester, students are assigned several readings relating to issues in justice and are asked to react to the readings. The points are debated in class to assure that students have an opportunity to apply their critical thinking skills. A few questions are posed, including:

- What is Justice?
- Justice for whom?

- What is a system?
- Is Criminal Justice a system?
- What can be done to improve the components of Criminal Justice?

These questions promote deeper thinking and carry discussion in the classroom. The discussions help students recognize strengths and weakness; in addition to helping them identify skills that still need to be developed.

Several short essays are required intermittently throughout the semester. For example, students are assigned *What to Ask the Person in the Mirror* (2007). This article allows students to look at themselves, their behaviors and approaches to life and others around them. While the focus is on business, through discussion they are able to apply it to their lives.

Classroom in the Round

The preferred set-up in the classroom is to set the chairs in a circle so students can see each other. This allows for freer flow and open communication and spurs responses from other. Students feel more comfortable in this room set-up. As students get to know each other, hear about other ideas, fears and trepidations, they realize they are generally in the same boat.

Seven Habits Discussions

The class is assigned to read the *Seven Habits for Highly Effective People* (Covey 2013). The Seven Habits are reviewed, assigning one habit every other week. Over the past few years, students have indicated that the book is relevant and meaningful to their thinking and personal growth.

Students find enlightenment as they read, discuss and build on the Habits. Over time, they begin to apply the lessons to their lives and consider their future, using the habits that are extolled by Covey (2013). Many incorporate the readings from Covey (2013) into their Learning Portfolio.

Those Seven Habits include:

1. Be proactive
2. Begin with the end in mind
3. Put first things first
4. Think win-win
5. First understand, then be understood
6. Synergies
7. Sharpen your saw

These 7 habits move through the following stages:

Dependence > Independent > and Interdependent. (Covey, 2013)

The material offers opportunities for open discussion and student growth. The concept of independent thinking and the value of interdependence in the workplace is discussed and explored. The collaboration fostered in the classroom prepare them for careers in the near future.

Hot Seat

A seat is placed in the middle of the room and students are selected to sit in the hot seat. Questions are posed to students about their dreams, their aspirations, their strengths and weaknesses. At first there is an uneasiness with being put on the spot. After allowing the first few students to participate, while there may be some residual uneasiness, once students have the opportunity in the hot seat there is often a desire to be placed back in the hot seat, to be better prepared, to get a second change for redemption. Students find it unusual, at first, to have to answer questions that make them truly reflect on themselves. This is something students do not often do.

The hot seat helps students by putting them on the spot to answer questions. Questions can be as simple as “what is your weakness?” or “what are you most proud of in your life?” If they seem unprepared, we discuss the possible approaches to take with difficult questions. It is made clear that this is a space where students can make mistakes and turn them into a valuable learning experience with each other.

Classroom Discussions

Discussions begin by helping students decide whether they “think to talk or talk to think.” This helps them understand learning differences. Many of the questions posed in the room focus on life; the mistakes, the failures, setbacks and preparation for the future.

Rejection is discussed so they are prepared to understand that the first job applied to is rarely offered, that the first job is oftentimes not the last job in a career. Class discussion surrounds the importance of being proactive, proper planning, and working on improving certain aspects of their lives. Issues that are discussed include procrastination and the importance of improving time management.

A few thoughts and pieces of advice are advanced in the class. Students are told not to put “all their eggs in one basket.” They are also advised to “realize the importance of networking,” to “learn from past to create the future” and that “success is a team sport.”

Tools: SWOT, Mind-mapping and Brainstorming

Students conduct a personal SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), which helps them consider and identify those things where they have strengths, those where they have weaknesses, and where the opportunities lie for them to improve themselves. Students are asked to think deeply and identify strengths and weaknesses, areas where they can seek improvement.

They are guided through the mind-mapping exercises, (Buzan, 2010) as they prepare for development of the Learning Portfolio. They are surprised to learn how a few minutes of focused thinking, with pen in hand, can create a solid number of ideas to draw from and expand upon.

