

POLICE RECEPTIVITY TO RESEARCH: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE U.S. AND THE ROLE OF EDUCATION MOVING FORWARD

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27 June 2018

Overview

2

- Importance of examining police officer receptivity to research
- Lessons learned from multiple projects examining receptivity of officers at all ranks in the U.S.
- Focus on police education as one approach in moving receptivity forward

Background

3

- “The Federal Government should encourage and support partnerships between law enforcement and academic institutions to support a culture that values ongoing education and the integration of current research into the development of training, policies, and practices.”
 - ▣ President Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015: 55)

- Receptivity work designed to assess extent to which research playing a role in policing

Why receptivity matters

- Evidence-based policing: “Police practices should be based on scientific evidence about what works best” (Sherman, 1998)
- “The obstacle all professions have faced is a lack of systematic evidence about how professions or organizations become evidence based” (Sherman, 2015)
- Evidence-based policing requires not only generating and synthesizing the evidence, but getting police to utilize it
- Important to study receptivity to research to understand the current landscape and to consider ways to build receptivity

Lum & Telep receptivity survey

5

Survey sections (survey online at cebcp.org/matrix-demo):

- I. Resource resources and knowledge base
- II. Perception/view of science
- III. Views on innovation and conducting research
- IV. Higher education and policing
- V. Personal information

Receptivity data collection to date

6

- Officer sample (4 agencies)
 - ▣ Majority front line officer sample from 4 American agencies of varying sizes
 - Sacramento, CA; Reno, NV; Richmond, VA; Roanoke County, VA

- Managers/supervisors sample
 - ▣ Sample of mid-level supervisors administered prior to a police leadership course in Oregon

- Chiefs sample
 - ▣ Sample of chiefs and high level police leaders in Oregon

What have we learned?

7

- Officer exposure to the evidence base
 - ▣ Are officers reading the effectiveness literature?

- Officer views on what works
 - ▣ Do officer views align with what works?

- Officer views on conducting research
 - ▣ Are officers open to conducting research?

- Officer definitions of evidence-based policing
 - ▣ Do officer definitions align with academic conceptions?

Officer exposure to the evidence base

(Telep & Winegar, 2016; Telep & Lum, 2014)

8

Source	% Reading Anything from Source about Effectiveness (Past 6 months)	
	Officers	Chiefs
Own agency	45.1	26.7
None of the above	42.3	11.1
Intl. Association of Chiefs of Police	8.5	80.0
National Institute of Justice	5.3	26.7
Bureau of Justice Assistance	4.0	33.3
University	3.4	26.7
Library database	0.9	4.4

Officers n = 1145; chiefs n = 45

Officer views on the evidence base

Strategy	Very Effective %		Effective %		Somewhat Effective %		Not Effective %	
	Officers	Chiefs	Officers	Chiefs	Officers	Chiefs	Officers	Chiefs
Hot spots policing	13.7	28.9	30.0	55.6	28.7	15.6	14.9	0
Problem-oriented policing	26.8	40.0	30.0	51.1	15.3	6.7	2.3	0
Random preventive patrol	9.5	6.7	28.5	15.6	38.6	51.1	8.7	24.4
Rapid response to 911 calls	21.5	26.7	36.9	28.9	27.8	26.7	6.2	17.8

Officer openness to conducting research

10

Action	Very Willing %		Quite Willing %		Somewhat Willing %		Not Willing %	
	Officers	Chiefs	Officers	Chiefs	Officers	Chiefs	Officers	Chiefs
Conduct a small randomized trial	7.7	6.7	22.6	13.3	30.5	15.6	33.6	42.2
Use before/after data to evaluate	24.7	37.8	38.8	40.0	25.9	22.0	5.1	0
Approach a researcher	7.2	17.8	19.9	40.0	41.4	33.3	25.3	6.7
Seek assistance in the agency	15.4	22.2	39.3	60.0	31.3	15.6	7.7	2.2

