

# Cultural Awareness and Racial Sensitivity Based on Cognitive Styles

## Multicultural Awareness and Racial Sensitivity Training Structure Using a Jungian Cognitive Styles Approach

by

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The challenge for law enforcement and cultural awareness, more unique than in any other profession because of the power held by police, creates a special need for understanding a pluralistic, multicultural society. The very success of the many facets of community based policing is dependent on this understanding (Hendricks, Et Al, 2000). The concern for understanding the importance of culture and the role that police play is not new. In fact negative attitudes by police officers regarding race and culture was noted by police researchers in the early 1900's (Simon, 1929, Jordan, 1972, Walker, 1980, Suthen, 1987). Cultural awareness training and attempts to educate police officers to be more sensitive to different ethnic groups, races, and lifestyles, began to proliferate in the mid 1960's and early 19670's during and after the strong emphasis on civil rights, particularly for those rights long denied African-American citizens. The usual setting for this training, in the form of panel discussions, was typically marked by a strident and emotional challenge to participants which could, and often did, result in deep anger and resentment on the part of the participants (Work, 1989). This interest in cultural awareness and sensitivity training intensified after the Rodney King assault in Los Angeles in the early 1990's and even more so after the more recent George Floyd death in Minneapolis. Because of the nature of power law enforcement officers possess, it becomes critical they understand the changing community. However, many new officers' perceptions of police work are often influenced by the myriad of police shows on television and motion pictures with a strong enforcement theme which tends to glorify action-oriented policing and "an us against them" mentality (Hennessy, 1998). In this media environment, little importance to interpersonal communication and cultural awareness is emphasized. Coupled with this action-oriented view of policing, police training academies struggle with countless important and critical performance objectives competing with each other for the limited time officers train to become minimally competent. Subjects oriented to maintaining officer safety, firearms, arrest tactics, and other tactical issues usually win out over "softer" subjects such as cultural awareness and communication issues.

The design of the multicultural curriculum for the **Police and Public Interaction** module began with an analysis of the nature and learning styles of the law enforcement profession being impacted. It is based on predominant cognitive functions as theorized by Carl Jung (1974). Jung believed people differ according to basic psychological functions. He described functions as a form of psychic activity that remains the same in principle under varying conditions (Jung, 1974, pp.436-467). Jung understood two functions of Sensing and Intuition as perceiving functions. The Sensation type prefers perception directly observed and interpreted through the five senses. The Intuitive type prefers to go beyond the basic information and look

for meanings and potentials. The decision making dichotomy reflects two different ways of judging. The Thinking type prefers to decide through impersonal or logical analysis in contrast to Feeling types who prefer to consider affiliation, warmth, and a connection to individuals, not things (Thompson and Borrello, 1986). An individual's preference in using these functions can be measured by the Law Enforcement Personality Profile, (LEPP) a registered trademarked instrument, along with numerous other instruments including the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (M.B.T.I.) a registered trademarked instrument of Consulting Psychological Press, Palo Alto, California.

Research into cognitive styles of law enforcement officers according to Jungian typology began in the mid 1970's with Wayne B. Hanewitz from Michigan State University (1978). His research indicated that the majority of police officers preferred to perceive information realistically and concretely as Sensors (S) and make decisions using the impersonal and objective analysis of the Thinking (T) function. Subsequent research by Henson, 1984, Cacioppe and Mock, 1985, Lynch, 1988, and Hennessy, 1991, reflected the same conclusion that a minimum of 65% of any given population of students from a law enforcement group are ST's. Additional recent research by Grimaldi, Hall, Hennessy, Hesse, and Roy (2014) reflects individuals with ST preferences still being at least 65 to 70% in the law enforcement profession.

Police officers have often been described as concrete, decisive, direct, cold, condescending, matter-of-fact, impersonal, pragmatic, and logical. They are not likely to be convinced by anything but reasoning based on solid facts. They are seldom wrong with the facts as they see them, are sequential and enjoy working under an established, structured plan (Hennessy, 1998). In analyzing learning styles, ST's focus on the realities of a situation. They are fact and detail-oriented with a great capacity for seeing the world as it really is. Sensors usually like concrete things they can see, touch, and handle with practical experience (Wilkins, 1996).