As these thoughts are discussed students are asked to write about the phrases and what it means to them for 1-minute. Then students share with a few other peers to grow their lists by adding ideas from the classmates.

They do not have to come to a conclusion right away for their phrases, but are tasked to reflect and return with a short list. Then students are asked to note their strengths and weaknesses and choose a few areas worthy of improving.

Exploring Graduate Program Options

So many students overcome a natural fear for graduate studies as these programs are explained helping them recognize that a graduate degree is made up of between 30 and 45 credit hours or more. It is explained that in many cases the master's degree is a place where students can extend their learning, expand their knowledge at a higher level, instilling higher order thinking and in several instances to expand their grasp of knowledge by changing the direction of their studies. Programs such as MBA programs, MPA programs masters in leadership and organizational development, and masters in forensic studies are discussed in detail. Students are asked to go and find two programs in an area that they may be interested in beyond an MPA or an MCJ. Open discussions surround the cost, time it takes to complete, and potential benefit of the graduate degree. Because there are a number of students with interests in law school, this is also described and discussed, with a focus on full-time and part-time programs, the LSAT and the course choices.

Written Assignments

From the very beginning, students are broken into groups of 2 to 3, and asked to interview each other. They later introduce each other. The interview is intended to extract information on their past, their high school experience, their college experience, no matter what institution.

In open discussions about their writing, it is great to see other students making notes, as the conversations and classroom discussions trigger ideas of other things they could add to their portfolio. While this is a writing intensive course, as discussions revolve around an area they have written about, many students say they feel their writing is cathartic. In many instances, students find that the writing helps them gain a better understanding of the learning that has occurred, and they begin to tie things together, realizing the total college experience has great benefit.

Students are asked to consider people who have been influential to them. Students are asked to consider whether they got what they came for in their quest for higher education.

The Portfolio

As the course begins, students are asked to print out their degree audit. They are asked to review all courses they have taken, regardless where the courses were taken from or what department the course was taught in.

This exercise is intended to allow students to review every course they have taken to determine how the courses allowed them to grow and develop.

The Portfolio is often 25-40 pages long. Students find the thought of such a long paper daunting at first. However, working in increments or sections helps to focus their thinking. As they begin peer review, students read their classmates drafts. The portfolio is an iterative effort, built in pieces over the semester. The process is begun in the very first class, where students are asked to jot down notes of important events, changes, personal growth, and create a timeline. The timeline consists of their time in high school, application to college, arrival at college, extra-curricular involvement, work history, events participated in and any other meaningful activities they have been or are involved with. To protect each student, the final portfolios are submitted only to the instructor.

From the first weeks in class, students begin the process of collecting their thoughts, considering the courses that were meaningful, identifying meaningful and influential people in their lives and to consider their path through their past, from high school to college applications, the present, while in college at any level and the future. This thinking helps the student begin to frame an outline to begin working on the Learning Portfolio.

The portfolio is made up of sections beginning with the Past, Present and Future. When assigning the Portfolio of Learning, students are instructed to include an opening or introduction, and should include sections on:

- Personal SWOT analysis
- Discuss the responsibility of education and giving back
- Work, volunteering, clubs and internships
- Coursework, including significant major/minor course and meaningful electives
- What I Know Now that I Wish I Knew Then. This is aimed to cause students to reflect on the lessons they have learned in their four years in college.
- People who inspired you.

Students are asked to assess their personal growth, considering their knowledge, maturity and views since high school. They are asked to reflect on the value of college, the other things they have done while in college, beyond taking classes.

Presentations

Each student is responsible for at least two PowerPoint presentations which represent the Learning Portfolio and the “What I know now that I wish I knew then” assignment, which is

converted into a 12-15 slide presentation. These assignments are more fully described ahead, but focus on what their thoughts are of what they may have missed while in the college years.