Researcher definitions of evidence-based policing

11

Author (Year)	Definition
Sherman (1998)	“police practices should be based on scientific evidence about what works best...the use of the best available research on the outcomes of police work to implement guidelines and evaluate agencies, units, and officers”
Welsh (2006)	“the police using the highest quality available research evidence on what works best to reduce a specific crime problem and tailoring the intervention to the local context and conditions”
Lum, Koper, & Telep (2011)	Evidence-Based Policing Matrix: “ proactive, focused, place-based interventions are more likely to reduce crime and disorder than strategies concentrating on individuals, or those that are reactive and/or general in nature”
Lum & Koper (2013)	“law-enforcement perspective and philosophy that implicates the use of research, evaluation, analysis, and scientific processes in law-enforcement decision making”

Are police familiar with “evidence-based policing?”

12

- Have you ever heard of the term “evidence-based policing”?

Sample	Heard of EBP	Provided a Definition
Officers (n = 1094)	304 (27.8%)	250 (22.9%)
Supervisors/managers (n = 163)	106 (65.0%)	106 (65.0%)
Chiefs/leaders (n=104)	86 (87.8%)	72 (83.7%)
Total (n=1355)	496 (36.6%)	428 (31.6%)

Key words in police officer definitions

13

Key Word	Percentage Of Definitions That Included...			
	Officers	Supervisors	Chiefs	Total
Statistics/data*	27.2	38.7	52.8	34.3
Effective/what works*	18.4	34.9	29.2	24.3
Research/empirical	19.6	31.1	25.0	23.4
Evaluation/analysis	12.4	9.4	15.3	19.2
Specific places/people	21.2	17.0	15.3	12.1
Science/scientific*	5.2	8.5	13.9	7.5
Prevention/proactive	7.2	5.7	6.9	6.8
Forensics/case evidence*	12.4	7.5	1.4	9.3

* χ^2 p < .05

Number of key words in definitions

14

Total Key Words	Percentage of Definitions that Included...			
	Officers	Supervisors	Chiefs	Total
0	30.4	13.2	8.3	22.4
1	39.2	42.5	40.3	40.2
2	20.8	31.1	37.5	26.2
3	8.0	12.3	12.5	9.8
4	1.6	0.9	1.4	1.4

$\chi^2 = 27.2$ ($p < .05$)

How “correct” are police definitions?

15

Sample	No answer %	No match %	Partial match %	Total match %
Officers	5.2	32.0	59.6	3.2
Supervisors	0.9	20.8	73.6	4.7
Chiefs	2.8	15.3	73.6	8.3
Total	3.7	26.4	65.4	4.4

$\chi^2 = 16.6$ ($p < .05$) Note: no answer and no match were combined for the χ^2 test

The role of education

16

- Does higher education play a role in understanding and predicting officer receptivity?
- What do officers think about higher education in policing and minimum education standards?

What predicts having heard of evidence-based policing? (Telep, 2017)

17

	Heard of EBP	
	b(SE)	Exp(b)
Read 2+ publications	1.40(.32)	4.05**
Prior training on effectiveness	.40(.24)	1.50†
Never heard of 3+ strategies	-.41(.17)	.67*
Master's	.99(.33)	2.69**

Only significant predictors from the logistic regression presented

* $p < .05$ † $p < .10$

What predicts “better” definitions of evidence-based policing?

18

Predictor	1+ key word		Definition matched	
	b(SE)	Exp(b)	b(SE)	Exp(b)
Read 2+ publications	.53(.46)	1.71	.84(.41)	2.31*
Patrol	-.17(.40)	.85	-.76(.38)	.47*
Master's	1.47(.59)	4.35*	1.17(.47)	3.23*
Nagelkerke R ²	.20		.21	

Only significant predictors from the logistic regression presented

* $p < .05$

Chiefs views on importance of higher education

19

Importance of pursuing higher education (n = 45)	For officers %	For chief executives %
Not important	2.2	0
Somewhat important	8.9	0
Important	13.3	6.7
Very important	40.0	15.6
Essential	35.6	77.8