In view of this ST orientation of the majority of both recruit and veteran police officer populations, the cultural awareness courses are designed with a pragmatic rationale emphasizing the realities of police work, the changing demographics of the United States, and the importance of police interaction with the community with the growing emphasis towards community policing.

Three main cultural awareness courses along with several shorter, specific subject versions such as Hate and Bias Crime Issues and Street Communication, have been designed for use at the Phoenix Police Training Academy from two primary sources, those of Hennessy, Warring, DeVito, Arnott, and Heuett (2000), and Heuett (1994). They are one eight hour class for recruits, one eight hour class for veteran officers, and one sixteen hour train-the-trainer course. The main course components examine goals and the rationale of the training as well as demonstrating the changing demographics of the United States, their respective cities and various neighborhoods. The term "cultural awareness" is used indicating the class is structured to give the attendees tools and insights (an awareness) on how to do their jobs better. During the courses the term "cultural diversity" is not used.[1] Group discussions, role plays, pencil tests, videos, lecture, overheads, and Power-Points are used as media. Multimedia resources are used as those students preferring Sensing learn better through practical experiences while Intuitives learn better through abstract lecture methods. The lecture method is used

throughout as it serves to pass on volumes of information and facts, but it is made more effective by using a multitude of media and training methods (Wilkins, 1996).

Officers at the Phoenix Police Training Academy discuss changing demographics and pragmatic benefits for officers to understand different cultures through a cultural communication context. Exercises involving stereotyping and values, and the power of law enforcement agencies and how that may be interpreted by different cultures and races are used. Emphasis is placed on the historical context and developmental issues in law enforcement. One major exercise involves group discussions and presentations regarding all major cultural groups as well as gender, economic and lifestyle issues. Various cultures and compared to and contrasted with each other. These presentations and discussions focus on sociological issues of extended family versus nuclear family, higher or lower context in communication patterns and challenges presented to the law enforcement profession. Additionally a series of case studies and/or role plays are reviewed that involve real-life issues in law enforcement. Case studies and group discussions on real police problems allow participants to bring real-life issues to the table for discussion. This allows Sensing types to deal with concrete issues and Intuitives to participate by adding abstract thought and ideas to these concerns. Case studies also allow officers and recruits to "vent emotions" during value and emotion laden subjects and bring issues to the front to be discussed (Hennessy, et al, 2000).

The above methodologies and discussions have proved extremely successful in presentations of racial and cultural issues involving police audiences. As we all know, these issues in our communities have become a critical part of how we police and how successful we will be as guardians of our communities in the future. For any additional information on cultural awareness and training issues, please contact the author Dr. Steve Hennessy. His contact information is located on this website. He would be more than pleased to talk with you about these critically important issues.

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[1] The course authors choose not to use the term "cultural diversity" due to a perceived negative connotation to the term and its use in past law enforcement training. This rationale is based on the history of many cultural diversity courses that proliferated in the mid 1960s' to

early 1970s'. Many courses were structured in such a way to afford various minority representatives an opportunity to address rookie trainees or veteran in-service officers. The usual setting was in the form of a panel. These courses often became one way monologues or confrontational dialogues between both minority representatives and attendees in an attempt to induce learning, understanding, and a change of attitude. This was not necessarily the fault of the presenter(s) or attendees themselves, but the construct and methodology of the courses. Such a presentation panel on a subject as value laden as race relations in law enforcement often invoked anger and resentment. Without an opportunity to explore and discuss issues of differences in an adult learning environment including an intellectual exchange of thoughts and ideas, the goals of the courses were often not achieved. The authors felt the term "cultural awareness" was more appropriate and positive in that the course rationale and objective was that of "being aware of other cultural communication patterns will help them perform better in their profession.