This provides students for a method of synopsis to help present their points of view through a PowerPoint presentation focused on mistakes made during their time in college.

Round Robin Peer Review

Peer review is conducted through the course. Students get the opportunity to have 6-8 peers review their writing. As the exchanges occur, students provide input and make suggestions for missing items to consider, and recommend areas to expand or make certain sections more detailed. What often happens is that the peer reviewer identifies a potential area that is missing from their portfolio. Several peer reviewers 15 minutes, read a section (Past, Present and Future) and comment, then discuss growing the piece, adding to their portfolio. Then, a fourth party is selected to review the piece over the weekend for comment.

Extending Learning through Blackboard Assignments

In order to extend the discussion in the classroom, weekly short written assignments give students the opportunity to digest and explain the reading as we understood them. Creating a need for us to think further as we move from reading to having to explain and defend our thoughts bring us to a different understanding of what we read.

Discussions in Blackboard

As an extension of the classroom, and to enhance learning, Blackboard is used throughout the semester. Virtually each week, there are discussion threads posted with short assignments. For example, every other week, students are asked for reactions to the assigned Habit from *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (Covey, 2013).

Using a series of case studies and essays about the Criminal Justice System, students are asked to read and respond to the essays, from a critical view. As students post their responses in forthcoming classes, the article and the student views are explored. In some cases, on the spot debates are opened.

Students post drafts of their resume for review and comment, post three iterations of the drafts of their Learning Portfolio, along with the final portfolio and a short PowerPoint based on their Learning Portfolio.

In addition, students are first asked to consider “What I Know Now, that I wish I knew then” referring to the lessons learned over the past 4 or more years. More recent classes were asked if any students were interested and willing to visit CJ freshman Introduction to Criminal Justice classes to share their views on the lessons learned since entering college. A good number agreed and presented their PowerPoint in first year classrooms.

Articles are posted for review and comment on their views and application to their lives. A question is posed, what does the phrase “Control your own destiny, or someone else does” mean to you as you get ready to leave the security of the university. This question causes great reflection and yields interesting responses. Students begin to understand the need to be proactive in their career approaches and recognize the effort required to move from college to the workplace.

Career Services

During the semester, Career Services visits the class and provides information on writing resumes, using Social Media in a professional manner, recommending the use of LinkedIn. Cover letters and job search hints are provided to the Capstone students. Literature and guides are supplied to students. In many cases, this is the first contact students have had with Career Services. Many students make appointments with staff for Career Services to help guide the job search process.

The use of LinkedIn for professional posts and networking is also described and discussed. In one session, the Career Services Director asked for a roster of students in two sections. She checked several sites, only to find many risqué and inappropriate posts in the history of students in Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Since many employers now review Social Media sites when considering potential employees, this is a significant wake-up call for students to watch what and where they post.

Roulin (2014) found that 90% of employers are reviewing applicants Social Network posts during review of potential interviewees. They are looking for faux pas postings by candidates. These are weighed heavily in the screening process. Many lose opportunities because of their positions or postings on the Internet.

Mock Interview

Students are exposed to Mock Oral Boards. The Mock Oral Board is set up where a panel of two students and the professor serve as interviewers. Student interviewers are provided with a list of questions and an interviewee is selected. The interview lasts for several minutes and virtually each student gets an opportunity to ask questions and be asked questions about entry-level positions in criminal justice from policing to probation, to court officers.

This is very well received, while some students feel uncomfortable with answering questions at first. It is clear that learning takes place while other students observe both the missteps, misspeaks or the hesitation to answer questions. There is knowledge gained from classmates that have answered the question well and in a concise manner.

Most students feel that the on the spot discussion and questioning, the hot seat, the peer editing and the student based discussions are extremely helpful. They are given an opportunity to reflect and take the time to become introspective on their life to this point, as they contemplate the future.

