



Training for Law Enforcement Managers What Does Professional Military Education Offer?

By ROGER TROTT

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The demands on law enforcement managers have increased as their agencies' missions have grown more diverse and complex since September 11, 2001. New investigative priorities and programs and current laws, along with corresponding changes in policies and procedures, all place elevated demands on managers' knowledge, skills, and abilities. Several aspects of a professional military education (PME) approach, combining the academic rigor of graduate-level

education with a professionally focused curriculum, can help local, state, and federal senior law enforcement managers become better prepared to carry out their responsibilities.¹

While "warfighting" and "crimefighting" clearly are different professions, both military officers and law enforcement managers often operate in a similar environment frequently filled with uncertainty, crisis, and danger, as well as complicated by a considerable responsibility for

the well-being of others. Success for both professions in these circumstances often depends heavily upon the thought processes, which must be timely, rational, and even innovative, and the capabilities of the person in charge. All elements of America's strength, as represented by the military services, law enforcement agencies, and other civilian organizations, are needed to effectively protect the country from terrorists and support the global war on terrorism.

The Professional Military Education System

The PME system is designed to educate and prepare officers to operate in a joint (multiservice) environment and equip them with the ability to generate quality tactical, operational, and strategic thought. It aims to produce critical thinkers who view military affairs in the broadest context and can identify and evaluate probable changes. Finally, the PME system aspires to produce senior officers who can develop and execute national military strategies that effectively employ the armed services to fulfill the goals of national security and strategy policy.² To achieve these results, the services and joint chiefs relied upon a structured and long-term academic educational approach, rather than a more narrow training system. “[T]hroughout military education in the last fifty years of the twentieth century there has been an increasing tendency to draw professional military education closer to the academic standards of universities, in terms of both quality and of breadth.”³ Further, “warfighting is the greatest challenge to a student’s capacity for dealing with the unknown, and those trained as opposed to educated, have seldom managed to muster the wherewithal to cope with that environment.”⁴

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Special Agent Trott is an assistant section chief in the Training and Development Division at the FBI Academy.

Currently, all military branches operate multiple educational facilities for officers of all services to attend at different stages of their careers. There are four levels of military education: primary (lieutenants and captains or equivalent); intermediate (field-grade officers and majors or equivalent); senior (lieutenant colonels and colonels or equivalent); and generals/flag officers. Each level of military education focuses at the appropriate categories of war (tactical, operational, and strategic), building upon the knowledge and values gained in previous ones.⁵

The U.S. Marine Corps University (MCU), through its various schools, is the primary provider of resident PME for its almost 19,000 officers.⁶ It simultaneously renders PME to officers from other U.S. military

branches, international officers from allied military services, and representatives of certain U.S. civilian agencies. The MCU is part of and similar to the other service institutions that comprise the PME system in the United States.

The MCU’s largest and oldest PME school is the Command and Staff College (CSC), which has the primary purpose of preparing military officers “for command and staff duties with Marine Air-Ground Task Forces and for assignment with joint, multinational, and high-level service organizations.”⁷ The CSC offers a 10-month curriculum of graduate-level rigor to educate officers in various aspects of the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war. The CSC student body, with U.S. and international military officers and select civilians, represent a wide range

of military operational specialties and experiences all learning together. While admission processes vary by student type, candidates must apply to attend the CSC resident program and go through a selection process. Admission requirements include a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.

The CSC has a learning environment, curriculum, and instructional approach based on educational and adult-learning principles. The faculty uses a variety of instructional methodologies in support of the curriculum, which contains a broad spectrum of courses that range from the theoretical to the specific application of warfighting doctrine. The faculty of the CSC includes civilian staff members who are experienced educators and recognized experts in their fields of study with doctorate degrees and seasoned command-level military officers who generally have completed their senior-level PME with a graduate degree. The CSC military officers on the faculty represent all U.S. military services.

The MCU is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award a CSC master of military studies degree, a voluntary program that requires additional work beyond the CSC's PME

curriculum. One CSC faculty member succinctly summarized the objective of the curriculum and the faculty's mission, "We equip officers through PME to solve problems more effectively, improve the speed of their decision cycle, and simply fight smarter." The synergy America reaps from combining its tailored educational program



for military officers with its battlefield technological achievements is evident. "The dollars that our nation invested in educating the leaders of Operation Allied Force and Desert Storm paid off in terms of the strategy and the operational concepts that our men and women in uniform followed to victory."⁸

Current Concerns

During interviews with FBI Academy and MCU faculty and administrators, several educational strategies were discussed. FBI interviewees felt that, historically, the FBI relied too

heavily on on-the-job training and would benefit from additional comprehensive formalized instruction for mid-level managers. They commented that training provided by external entities often lacked relevance to the workplace. One interviewee explained that using a purely academic model to educate FBI agent managers has limited value for the organization. Several indicated that while the mission of the FBI has substantially changed, managers have not received adequate preparation to meet these new challenges. However, in the past year, the FBI has made significant progress through an initiative to address career-long development with a well integrated, competency-based leadership training framework.

