

DECISION 15/2008/GB
OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE EUROPEAN POLICE COLLEGE
ADOPTING CEPOL'S LEARNING STRATEGIES

Adopted by the Governing Board
on 21 May 2008

THE GOVERNING BOARD,

Having regard to Council Decision 2005/681/JHA of 20 September 2005 establishing the European Police College (CEPOL) ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 7(9)(a) thereof;

Whereas:

It is for the Governing Board on the basis of Council Decision 2005/681/JHA to adopt common curricula, training modules, learning methods, and any other learning and teaching tools.

HAS ADOPTED the Learning Strategies as detailed in the Annex to this Decision.

Done at Bled, 21 May 2008

*For the Governing Board
Nevenka Tomovič
Chair of the Governing Board*

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 256, 1.10.2005, p. 63.

CEPOL's Learning Strategies

1. Introduction

The aim of CEPOL shall be to help train the senior police officers of the Member States by optimising cooperation between CEPOL's various components. It shall support and develop a European approach to the main problems, the Member States are facing in the fight against crime, in relation to crime prevention, the maintenance of law and order and public security, in particular with regard to the cross-border dimensions of these problems. ⁽¹⁾

One of the CEPOL's tasks is to provide training sessions, based on common standards, for senior police officers. ⁽²⁾

On the 19th of February 2008, the Governing Board adopted CEPOL'S Mission and Vision ⁽³⁾ in Brdo (Slovenia).

CEPOL's Mission

Contribute to European Police Cooperation through Learning.

CEPOL's Vision

CEPOL is acknowledged by allied agencies and authorities in the policing and educational areas as the primary source of learning and development in the field of education and training for better cooperation and policing in Europe.

Mission and Vision statements both contain 'learning'. This document describes the way how we can reach the vision and fulfill CEPOL's mission through learning.

The Working Group on Learning has identified eight elements that should be taken into account when organising CEPOL activities to reach the vision:

1. Active learning
2. Learner centeredness
3. Contextual learning
4. Learning from each other resulting in a learning community

⁽¹⁾ Article 5 COUNCIL DECISION 2005/681/JHA of 20 September 2005 establishing the European Police College (CEPOL) and repealing Decision 2000/820/JHA

⁽²⁾ Article 7 (a) COUNCIL DECISION 2005/681/JHA of 20 September 2005 establishing the European Police College (CEPOL) and repealing Decision 2000/820/JHA

⁽³⁾ Decision 1/2008/GB

5. Future oriented learning, related to policing in Europe
6. Supporting self-directed continuous learning
7. Competency based learning
8. Learning based on science and providing insights into science

Most of the constituting elements find their origin in discussions in the Governing Board, in the Training & Research Committee and in other fora as well as in documents like 'Quality in Thirteen Questions'.

To reach the vision in a full, other organisational and conceptual efforts are also needed, and they are in the hands of the network.

2. How do we understand Learning?

Learning can be defined as processing information that leads to acquiring or changing competencies. In other words: ideally learning results in change.

'Processing' relates to how the way learning takes place 'inside the head' of a learner and can be described with the help of three variables: construction, interaction and reflection:

- construction: does an individual make use of his own (fore)knowledge?
- interaction: does an individual make use of the insights of others?
- reflection: does an individual integrate newly acquired knowledge and insights?

The use of these three variables together determines the effectiveness of the individual learning process. (Manon Ruijters *et al*, 2004 ⁽¹⁾)

Another way of looking at the 'processing' and very much in line with the previous one is the following, based on two essentially different types of the process:

- External interaction process between the learner and his/her social, cultural and material environment,

⁽¹⁾ Ruijter,M & Noorman,S. & Rockwell,B & Simons, R.J. Creating Strategic Value through the Language of Learning :Building a transparent Learning Architecture ,*Paper presented at the Fifth International Conference on HRD Research & Practice across Europe 2004, 27 & 28 may, University of Limerick, Ireland* , 18-19

- Internal psychological process of acquisition and elaboration, in which new knowledge and information are connected to the results of prior learning.

Actually, this way learning includes three dimensions, (1) the cognitive dimension of knowledge and skills, (2) the psychodynamic dimension of motivation and emotions, and (3) the social dimension of communication and cooperation. Cognitive dimension, described as knowledge and skills, builds up the understanding and develops the meaning for the learner. Psychodynamic dimension is the dimension of mental energy, motivation and emotions, and builds up the identity of a learner. The social dimension is the dimension of external participation, communication and cooperation, and builds up the social character of the learner (¹). This way competencies are built up as well.

Finally: learning is neither dependent nor independent, but interdependent, forming new understanding through dialogue, feedback, and reflection with fellow learners, teachers and facilitators.

3. CEPOL is connecting and sharing knowledge and experiences

CEPOL's activities give the opportunity to learners (senior police officers) to experience interaction with colleagues and professionals from abroad, with different social, professional, cultural and material environment, give them the opportunity to check how their prior knowledge and learning correspond to the European environment. It may/could cause that their prior knowledge and assumptions will change in some parts or to some extent and that newly gained knowledge will connect differently to slightly changed results of prior learning.

All these happen in the context of the society. And as CEPOL's activities are based on networking, meaning experiencing different European countries and environments, gaining new insight into professional work, meeting new colleagues, it builds up the European dimension of understanding, identity and belonging to the broader social context – to the EU policing area.

So: CEPOL sessions are facilitated gatherings of high class professionals, who participate in three roles:

- as individual learners furthering their competencies, as professionals
- in their organisations bringing new insights and best practices home for elaboration and sharing, and
- as professionals working with the European Dimension.