After the exposure to the hot seat, students seem to be a bit more comfortable in having questions tossed at them. A series of questions from a list are provided to two students, with the professor assuming the third seat for a police or corrections Oral Interview Panel.

To simulate a one-on-one interview for other jobs, a Mock Interview is used. Students are put in a situation where they sit in front of one to three interviewers and asked questions, drawn from a set of questions used in many interview situations. This includes questions about their background, their strengths, weaknesses, aspirations and what they know about the organization they are competing for. There are also hypothetical and scenario-based questions.

Putting a Period on It

As students begin to answer questions, some are found to ramble, repeat questions, talk in circles, or become repetitive. One of the reviews conducted is to try to help students be concise and answer questions without offering too much that can draw other questions from interviewers.

Using the classroom is an opportunity to understand how to create your elevator speech, or to begin framing answers to questions to address the question and place the interviewee in the best light for prospective hiring officials.

Senior Focus Group

Since this is a Capstone, it has been determined that this course is appropriate to collect details and feedback from seniors on the program, as they near the finish. A series of questions have been created to seek input on each student's perspective on the learning, course offerings, availability of courses, student perspective on job readiness,

This serves the CJ Department well, as it is an effective form of Assessment. The Portfolio served as a n artifact, which can be used to evaluate learning in a qualitative manner.

Students are encouraged to become involved with the Alumni Association of the University for networking opportunities and to remain involved with their campus and alma mater.

Student Feedback

According to students, the Capstone course is different than most courses, where the students feel they are talked with not talked at. The course focuses on creativity in helping to build resiliency. The views of the hot seat change dramatically, when students recognize the learning opportunity. It is stressed that each one has the ability to bounce back from mistakes or missteps. Many students indicate that the course has been inspirational for them.

One thing that is spoken about often is that there will be rejection in their life going forward and

that one of the most important lessons is to define their ability to sell themselves. Time is spent on students creating their "elevator" speech.

Students find that this is the only class they have taken where the subject matter is themselves. They feel it is a class in preparation for their future lives. Students in classes feel that they mature in this class because of the open and honest communication and that they understand importance of leadership traits, humility and collaboration. They learn new words in the class that boosts their confidence, changes the way they think, and because it is unfiltered, allows for conversation and for personal expansion.

In so many classes, we find that students do not do the required reading. What I have found in assigning the Seven Habits is that the students are prepared, and that they find the life skills and the thoughtfulness and reflection required to digest the lessons of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. (Covey, 2013) Students work to internalize the lessons and seek to apply them in their lives.

This class leads to meaningful relationships through quality, deep conversations and student sharing. Students share their trials and tribulations, their fears and trepidations, as they leave the protection and cocoon of their college experience.

During discussions about the future, students explore the possibility if the value in the difficulties of continuing their education through discussions and research about law school, graduate school, and in some cases changing the focus of their future towards the medical or psychology field.

During the class students spend time developing draft cover letters, draft resumes and discuss strategies for looking for jobs. Much of the discussion surrounds the importance of thinking "outside the box" and seeking job opportunities outside of the area where they now live.

Students have said that the reflection required them to look at the past through a different lens helps them look at the future. Other students commented:

"While Capstone is a class for seniors, it has become a collaboration, not a competition."

"The class is like a bridge . . . before the Capstone, we are on one side, with some hesitation on how to cross. After the class, we find ourselves on the other side, with a general idea of the next steps to find the right direction."

"Class is like a 'pot luck' dinner. Everyone brings something to the table!"

"It is like finding missing ingredients in a recipe: When missing things within ourselves, trying to find our courage or comfort to branch out. If something is too salty, look for another ingredient that seems to work to allow ourselves to enjoy the taste."

"it is comforting realizing that all of us in the class is facing uncertainty and fears for

the future. The willingness of classmates to share their fear and trepidations is rewarding.”

“Capstone acts as a guide as students explore opportunities in the future.”

When asked what they feel the direction of the course is, several students responded that instead of writing a topical research paper, one student said they felt they had been asked to “write a research paper on myself.”