An MCU interviewee indicated that Marines educate in a broad-based way to develop problem solvers. Further, he advised that using external providers for education does not offer current and relevant military knowledge or networking value among other military officers. MCU interviewees noted that resident PME provides education and training that effectively prepared U.S. Marine Corps officers to serve successfully in their future positions.

Today, some organizations have the erroneous idea that they can adequately develop

their managers and executives simply by sending them to the latest leadership courses and seminars. Undoubtedly, leadership development constitutes an important feature of professional education, but it should not be substituted for a more comprehensive preparation of managers. Professional education enhances a wide range of cognitive skills, improves critical thinking ability, and provides increased professional knowledge. It also offers managers the freedom of a learning environment to sharpen their analytical, innovative, and evaluative thought processes on occupational issues. All of these factors prepare managers to select the best path before they can inspire and lead others down it. An FBI interviewee stated that successful FBI SSAs (supervisory special agents) must “possess the art of managing and possess the fine art of leadership.”

Benefits to Law Enforcement

Professional education at the graduate level improves students’ abilities to perform the intellectual tasks of analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information within their professions. These tasks are at the highest level of Benjamin Bloom’s “Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain.” Bloom, an educational psychologist, developed classification levels

of intellectual behavior important in learning (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, in ascending order of complexity).⁹ Improvements in the higher levels of intellectual behavior, such as synthesis or innovative thought, require instructional methodologies that offer opportunities for students to use these more complex cognitive functions. Graduate-level education provides these

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options. However, professional education is intended to do more than increase generic intellectual capability. Courses are designed to increase the practitioners’ levels of professional knowledge and to develop a better understanding of the principles, theories, and concepts that comprise the foundation and environment of their occupations. By its nature, professional education is more relevant to the workplace than general graduate-level studies.

Individuals more readily can transfer the knowledge, cognitive skills, and abilities acquired from professional education to job performance because of their pertinence, providing a more direct and positive impact on the organization.

Because of its more comprehensive nature, professional education can focus on improving a number of core competencies within a specific occupational environment. For example, such an approach can improve FBI managers’ core competencies for use in the complex environment in which they interact. It also requires more opportunity for learning than a 1- or 2-week seminar can offer to significantly improve intellectual capabilities and enhance core competencies. “The exploration of new ideas occurs over a longer time and requires a different level of engagement than an 8-hour in-service training session.”¹⁰

The Approach

The importance of critical thinking and professional competency is equally important to military officers and law enforcement managers. Mid-level law enforcement managers, similar to military officers, must think critically and creatively and act decisively in stressful and uncertain situations to effectively and efficiently solve problems. The government

entrusts both with carrying out some of the country's most important responsibilities, such as their duties to protect life, liberty, and property and to ensure that America's way of life and rule of law endure for subsequent generations. They have the authority to take lives in defense of themselves and others as necessary to meet these responsibilities. The successful fulfillment of these obligations requires important leadership, management, and intellectual capabilities.

If the purpose for the professional education of military officers is to develop a smarter warfighter, then the purpose of a PME-like approach for preparing law enforcement managers is to produce a smarter crimefighter. "[W]hen educated people are faced with a novel situation, they should be able to analyze, interpret, and make judgments about the situation themselves, rather than rely on others to tell them what to do."¹¹ Professional education accomplishes this by improving practitioners' abilities to reason and effectively solve problems within the realm of their occupational environments. It also simultaneously increases their knowledge and understanding of their profession.

One law enforcement educator makes relevant comments linking law enforcement and the military. He indicates that

members of the U.S. military displayed exceptional war-fighting expertise and effectiveness in Afghanistan while also operating within the values of justice, compassion, freedom, and respect for human rights.¹² He attributes this outstanding performance to their "solid foundation of education and training." Further, he argues that professional policing is

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second only to the military in its importance to America because both institutions protect the safety, health, and welfare of the country. The current cooperative efforts to combat terrorism highlight this commonality of mission. He infers it is as equally important to provide the best possible education and training to police officers if law enforcement is to successfully "carry out the contradictory mandate of policing a free society" as effectively as the military carried out its mission in Afghanistan. Because of the importance of rank and management positions within

law enforcement organizations (their paramilitary nature), agencies need to make a significant commitment to preparing and developing mid-level managers. The proper "preparation and development of management personnel should be comprehensive, intellectually progressive, and continual." Instruction for lieutenants and captains should be "disproportionately educationally based" and "focused heavily on the conceptual principles of organizational and transformation leadership." The "level of abstraction" of the education provided to managers should increase with rank in the organization. The education should prepare command officers for their future roles and responsibilities.