## **THE LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONALITY PROFILE IN A POLICE ACADEMY SETTING**

"Some years ago I had the opportunity to administer the Law Enforcement Personality Profile™ to some four hundred and fifty recruits in a large Southwestern police academy over the time span of several years. The instrument was used to help them understand the police culture and the communication styles of most law enforcement officers in contrast to the general public. It was also used to help them understand differences in cultural communication and how many other cultures communicate differently than police officers. The results of this study reflected the general type distribution characteristic of other research into cognitive styles of police in the past twenty years. In this study, the clear majority of recruits (over 78%) preferred ST and NT as a cognitive style. In each class, there were no more than six or seven NFs and SFs. As I was instructing on communication skills or cultural awareness subjects, their comments and learning styles were very true to type. The majority of questions and discussions revolved around a critical analysis of the subject matter. The many groups of approximately forty recruits per class had been together for ten to fourteen weeks when I had the opportunity to spend several days with them, and consequently they knew each other well.

When we were discussing type after taking the instrument, I would ask those NFs and SFs if they felt they were different from the rest of the recruits in their specific class or general recruit population at the academy. All stated openly in class that they had felt somewhat different from most of the instructors and other recruits. Additionally, some stated that they had often wondered if this profession was the one for them or if they had mis-selected policing. They had recognized that their preferences in communication and looking at the world differed from those of the majority of their classmates. When asked how they were different, many would state "I think I am more people-oriented, more compassionate, than most others in this class." Other Feeling types would nod in agreement. One male NF recruit stated, "I think I am more compassionate than the rest of these slugs," to the laughter of the rest of the class. During

these open discussions, classmates recognized they knew each other quite well and agreed with the assessments of their fellow recruits. Many of the STs in the group also recognized that the Feeling types seemed to be friendlier and people-oriented and personally interactive in a friendly sort of way. The recruits also recognized that the Thinking types were those that personified the general culture of policing, while the Feeling types were those that may have an advantage in dealing with the community because of their obvious skills in relating to people on a more personal basis.

These discussions were very revealing, and the personality characteristics were easily recognizable to the class. Once one understands and listens carefully to communication patterns of individuals, one does not need a formal assessment instrument to recognize preferences in people. A member of a class of forty-three sat up in the top row of the graduated risers in the classroom. Throughout the first part of the presentation, he had asked very intellectual, probing questions, and critically assessed information being presented to him and his classmates about communication, culture, and different value systems. At no time in the morning session did he smile or socially interact with the rest of the class other than speaking seriously to the subject at hand. His interactions and conversations with other class members were direct, structured discussions with critical analysis of the facts of what was being presented. The Law Enforcement Personality Profile™ reflected his preferences as that of an ST. After he received the results of the assessment, he raised his hand and stated "I don't really believe the results of this test. Doc. I don't think I am an ST, I think I am an NF." The rest of his classmates looked back and up at him quizzically. He then said seriously, "I really think I am a warm, friendly, compassionate sort of a guy." With that comment, some of his classmates burst out laughing. They did not believe his self-assessment at all. To the rest of the class, his actions throughout the training period reflected a strong preference for functioning as an ST. He seemed very surprised that he wasn't perceived as he felt he really was, an NF, but was perceived as he behaved, an ST. I asked him if he has a significant other at home to which he said yes. I asked him to take the completed instrument home and ask his wife to choose which of the four personality types fit him the best. The next day back in class I asked him what she had said. He looked a bit down and said, "She said that I am an ST."

During these class interactions, numerous student recruits with SF and NF preferences approached me after class and thanked me for giving them the insight through the Personality profile that they were not crazy, or inadequate, or wrong. Many had really believed they were in the wrong profession or that something was wrong with them. The explanation of type and preferences gave them new understanding of their own and their classmates' behavior. They also stated they more fully understood the profession and the police culture and believed they would be able to function better on the street because of the information. All the groups of recruits stated they had gained new insights into how the majority of officers prefer to function in the world of law enforcement, and particularly how these differences can affect communication with members of other diverse communities. "

Excerpt taken from "Thinking Cop - Feeling Cop. A Study in Police Personalities"  
1999, Published by the Center of the Application of Psychological Type, Gainesville, Florida.