During one feedback session a student said “Professor, the reason this class works is because, and please don’t take offense, you are a student too.” This statement was far from offensive. Instead, I took it as a compliment that I was seen as a lifelong learner and willing to be exposed to differing views and expand my own base of knowledge, especially from my students. Other comments include:

“This class has a professor who is open and trusted.” “We were talked with rather than talked at.” “This class was about creativity and building individual resiliency.”

One student commented, “It changes the way we think because of the unfiltered conversation and allows you understand new ideas, makes us think deeper and helps us to communicate our thoughts and find out more about ourselves so were able to sell ourselves and our education.”

Another student said: “This is the only class with a subject matter that is ourselves. You learn to sell yourself and identify your strengths and weaknesses in preparation for life and for future work. It helps us in preparing for the life ahead. It helps us mold path for the future helps us to develop leadership traits through collaboration and humility it also helps us to look at the past with a different lens and aims us to focus on our future.”

Very often when looking to lead a discussion, I ask students to take out a pen and piece of paper to note 3-4 thoughts about a particular question. For example, what three things do you wish you had done while in college? The responses range from being more involved on campus with clubs and trips to being more selective and thoughtful in selecting elective courses. While these may be regrets for many, the discussion leads to students working to avoid that mistake going forward.

There are several discussions that take place in the classroom include consideration for taking stock and skills that have been acquired in the college experience and in the workplace.

Reflection on Teaching the Course

As I reflect on my teaching style and approach, I also consider the tremendous learning potential for seniors as they prepare for their future. In my view, the Capstone should help students self-assess, consider their learning over time and plan for their future.

As an instructor, after weeks and months of hard work to attempt to set the classroom tone, set expectations, create an atmosphere of trust and openness it is both validating and rewarding to

watch as students come out of their shell, understand more of their future, recognize the mistakes they have made, and the potential they have because of their education. Their ability to write, critically analyze mistakes and opportunities, and their willingness to share while competing makes this class so valuable to the students and the instructor.

The feedback, the promise, the growth and the value of a class focused on the individual student, with a view towards the future is inspiring and humbling at the same time. By the end of the class, it is emotional and difficult to see the group leave. However, as the circle of life continues, the work of the professor provides hope for our future and gets ready for the next installment of hope and growth for another group of seniors!

In one semester, two of the students were non-traditional students, both single mothers, and had chipped away at their education for 15 or more years. As the course came to a close, students were excited about walking across the stage to receive their diplomas. Both non-traditional students had decided not to participate in the graduation. The rest of the class encouraged and indeed implored them to attend, not only to celebrate their amazing achievement but to allow their children to witness the success of their mothers. They were swayed by the encouragement of their classmates. On graduation day, their new support group were thrilled for the accomplishments and celebrated with them, at long last!

In another semester, a student was getting ready to graduate and was embarrassed to admit that he wanted to take his education and career in another direction. The student was working as a police dispatcher while in school and had decided to switch focus and aim toward medical school to be a physician. During class, that fact came out and the student was ashamed to admit what he felt was a mistake. When a discussion was opened with the classmates, that student became emotional at the encouragement and support he found from his classmates.

Conclusion

Teaching the CJ Capstone can be a rewarding experience for both the student and instructor. Allowing the student to reflect and explore the pieces of their personal growth over time requires deep introspection and reflection. The feedback from students participating in the Capstone has been extremely favorable. At the semester mid-point and again at the conclusion of the course, students are asked to post a Reflection of Learning essay. The reflections during the class and writing is found to be cathartic.

The depth and breadth of the Learning Portfolios are both revealing, inspiring and provide validation for the professor. The review of Portfolios offer an important artifact, which can be used for program assessment.

The Portfolio serves to help students reflect on their past, looking back to times in high school, the teachers, classes, sports and extracurricular activities. Then, onto the process of considering college, the applications, the acceptances, the rejection and the selection of a school.