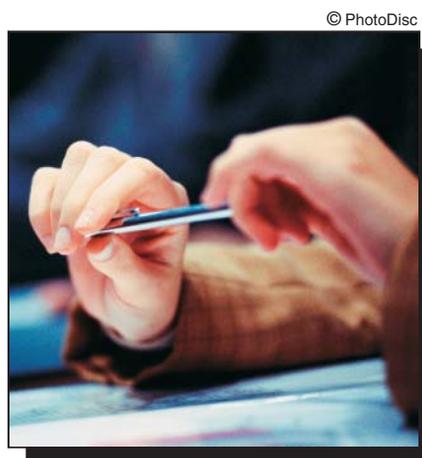
A Model

A professional education program should provide a pragmatic and academically challenging graduate-level course of study in a multiagency environment that will sharpen intellectual capabilities and increase professional competencies of law enforcement and national security managers (intelligence and counterintelligence) committed to vigorously maintaining the security of the United States. The program's curriculum should have two principal objectives. First, it should dramatically increase

the capability of law enforcement managers and their counterparts in other departments to initiate, conduct, oversee, and evaluate investigative and intelligence initiatives that will protect the United States from terrorism, cybercrime, and other major criminal and national security threats. Second, it should develop a corps of managers within U.S. law enforcement and national security agencies, along with representatives of the military services, who possess a common understanding of law enforcement investigative/intelligence concepts, principles, and strategies and who have completed a similar comprehensive management development program. Participants selected to attend the program could obtain a national investigation and intelligence manager certification, as well as an optional master's degree in national investigation and intelligence studies.

Law enforcement and national security agencies generally do not have the training positions or billets provided to the military services for PME. They would be unable to support a PME residence program to keep significant numbers of their senior mid-level managers away from operational responsibilities for several months. The delivery structure of a PME-like program must meet agency and

department operational and administrative realities. For example, one curriculum possibility would require four to six 12-week quarters. A 12-week quarter would have 2 weeks in residence with 10 weeks of network learning. This structure would combine the strengths of a residence program with the flexibility of a nonresidence one.



Agencies could establish the program through a partnership with a university that could provide graduate-level education in support of the designed curriculum. For example, the FBI, in partnership with the university and possibly another federal investigative or national security agency, could assist in developing and overseeing such a program. A university's prior experience with providing a professional education program combined with its distance learning capability would

significantly help further these goals.

Conclusion

Success in the war on terrorism requires more than military strength alone can provide. It commands unmatched military service and civilian agency cooperation and coordination with all entities operating at the highest levels of effectiveness. A graduate-level, multiagency, professional educational approach modeled after professional military education represents an excellent way for local, state, and federal law enforcement and national security partners to significantly improve the education, preparation, and development of their senior mid-level managers. Further, such a program's characteristics will build stronger partnerships between law enforcement departments, intelligence agencies, and military services.

This educational endeavor would move the U.S. law enforcement community from an era of multiagency cooperation toward the concept of jointness practiced by U.S. military services. It also would be another step in the development of U.S. law enforcement education. "What an organization needs is not just good people; it needs people that are improving with education."¹³ ♦

Endnotes

¹ The author gathered information for this article while attending the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) University (MCU), Command and Staff College (CSC). Research included semistructured interviews of FBI Training and Development Division (TDD) and MCU administrators and faculty members. Questions and discussions in these interviews focused on the training, preparation, and development of FBI supervisory special agents (SSAs), FBI agent mid-level managers, and field-grade USMC officers. The author examined the MCU PME program, as represented by the CSC, to determine what aspects of PME the FBI can apply to improve how it trains agent mid-level managers. In October 2005, the FBI approved a feasibility study as the next step in exploring the potential implementation of this educational approach.

² Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Instruction 1800.01B, *Officer Professional Military Education Policy* (Washington, DC, August 30, 2004), A-A-1.

³ George C. Kennedy and Keith Neilson, *Military Education Past, Present, and Future* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002), 10.

⁴ *Ibid.*, preface, xi.

⁵ *Supra* note 2, A-A-2.

⁶ *Marine Corps Concepts and Programs 2004*, "Marine Corps Almanac," retrieved on September 6, 2004, from <http://hqinet001.hqmc.usmc.mil/p&r/concepts/2004/toc5.htm>.

⁷ U.S. Marine Corps University Command and Staff College Catalog AY 2004-2005, 1.

⁸ Harry H. Shelton, "Professional Education: The Key to Transformation," *Parameters* 31: 3 (Autumn 2001): 4.

⁹ W. Huitt, "Bloom, et al's Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain," *Educational*

Psychology Interactive (Valdosta, GA: Valdosta State University); retrieved on January 13, 2005, from <http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/cogsys/bloom.htm>.

¹⁰ Michael Buerger, "Educating and Training the Future Police Officer," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, January 2004, 30.

¹¹ M.L. Dantzker, *Contemporary Policing: Personnel Issues and Trends* (Boston, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1997), 76.

¹² Information in this paragraph was derived from James O'Keefe, *Protecting the Republic: The Education and Training of American Police Officers* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004), 53 and 253-254.

¹³ W. Edwards Deming, *Out of Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1982).

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