

Peer learning

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Innovative ways to foster organizational learning within the police

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Innovations in Law Enforcement

CEPOL Research & Science Conference

Geller (1997)

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““Suppose we were really serious about police departments becoming ‘learning organizations’”

Obstacles to organizational learning

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- Organizational culture averse to learning
- Lack of trust
- Scapegoating
- “in the job trouble” (Waddington)
- Accountability and learning in practice often at odds

US Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015)

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Recommendation 2.3:

encourage law enforcement agencies to implement nonpunitive peer review of critical incidents separate from criminal and administrative investigations

Sentinel events/ near miss

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- participation of all stakeholders
- emphasis on non-blaming
- approach that is routine and ongoing
- findings publicly disseminated
- emphasis on being “forward-looking”

Doyle (2014, p. 53)

Barriers to learning (Doyle, 2014)

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- system legitimacy (will they nourish public trust in the system and its operators?)
- resources (will it not take too long and cost too much?)
- liability and confidentiality (can they be done without increasing liability or compromising confidentiality?)
- risk management (how to deal with the trade-off between risk-reduction and liability?)
- leadership and collaboration (how to find innovative leaders that can initiate the necessary collaboration?)
- the choice of sentinel events (big or notorious cases might hinder innovative efforts).

Utilization-focused approach to evaluation

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- “commitment to intended use by intended users should be the driving force in an evaluation” (Patton, 1997)
- primary determinant of evaluation utilization is not the level of methodological rigor but the extent to which stakeholders take ownership of the evaluation process and actively work to ensure that evaluation findings are utilized

Peer Review

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professionals from different police forces observe and gather data of actual policing operations during events, as they occur

Peer reviews

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	N reviews	N hosts	N police reviewers	N other reviewers	Period	Source
Europe football	13	13	21	6	2005-2007	Adang & Brown (2008)
Sweden football, demonstrations	16	3	34	26	2008-2009	Adang (2012) Hilton & Wessman (2013)
Netherlands football	6	6	22	6	2009-2010	Adang et al. (2010)
Europe demonstrations	10	10	20	20	2010-2012	Godiac (2013)
Netherlands festivals	17	10	53	19	2011-2013	Adang et al. (2013)

1 van 50

Recommendations for policing political manifestations in Europe

GODIAC – Good practice for dialogue and communication
as strategic principles for policing political manifestations
in Europe



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HOME/2009/SEC/JAG/182



Policing football in Europe

Experiences from peer review evaluation teams

Otto Adang & Elaine Brown

Overcoming learning obstacles

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- Connected series of reviews
- Overall analysis of good practices
- Part of larger knowledge exchange/development: researchers, dissemination
- Involvement of police academies
- Continuity of network

Barriers to learning (Doyle, 2014)

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- system legitimacy: so far mainly internal
- Resources: limited
- liability and confidentiality: safe learning environment
- risk management: learning *before* errors
- leadership and collaboration: stakeholders on board, importance of local leadership
- the choice of sentinel events: only depends on learning needs

Remaining obstacles

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- Newness of the methodology
- Police officers in observer role
- Implementing changes remained difficult
- Mistaken expectations; audit, inspection, complete evaluation

Learning outcomes

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- Sweden: Special Police Tactics
- Swiss cities before Euro 2008
-

Learning outcomes

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- Informed and constructive feedback to hosts
- Experience and insights for reviewers
- Identification of good practices and development of professional norms
- The *process* itself fosters reflection and learning

Critical success factors

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- Creation of a safe, nonadversarial, non-blaming, utilisation focused learning environment
- Real time data collection
- No one-sided focus on errors

Peer assist: learning before doing

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- A facilitated session
- where peers from different teams/ organizations (including researchers)
- share experiences and knowledge
- with a team that has requested help in meeting an upcoming challenge

(Greenes, 2010)

So far, 20 instances

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- Mostly local, with urgent issue: event, conflict, potential public order risk
- Some at national level, more long term oriented, recurring or anticipated events

Characteristics

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- Specific and concrete request
- Quickly organized meeting
- Aimed to generate new angles/ fresh perspectives
- Safe learning environment
- Confidentiality
- Host takes notes

Gains

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	Percentage
Increased awareness	50%
New perspectives/ insights	43%
New relevant contacts	36%
Concrete solutions/tips/tools	29%
Confirmation	29%
Radical change in approach	21%
Other*	7%

Be aware

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- Teaching does not equal learning
- Identifying lessons or good practice does not equal learning

Peer learning

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Can be transformative and help mobilize the continuous conversation among practitioners, researchers, policymakers and citizens