Officer views on importance of higher education

20

Response	Sacramento % n=518	Richmond % n =271	Roanoke Co % n=71	Reno % n=122	Total % n=982
Not important	3.5	14.0	5.6	14.8	7.9
Somewhat important	13.7	27.7	26.8	23.0	19.7
Important	24.3	25.8	31.0	29.5	25.9
Very important	36.1	23.2	23.9	25.4	30.3
Essential	22.4	9.2	12.7	7.4	16.2

Chiefs views on education standards

21

Minimum education standard (n = 45)	What is it? %	What SHOULD it be? %
No education standard	0	0
High school diploma	77.8	28.9
Some college	11.1	22.2
Associate's degree	11.1	37.8
Bachelor's degree	0	11.1

Officer views on minimum education standard

22

Standard	Sacramento % n=514	Richmond % n =268	Roanoke Co% n=71	Reno % n=122	Total n=975
No standard	0.2	1.5	0	1.6	0.7
High school diploma	3.7	40.7	38.0	40.2	20.9
Some college	37.5	26.5	26.8	22.1	31.8
Associate's degree	26.5	22.4	26.8	32.8	26.2
Bachelor's degree	32.1	9.0	8.5	3.3	20.4

How do we build receptivity? Some ideas

23

- Training officers
 - ▣ Little research on this in the U.S. context
- Embedding evidence-based practice into agency routines
 - ▣ Matrix Demonstration Project (Lum & Koper, 2017)
- Sustaining mutually beneficial police-academic partnerships
- **Developing translation tools to make research more accessible**
 - ▣ **Benefits of officers reading more publications/research**
- **Enhancing police education**

Translational criminology

24

- Research, especially when published exclusively in academic journals, will not automatically influence practice
 - ▣ Less than 5% of chiefs and less than 3% of officers had read an academic publication

- Need to present research in succinct ways that are accessible and easily digestible

