

THE TEACHING PRACTICE VALUE IN THE STUDY PROCESS

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Abstract:

Police officers must be professional in order to do their tasks professionally. Today, when Lithuania faces greater or smaller crises of different characters, researchers in education rise the question how to develop a future specialist that he/she would distinguish in his/her ability to adapt in the society that is fast changing and full of challenges, would have accumulated the necessary amount of knowledge, would be able to apply it in different practical situations, would be able to analyze as well as would interpret and predict his/her further career. The article strives to disclose the higher police education at the Faculty of Public Security Mykolas Romeris University in Lithuania. The paper aims to reveal the educational aspect of teaching practices, goals and the criteria of assessment in training police officers. The aim of investigation is to ascertain the attitude of future police officers towards the chosen profession and its evaluation after the fulfillment of practice, and to analyze students' evaluation of different territorial police subdivisions. The university education is stated as the advantage of a police worker: having higher education such an officer can better adapt to the relations between the police and citizen as they became bilateral and are based on mutual understanding. It is associated with changes of the tendencies of crimes, growth of younger and more cruel criminals, appearance of complex development group-nets sailing drugs, terror attacks and international criminal expansion by making use of new sophisticated technologies.

Key words: Student, teaching practice, higher education, police officers.

1. Introduction:

Higher education can best assist police, in their great social work, by working with them to design, develop, deliver and evaluate full-fledged philosophies of police education¹. On this basis, all university programs have a strong focus on basic skills education. In management education in particular, this relies on the development, or at least the articulation, of normative and interrelated models of society and its police, and on the identification of empirically justifiable dispositions for practice and methods for teaching.

The trends and developments in higher police education in Lithuania have generally confirmed the principal challenges identified in the Bologna Declaration – standardizes and integrates the Lithuanian

¹ Nedzinskas, E., Bankaukienė, N. (2009). Training practice – the premise for professionalism of a future officer of law enforcement. Changes in Social and Business Environment : proceedings of the 3rd international conference. Kaunas: Kaunas: Technologija. ISSN 1822-7090. pp. 279-288.

education in the European Higher Education Area². University education increased communication skills, public relations skills, report writing skills, response to new training, decision-making ability³. That demonstrates that a university education requirement for police institutions is beneficial to the level of performance achieved by its police officers. The quality of the personnel of police officers depends on the strategy of its training very much. At present the following tendencies prevail in the philosophy of the training of Western European police officers: assistance, attention to and social sensitiveness for community⁴. Institutions of police officers' training begin to train a police officer who meets the standards of new public management.

In modern developed and democratic society the service at law enforcement institutions should be considered to be a respectable profession because it requires not only strong character and high intellect, good physical training, but also the wish to serve considering interests of a person, society and state⁵. Referring to these attitudes, the state pays a lot of attention to the quality, improvement and standard of police officers' training. Its aim is to train a professional, qualified officer of law enforcement, who would be able to solve different legal-social problems in practical activity in order to guarantee law and order⁶. Thus professionalism of a police officer is understood as the kind of work activity, which needs special preparation. A professional officer distinguishes in good knowledge in his/her work. Professionalism is readiness and proficiency to work as well as thorough know-how in the work. Professional activity differs from amateurish activity by its high quality and competence.

Thus, according to Chapell⁷, the interface of theory and practice is especially important in law enforcement. Theory and practice, scientific and empirical knowledge complement each other, refer to each

² The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999. Joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education. The European Higher Education Area. (internet resurs: www.smm.lt/t_bendradarbiavimas/docs/bp/Bologna%20declaration.pdf.)

³ Nefas, S., Smalskys, V. (2008). Physical Safety of People as the Common Function of the Police and Local Community. *Journal of Comparative Politics*. Vol 1, No. 1, pp. 82-92.

⁴ Pagon, M., Bjorg, T., Romerio, F.B. (2007). *Perspectives of Police Science in Europe*. Bramshill: CEPOL Series No 2.

⁵ Paoline, E.A., Terrill, W. (2007). Police education, experience, and the use of force. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*. Vol 34, No 2, pp. 179-196.

⁶ Johnston, C.W., Cheurprakobkit, S. (2002). Educating our Police. Perception of the Police Administrators Regarding the Utility of a College Education, Police Academy Training and Preferences in Courses of Officers. *International Journal of Police Science& Management*. Vol. 4-3, pp.182-196.