(¹) Illeris, Knud, 1999

The way the learning process is facilitated should be based on common and shared approaches of learning.

4. Constituting elements for CEPOL’s approach of learning

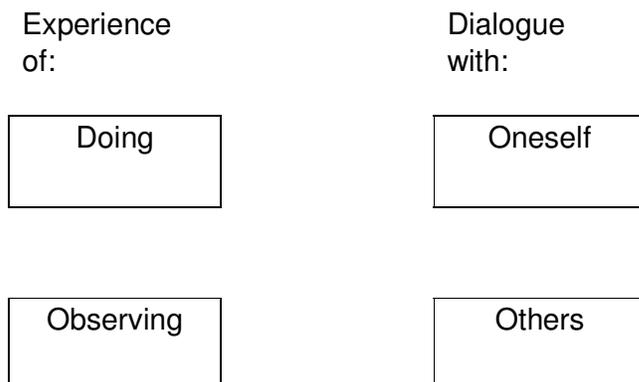
The WGL has identified eight elements that can bring into effect the vision on learning:

1. Active learning
2. Learner centeredness
3. Contextual learning
4. Learning from each other resulting in a learning community
5. Future oriented learning, related to policing in Europe
6. Supporting self-directed continuous learning
7. Competency based learning
8. Learning based on science and providing insights into science

In order to achieve this vision, it is necessary to organise the learning environment accordingly, with the main characteristic that it is pro-active and flexible.

Active learning

Active learning happens when learners are given the opportunity to take an interactive relationship with the subject matter, encouraging them to generate rather than simply to receive knowledge and opportunity to engage into relationships with colleagues, share their views and common problems to be solved by learning. The active learning environment gives the opportunity to:



Modern education stresses on active participation of learners.

But how modern is modern education? What have we learned since 450 B.C. from Confucius: *“Tell me, and I will forget; Show me, and I may remember, Involve me, and I will understand”*?

Learner centeredness

Key characteristics of learner-centred education are:

- providing a primary emphasis on active learning. This may require the use of a wide range of techniques, methods, materials, and experience to engage learner’s interest;
- setting developmental expectations and opportunities for all participants;
- considering different learning styles and alternative ways of learning;
- using participants as a recourse of knowledge; and
- taking into account individual and organisational learning needs.

Learner centeredness requires:

- a shift from teaching towards learning and development and
- a shift from teacher’s activities towards learners’ activities.

Contextual learning

Contextual learning in CEPOL is a conception of learning that helps learners to relate subject matter content to real world (police) situations; and motivates learners to make connections between knowledge and its applications to their lives as senior police officers and citizens, and engage in the learning process.

Key elements of contextual learning are:

- The central issue in learning is becoming a practitioner not learning about practice ⁽¹⁾.
- Learning is a social construction and knowledge has its meaning in the context and should be profoundly connected to the profession and working environment.

⁽¹⁾ Schon, D. A. (1987)

- Adults usually reject learning which isolates knowledge from practice. They enter learning activities with a life-centred, task-centred and/or problem-centred orientation. They learn in order to be able to perform tasks, solve problems or live in a more satisfying way.
- Learning in the CEPOL environment involves becoming an “insider”, a member of the European policing community, they learn to function in that community – they acquire its viewpoint, learn to speak its language, they socialize, and behave as “community members” building European Dimension.

Learning from each other resulting in a learning community

On the whole, our learner population is diverse and a rich source of knowledge. Diversity brings about differences in values, social mores, experiences, practices and perspectives. Differences can be the input for learning and can bring added value to international police cooperation, team collaboration and group learning activities.

Bringing together participants from all over the EU undoubtedly contributes to better insight, which can contribute to safer EU. CEPOL provides tools and possibilities to build up learning community in policing.

Future oriented learning

Learning is action for the future. Society changes over the course of time and policing needs to keep up with those changes. Senior police officers work on a strategic level, which includes developing long term visions (future). Therefore, learning should include reflection: reflection on the past, the present, but also foresight: reflection on signals and indicators of change. Reflection should be complemented with analytical and critical thinking.

Supports self- directed continuous learning

The idea of life-long learning is widely spread. Given the explosion of information and an easy access to knowledge, considering the ambitious policy in the area of JHA, police officers are faced with the necessity to take life-long learning seriously. CEPOL should support the development of senior police officers (including teachers and trainers) who are self-directing, self-monitoring and self-adjusting learners, responsible for continuous self- improvement.

Competency based learning

A competency is integrated application of knowledge, skills, attitudes, experience, responsibilities and personal traits in order to perform tasks and duties successfully.

In other words: competency based learning requires:

- a shift from content towards tasks, and fragmentation towards authentic, whole and integration,

- a shift from curricula aiming at content towards curricula aiming at outcomes, competencies and professional practice.

Learning based on science and providing insights into science

Learning sciences research explores the nature and conditions of learning as it occurs in educational environments. The field draws upon multiple theoretical perspectives and research paradigms in order to understand the complexities associated with human learning, cognition, and development.

Learning science helps to understand how people learn, which can contribute to more effective learning strategies.

On the other hand, learning should incorporate research and science, especially the science on policing.

Efforts are made to raise the level of awareness among (senior) police officers, teachers and trainers of the potential roles and benefits from research and science.

Incorporating research as a learning strategy will also contribute to critical thinking. Besides, it can be connected to daily police practice: many police investigations follow patterns and methods used in (scientific) research.