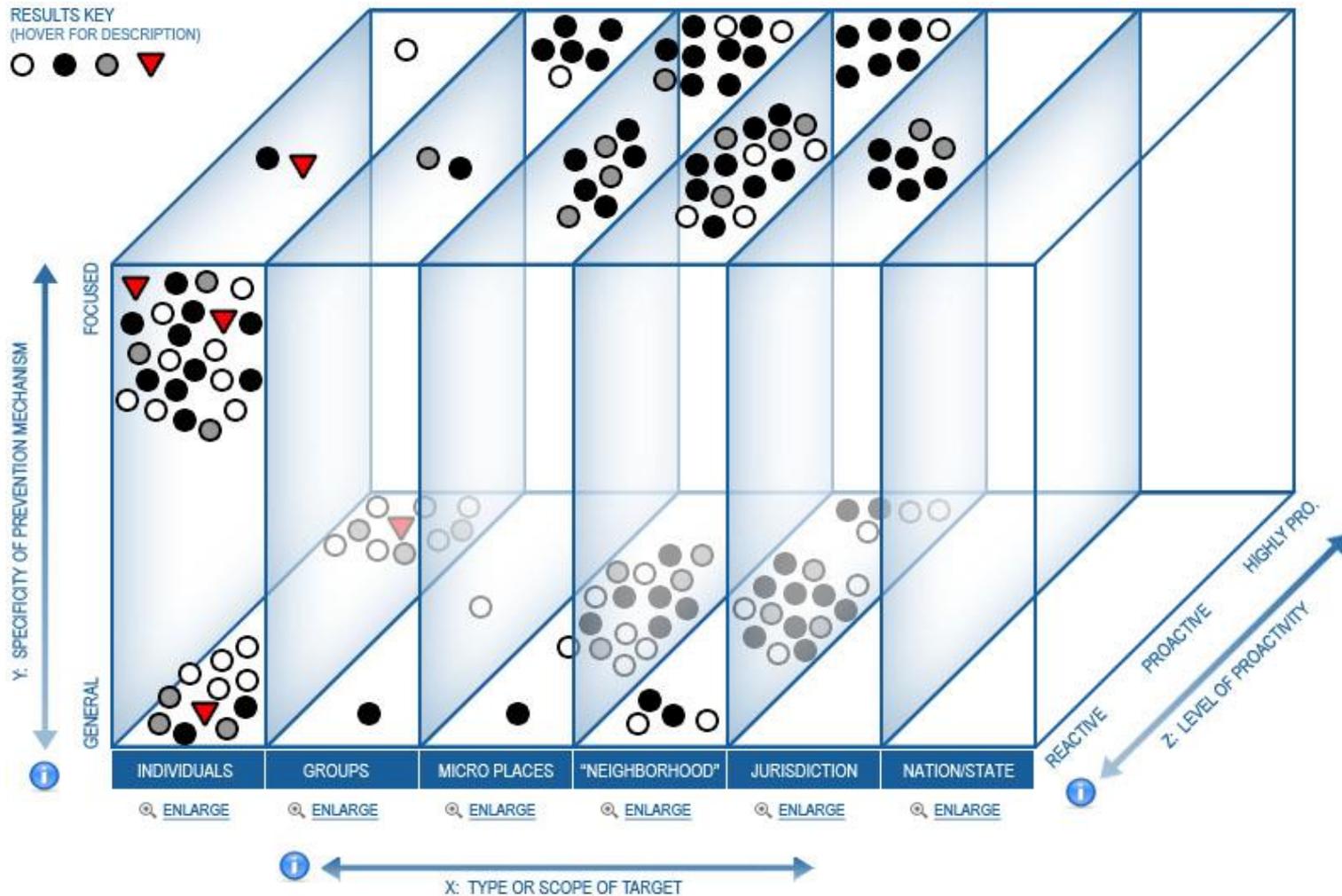
- Freely available translation tools can assist in these efforts
 - ▣ Evidence-Based Policing Matrix
 - ▣ What Works in Policing Site
 - ▣ Oregon Knowledge Bank
 - ▣ Plus others (Campbell Collaboration systematic reviews, CrimeSolutions.gov, What Works Centre in the College of Policing)

Evidence-Based Policing Matrix

(Lum, Koper, & Telep, 2011; online at www.policingmatrix.org)

25

Evidence-Based Policing Matrix



What Works in Policing? (CEBCP)

26

- Summary of the evaluation literature by program type
 - ▣ What is it? What is the evidence? What should the police be doing?
- <http://cebcop.org/what-works-in-policing/>

What Works?	What's Promising	What Doesn't Work?	What Do We Need to Know More About?
Hot spots policing	Community policing	Standard model policing tactics	Broken windows policing
Problem-oriented policing	CCTV	Second responder programs	Increasing department size
Focused deterrence strategies		D.A.R.E	Police technology
Directed patrol for gun violence			

Center for Policing Excellence in Oregon

27

- Center housed within the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (state training academy)
 - ▣ Created by the state legislature in 2013 to make policing more efficient and effective

- Engaged in a number of activities to build receptivity
 - ▣ Leadership training on evidence-based policing
 - ▣ Micro-grant funding
 - Leaders can get funding for community-based projects
 - ▣ Oregon Knowledge Bank (<http://okb.oregon.gov/>)
 - Statewide database of policing and correctional programs and evaluations

Role of higher education

28

- Receptivity research suggests benefits of higher education, particularly having a Master's degree
 - ▣ Unlikely police will recruit at Master's level (although Egon Bittner advocated for this)
 - ▣ Higher minimum education standards make advanced degree completion more likely, either pre-service or on the job
- Officers and chiefs generally view higher education as important to policing

Why should higher education matter?