⁷ Chapell, A. (2008). Police Academy Training: Comparing across curricula. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*. Vol 31, No 1, pp. 36-56.

other, formulate relevant problems, hypotheses, set research goals, define a research subject and content. The opinion of Sherman⁸ should be considered, i.e. „practical teaching of law enforcement officers is oriented to direct implementation of objectives and functions of law enforcement, i.e. to usefulness and effectiveness of law enforcement activity“. Our experience shows that professionalism of primary-level officers of law enforcement can be evaluated during the training practice already after two terms of studies when students have to apply the theoretical knowledge acquired at the Faculty of Public Security, Mykolas Romeris University, facing real situations and law violators. During the training practice students must efficiently evaluate situations that do not have analogues, to urgently take proper solutions, on which professional analysis of a situation as well as execution of law violation depends. In order to attain this aim it is very important that a student would have the formed fund of the most important theoretical knowledge and the ability to apply it in practice till the future training practice. Birzer (2003), Buerger (2004), Faull (2009), Janušauskas (2012), Janusauskas and Nedzinskas (2008), Jaschke and Neidhardt (2007), Nedzinskas (2007), Roberg and Bonn (2004), analysed and studied educational practice of students – future police officer wrote about professional training.

The aim of this article is to identify what influence is made by the training practice upon professionalism of law enforcement officers.

The research methods – analysis of scientific literature and documents, survey-in-written of students, quantitative data analysis.

2. THE ESSENCE AND ORGANISATION OF THE TRAINING PRACTICE OF STUDENTS

The following question constantly emerges in the study process: what is more important – theoretical preparation or practical abilities? Needs of the knowledge and information society induce the change in the concept profession, and it is suggested to understand a profession as certain area of an activity, in which professional ethics and social relations take a very important place.

The optimal solution might be understood as synthesis of these processes - meaningful reflection-based learning integrating individual experience and theoretical knowledge. Reflective observation and thinking as well as accumulation of individual experience are considered to be equally significant components that insuring effective studies. This model analyses crises of reflective thinking that emerge due to the gap of “heights of academic knowledge“ and „chaotic bottoms of the practice, as well as it points out continuity, flexibility, universalism of this spiral of learning. First of all day-time students acquire theoretical knowledge, afterwards they have a possibility to experiment during their practice, i.e. to reflect and to accumulate individual experience.

It is possible to assume that the most important condition that guarantees effective application of the time meant for the practice is students' readiness for this type of the activity during their studies. It has to take place in the following directions:

- professional teaching being realized by means of theoretical and practical courses of delivered study subjects;
- development of a professional personality, which manifests as specially organized and controlled process, during which a student gets involved into the professional work of a future officer as well as professionally important specialist traits are developed.

First of all, the first direction predicts formation of knowledge system about peculiarities a future profession by involving mastering of the foundations of basic subjects of police and state's border defense, getting acquainted with methodology and technologies of practical activity of police and state's border

⁸ Sherman, L.W. (1978). *The Quality of Police Education*. San Francisco: Jossey – Bass Publishing House.

defense, methodology and methods of scholastic cognition. Such preparation is implemented mostly at lectures and seminars of a theoretical subject. Beside the theoretical preparation it is also necessary to guarantee technological preparation of students for their future practice. Practical classes run the form of seminars, trainings, role-plays and simulations. During seminars preliminary interim defense of activity projects that contributes to improving student's "methodical fund" is planned. Enactment of different situations as well as performance of sessions and fragments contributes to improving practical activity and develops self-confidence as well as analyze own actions. Analytical abilities of students form when observing actions of experienced teachers, analyzing own actions, discussing problems at different levels (speeches and reasoning during seminars and lectures). Finally, a student develops the ability of operative reflection, i.e. the ability to perceive work content and its results.

Cooperating with the Police Department and the State Border Guard Service, the Faculty of Public Security, plans and coordinates distribution of students to their practice places. Before the training practice begins, the Faculty acquaints students with the aims and objectives of the practice, presents them assignments of their independent work planned in the study programmes of the training practice as well as the methodology for the performance of independent work assignments. In getting ready for the practice, the attitude that mutual efforts of an educational institution and employees of law enforcement institutions determine qualitative training of an officer was considered.

The performance of the practice is regulated by the Law of Police Activities of the Republic of Lithuania (2000), the Law of State Border Guard Service (2000), the Statute of Interior Service (2003), the Statute of Mykolas Romeris University (2004) and the Regulations of Students' Practice (Traineeship) of Mykolas Romeris University (2005). The content of the training practice has been formulated by referring to the study programme of Law and Police Activities as well as the Standards of Policeman and State Border Guardian Training (2000) confirmed by the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on August 29, 2000, No. 1079.