The Capstone provides quality meaningful conversation and it leads to meaningful understanding of complex and intersecting issues. The class also boosts student confidence and provides growth through honest, open dialogue

As I review the approaches to the Criminal Justice Capstone, I find that the course allows for active and integrated learning by encouraging students to exercise the approaches to Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001) which includes remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

There is value in introspection and reflection before a college career is completed. These stories and experiences are validation that our students can step up, can be more prepared by recognizing their shortcomings, realizing their growth over the years in college and focusing on themselves as the topic of research.

Certainly, no single method and approach will work for everyone. The approach to teaching is an individual choice. Having academic freedom to craft a course gives each instructor wide latitude. Customizing, student reaction and feedback to assignments, trial and error, tweaking after each semester will cause a course to morph. It is hoped that this article can allow for faculty to consider some of the lessons and approaches lessons and approaches as they decide how to create a meaningful Capstone experience for their students.

For a copy of a syllabus, please contact the author.

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Submission Guidelines for the *Police Forum*

Format Criteria

The format criteria for all submissions are as follows: reasonable length (less than 30 pages), double-spaced, and in a font similar to 12 pt Times New Roman. All submissions should be in Word format. All charts, graphs, pictures, etc. must be one page or smaller and contained within standard margins. Please attach these at the end of the submission as appendices. Due to formatting limitations all appendices must be in a Word, Excel or similar format - PDF's cannot be used.

Feature Articles

Feature Articles can be quantitative or qualitative. Tables, figures, and charts should be kept to a minimum and should be inserted at the end of the document with an appropriate reference to placement location within the text. The page limits are flexible, however the editors reserve the right to edit excessively long manuscripts.

Practitioners Corner

Articles written from the perspective of persons currently or formerly working in the field, expressing personal observations or experiences concerning a particular area or issue. Page limits are flexible, however long articles may be edited for length.

Academic Pontification

Articles for this area should focus on making an argument, presenting a line of thought, or formulating a new conceptual idea in policing.

Point/Counterpoint

Authors are encouraged to work with another person to develop a point/counterpoint piece. The initial argument should be between 2 and 5 pages. The initial argument should contain roughly 3 to 5 main points. Following exchange of articles between debating authors, a 1 to 3-page rejoinder/ rebuttal will be submitted.

Submission Guidelines – cont.

Research Notes

Research notes should describe a work in progress, a thumbnail outline of a research project, a conceptual methodological piece, or any other article relating to research methods or research findings in policing.

Reviews

Book reviews on any work relating to policing. Reviews of Internet sites or subjects concerning policing on the Internet are also welcome.

Policing in the News

News items of interest to the police section are welcomed in any form.

Legal News in Policing

Reviews of court cases, legal issues, lawsuits, and legal liability in policing are welcomed submissions.

Letters to the Editor

Questions, comments or suggestions pertaining to a given Criminal Justice topic, article, or research.

This Date in History

Submissions on prior hot topics, research, or research methods in Criminal Justice from the past.

Good News

Submissions relating to professional and personal good news for our members - promotions, new jobs, marriages, etc.

How to Submit

Submissions may be made electronically by sending copy in a Word format to acjspoliceforum@gmail.com.

Disclaimer

The editor(s) of this publication reserve the right to edit any submissions for length, clarity, or other issues.

ACJS 55th Annual Meeting
“So What? Understanding What It All Means”
February 13-17, 2018

Pre-Registration Deadline: Now closed

Onsite registration will take place beginning Thursday, February 15, at the Annual Meeting

Annual meeting information, including the call for presentations and the conference program, can be found at:

http://www.acjs.org/pubs/167_668_2915.cfm

2018 Hotel Accommodations

The ACJS block of rooms is available at:

Hilton New Orleans Riverside

Two Poydras Street
New Orleans, LA 70130
Main Phone: 504-561-0500

The hotel group rate, February 14 through February 17, for the ACJS Annual Meeting will be:

Single Occupancy	\$199.00 plus applicable taxes
Double Occupancy	\$199.00 plus applicable taxes
Triple Occupancy	\$199.00 plus applicable taxes
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Club Level	The hotel does not offer Club level at this point.
Standard Suite	\$398 plus applicable taxes

The above occupancy rates are available only until **January 26, 2018**, subject to available space in the ACJS room block.