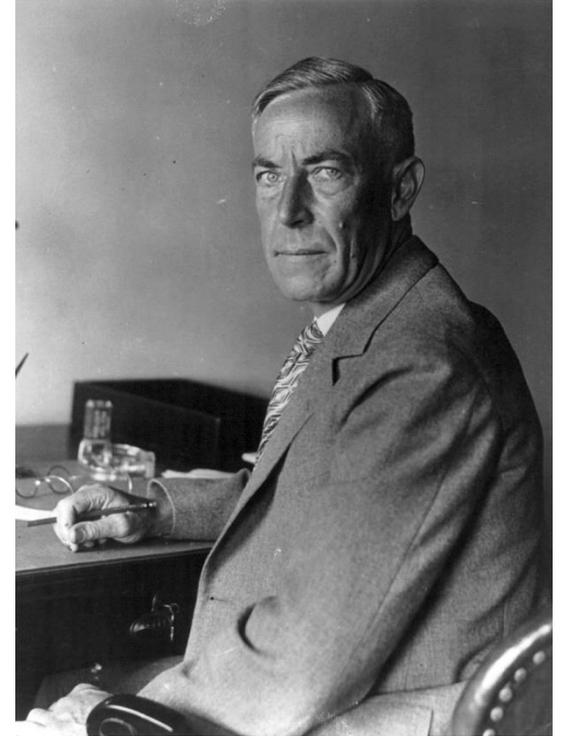
29

- Research on impact of higher education in policing in the U.S. has been mixed (Paoline et al., 2015), with limited assessment of impacts on behavior
 - ▣ Some evidence of less complaints, less use of force (Rydberg & Terrill, 2010)
- Belief that college could help police in a number of areas, including moral reasoning, critical thinking, problem solving, and working with diverse groups
- Also benefits for making policing more of a profession

Higher education and policing in the U.S. historically

30

- August Vollmer, police chief in Berkeley, CA 1909-1923 advocated for all officers to have a bachelor's degree
- Created the first American School of Criminology at the University of California



Higher education and policing in the U.S. today

31

Min. Education Standard	% of Departments
High School Diploma	84
Some College (but no degree)	4
Associate's Degree	10
Bachelor's Degree	1

2013 Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics Survey; national survey of U.S. agencies

- Multiple major city police departments have recently removed their requirement of some college or a two year degree for entry, claiming recruitment challenges
 - Memphis
 - New Orleans
 - Philadelphia

But things are more complex

32

- Many officers have a bachelor's degree, even though it is not required
 - ▣ 58.8% in our four agency municipal sample

- Many departments require higher education (and even a Master's degree) to rise up to senior ranks
 - ▣ Anecdotal, no known research on this in the U.S.

- American Society of Evidence-Based Policing founded in 2015
 - ▣ Led by many “pracademic” officers who have Master's or doctoral degrees and are leading research projects in their agencies

Moving forward with police education

33

- Further study of the impacts of raising (or lowering) minimum educational standards
- Further study of the impact of university-type/higher education quality
 - ▣ For-profit models vs. more traditional universities
- University partnerships to promote police graduate-level education
 - ▣ University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Police Department model (Engel & Whalen, 2010)
- American College of Policing?
 - ▣ “The U.S. Department of Justice should develop, in partnership with institutions of higher education, a national postgraduate institute of policing for senior executives with a standardized curriculum preparing them to lead agencies in the 21st century” President’s Task Force Report (2015: 54)

Summary of receptivity findings

34

Lots of positive findings	Things to consider moving forward
General understanding of strategies that work	More knowledge of research on less effective strategies
Openness to conducting research	More exposure to the value of rigorous methodologies
Most police leaders have heard of evidence-based policing	Better understanding of the term “evidence-based policing”
Higher education is viewed as very useful	Raising minimum educational standards

Conclusions

35

- Receptivity research important for assessing current landscape, change over time, and developing approaches to better integrate research into practice
- Research should be part of the conversation in developing policies and practices
 - ▣ Need to balance research evidence and officer experience (Willis & Mastrofski, 2014, 2016)
- Higher education potentially an important way to further build receptivity and evidence-based policing
 - ▣ Diverging paths when it comes to higher education requirements for policing in the US and UK

Thank you

36

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