The aim of the practice is to make a student realize public activity of law enforcement and the way of thinking that emphasizes cooperation. During the practice proper methods of the activity, the character of law enforcement work as service, representation of own profession by maintaining professionalism of a law enforcement officer, readiness to serve people and the ability to consider expectations of society should be emphasized. During the practice a student should be wider acquainted with the activity of the institutions, with which law enforcement mostly cooperates and with methods of the cooperation. The training practice is the stage, during which it is possible to observe trainee's aptitude for the activity of law enforcement. The aim of the practice is to achieve that students would:

- possess a reality-based view about the activity of police officers at different se and about requirements set for law enforcement institutions as well as understand the character of law enforcement institutions work as public service;
- learn to perform usual tasks of a universal officer of law enforcement.

In the beginning of the practice students get acquainted with a receiving institution. They get acquainted with the organization of law enforcement departments, the environment of the activity, divisions and subdivisions of the institutions, executives of law enforcement institutions, work hours and other conditions of the service, as well as they find out about the issues related to the use of service dress, a certificate and special means. Students have to be acquainted with requirements for work security. Matters of didactics are also considered. Also students have to sign that they will announce any confidential information obtained during their practice. A law enforcement institution, which appointed for the practice, is responsible for guaranteeing of the resources necessary for the practice as well as for implementation of the practice. The institution obligates to organize and to implement the realization of the training practice

and at the same time to evaluate the suitability of a law enforcement officer who participates in the practice for the work of law enforcement. The division that receives a student appoints a practice supervisor, who performs the functions formulated in programme of training practice and assesses the suitability of a student who participates in the practice for professional activity. The practice is performed at different structural divisions of law enforcement institutions. The succession of practice performance is established by the direction of law enforcement institutions.

The Faculty is responsible for planning of the content of the training practice, its compatibility to the qualification requirements formulated for professional training of officers. The Faculty controls, informs divisions of law enforcement institutions in time and participates in coordinating the activity of practice supervisors and the officers responsible for the practice. After the practice has finished and the evaluation of the results of students' activity during their practice has been made, the officer responsible for the practice presents his/her report about the organization of the practice for the vice-dean of the Faculty. During the practice students have to perform all training assignment given by their practice supervisor as well as other tasks related to the practice. Training assignments are given at every division of a law enforcement institution, in which a student performs the practice. A practice supervisor formulates assignments independently. The practice supervisor inscribes formulations of assignments, their assessments and remarks about the activity of a trainee into the documents of students' practice performance.

3. THE ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS

The students of the Faculty of Public Security, Mykolas Romeris University participated in training practices when they studied in the first and second year. The respondents got questionnaires. In the beginning the respondents were asked whether the Faculty cared that future police officers would apply the theoretical knowledge, acquired during lectures, during their practice. Every fifth respondent indicated that the theoretical knowledge acquired at the Faculty they completely applied during their practice; every second respondent pointed out that they only partly applied the theoretical knowledge and only every seventh respondent stated that they were not able to apply the theoretical knowledge, acquired at the Faculty, during their practice. The survey data show that prevailing majority of the students completely or partly applied the theoretical knowledge acquired at the Faculty in order to solve emerged problems during their training practice. In the nearest future it would be expedient to analyze the reasons why 14 percent of the respondents did not apply the theoretical knowledge acquired at the faculty during their training practice. It should be assumed that the reason for this could be students' frustration with their future profession and indisposition to master theoretical knowledge, as well as the absence of complicated fast-answer requiring situations in practice. However these are only premises requiring more detailed analysis.

The author of the article asked the respondents whether the knowledge and skills acquired during the practice contribute to strengthening the resolution to become police officers. 34 percent of the respondents answered that the knowledge and skills acquired during the practice absolutely strengthened their resolution to become police officers. 38 percent of the respondents indicated that it contributed partly, 14 percent – more contributed than did not. Also 14 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that the knowledge and skills acquired during the practice did not contribute to strengthening their resolution to become law enforcement officers. So it is possible to state that this strengthens the above-mentioned assumption that these students got frustrated with their future profession.

The respondents were asked to give their arguments why, according to them, the knowledge and skills acquired during their practice contributed to strengthening their resolution to become a law enforcement officer and vice versa. It should be noted that second-year trainees did not express their

arguments. It is possible to assume that they could lack both experience and courage to express their critical opinion.