It is preferred that you reserve your hotel accommodations through the online reservation system which provides more detailed information about the hotel.

Overflow Hotel:

Omni Riverfront Hotel
701 Convention Center Boulevard
New Orleans, LA 70130

Rates are the same as the Hilton, above.

Business Meeting Minutes

NOTE: The minutes below are to be considered and approved, with corrections, at the Police Section Business meeting in Kansas City, MO during the 2017 ACJS Annual Meeting.

MINUTES

ACJS Police Section General Business Meeting

Kansas City, MO

March 24, 2017

Meeting called to order at 1701. Approximately 30 in attendance.

Chair of the section has faith in the value of police section and what can be accomplished with the section. Awardees were not present to receive their awards, but these were presented in absence to Jeremy Wilson who received the O.W. Wilson Award, and Sam Walker who received the Outstanding Service Award.

The Police Section is the largest section in ACJS. The chair announced that the section was almost placed on probation. However, the section was able to get in the needed reports to ACJS in February, and are now back in good graces. The section also has money that it is able to spend. The section can spend it to help the section (e.g., increase practitioner engagement) or in other ways that the section feels will be of benefit. The Chair wants to co-sponsor with the regional organizations (e.g., SCJA) an Innovation Award which is co-branded with the regional sections. The regional sections would select individual to receive the award and then we would select an overall award winner from these regional award winners to be awarded at the ACJS meeting and then have panels with these individuals. This would help with bringing practitioners. Members should reach out to regional sections and the Police Section will provide money for this new award. Police Section should work with regional sections to put together panels and money to contribute to sponsor panels/speakers.

There are lots of police oriented panels but still need to increase practitioner engagement and bring them and others to be more proactive with the section and ACJS.

Chair needs people to volunteer for nominations for open positions and those to be on committees. The Chair needs individuals to work on by-laws and constitutions revisions. He also called on former chairs to potentially put on a panel with former chairs at the next ACJS meeting. The Chair needs awards committee and needs a list of former chairs (Lucy Hochstein, historian might have this). Phil Kopp is the remaining executive counselor, Carol Archibold is still serving as executive counselor, and Michael Jenkins still editor of Forum. The Section has approximately \$16-\$17,000 to spend.

There was a discussion of all editions of the *Police Forum* being placed online, not only previous print copies but all copies on the RU website as a resource with link on the Police Section website.

Chair would like a list of former officers and former award winners, though the information of former officers should be able to be found from previous issues of the *Forum*.

The Section needs to showcase our work with the section or the work section members are completing.

There are approximately 300 members and for approximately \$1500 we can get an open bar and food for reception at the meeting in New Orleans in 2018. This might help to grow the section and section involvement. The Section should also have a student membership structure and student paper competition to get student involvement.

The Section should have things more targeted at practitioners (e.g., training) while also staying with academic papers, to try to get more practitioner engagement. Maybe bring colleagues to regional meetings and then bring them to ACJS.

There was a discussion of a possible international part to the police section in order to learn from each other. The Section should look into having co-sponsored panels with the International section for next conference in New Orleans.

Most panels are informative as practitioners and there is a value to having practitioners at the conference, though we need to bring the gap better between practitioners and academics. The Section might need a practice-oriented/action-oriented journal online to assist in this process, despite this being a large undertaking.

Again the chair is looking for people to help with membership, elections, by-laws, making panels for the next conference, publications, awards, and communications. We need to sponsor a “major” speaker for everyone not just for the section.

Adjourned at 1724.

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