Having found out the respondents' opinion on application of theoretical knowledge in practice, it was interesting to know whether the practice influenced the development of theoretical knowledge thesaurus. One third of the respondents indicated that their thesaurus of theoretical knowledge enlarged, for two thirds of the respondents this fund only partly enlarged. Only a small part of the respondents thought their fund of theoretical knowledge did not enlarge. These data allows stating that the respondents who participated in the research noticed and positively evaluated that during their practice the thesaurus of theoretical knowledge enlarged, it was applied in practice. It was interesting to find out whether during the practice the conditions for students to develop their skills of filling official and professional documents were guaranteed. 30 percent of the respondents stated that they improved these skills completely, 46 percent of them pointed out that they partly improved these skills and 12 percent of the respondents indicated that they more improved than did not their skills of filing official and procedural documents. Only 12 percent of the respondents stated that during the practice the conditions to improve their skills of filing official and procedural documents were not created. Considering that filing official and procedural documents is a very important part of the work of a police officer, the answers revealed that the conditions to implement this process were guaranteed during the practice at the maximum. Future officers get acquainted and participate in the process of filing official and procedural documents; they are able to name and to state the facts emerged during the practice.

During permanent training of a police officer and during the practice it is very important that during their practice they would be taught to evaluate and to analyze different situations, which they face continuously. The answers of the respondents are the reason to pay some attention: only 18 percent of the trainees were taught to thoroughly analyze and to evaluate situations. Other respondents stated that they were more than were not taught to analyze situations or they were partly taught. Even 23 percent of the respondents indicated that they not taught to evaluate and to analyze different situations during their practice.

All respondents who participated in the research were asked to what subjects should be paid greater attention when getting ready to the practice – specialty subjects, specialty and general subjects or only general subjects. Only 20 percent of the second-year students indicated that it would be necessary to stress only specialty subjects – perhaps they did not have greater experience and did not see wide possibilities in the activity of police officers. 80 percent of the respondents pointed out that during the practice it was important to emphasize development of both specialty and general abilities. Such competitive evaluation of the practice content shows the ability of the respondents to orient in educational space of Europe and Lithuania as well as the ability to predict what is mostly lacking and to what the attention of higher education institutions training law enforcement officers should be paid.

During their practice students face miscellaneous activity of officers, professionalism of officers as their human traits becomes evident. Future officers of law enforcement perhaps not so open but discuss and evaluate the behavior of their working colleagues. Thus the respondents were asked what imposes them when observing the work of officers during the training practice. 44 respondents presented 81 evaluating feature. Mostly the respondents pointed out that they were imposed by the responsible viewpoint of officers to the assigned tasks. This made 25 percent of all evaluations. The second place went to the trainees' estimation (the greatest impression) that the officers before decision-making consulted with their colleagues (23 percent of all estimations). The third place (17 percent) went to the students' statement that law enforcement officers worked fast and professionally. Future police officers were imposed that the specialists of law enforcement used to perform their assignments in time (14 percent). The trainees stressed that

officers were civilized (12 percent of all estimations) with detainees, arrestees and waiters. However the statement those officers were civilized and polite got least estimations (9 percent).

The students – respondents were asked whether they had possibilities and whether the conditions to develop their different value attitudes were created during their practice. The respondents answered that the possibilities to develop the following value attitudes were created: dutifulness, punctuality, liability/responsibility and culture, communicativeness and honesty.

Generalization

Police education and training in Lithuania is changing. Within the Lithuanian system of police education, there is a coherent system of training at all levels of education. Having performed the analysis of scientific literature and documents, it is possible state that the training practice implicates the development of both specialty and general abilities. The results obtained during the research proved that prevailing majority of the respondents completely or partly applied the theoretical knowledge acquired at the faculty in order to solve the tasks that emerged during their practice. Almost all students emphasized the development of general and special abilities; and only few respondents indicated that it was important to develop only special abilities. Having performed the research it is possible to state that prevailing majority of students completely or partly applied the theoretical knowledge acquired at the faculty in order to solve issues that emerged during their training practice. It is also identified that acquired knowledge and skills completely or partly strengthened the resolution of most students to become a police officer. Having analyzed the answers of the trainees on what imposed them when observing the activity of officers during their practice, it was identified that most respondents valued responsible viewpoint of officers to their assignments, that officers consulted with their colleagues when making decisions, performed their assignments fast and with expedition. The respondents pointed out they had possibilities to develop the following value attitudes during their training practice: dutifulness, punctuality, responsibility/liability and culture, communicativeness and honesty.

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