



LEADERSHIP DECONSTRUCTED:

Exploring entry level leadership development in
Canadian Municipal Policing.

Inspector Aman Nasser



Outline of Presentation

- Introduction
- Problem (what I observed, what I learned)
- Study (what I did)
- Results (what does this mean)
- Next steps

What Police Agencies / Organizations are in the room.

- Please type in the name of your police service or organization you are with.
- Mentimeter

About me & why I started down this journey

- 20 years in policing
- 2005 – 2021 – Toronto Police Service (Patrol, Major Crime, Organized Crime, National Security, Hold Up Squad, Homicide Squad)
- 2022 – Present – Surrey Police Service
- experienced officers from **28 police services** across the country
- approximately 1050 members & growing (650 sworn + 500 Civilian)
- Amalgamating multiple cultures, practices, understanding of leadership at Sergeant level

Observation

- Surrey in growing phase experienced officers from 28 police services across the country
- Surrey Police Service hired experienced officers at Rank (Sergeant, Staff Sergeant, and Inspector)
- **Observed that Sergeants from different organizations had significantly different strengths (& weaknesses) when it came to aspects of their leadership.**
- Trends observed depending on the agency they came from.
- Sergeant rank is extremely important (effects of leadership often the most visible on a day-to-day basis)
- Significant impact on constable morale, retention, reputation of the organization.

Standards on leadership development / Academia

- Provincial Policing Standards across country (silent on leadership/supervision)
- Academia

Abundance of research available but there is focus on the impact of leadership style and the impact (morale, performance, well-being, retention).

Support in the literature regarding use of Competency models & Transformational leadership models.

Other researchers interested in police leadership tend to focus on senior / executive leadership (Inspector to Chief ranks).

The learning environment is largely ignored (for leadership development)

- Knowledge gap in research & practice

Solution

- January 2024 Started my Doctoral Research (Supervisor Dr. Curt Griffiths from SFU)

Exploratory Research

- 1st year of my program I conducted a Directed Study in Fall of 2024 (no direct contact with participants).
- Sergeant training curriculum of 4 Municipal Police Services in Canada

What competencies / skills come to mind when you think of leadership training ?

Sergeant level (1st rank above Constable)

Mentimeter poll

The Police Agencies in Study

- Anonymized (A, B, C, & D)
- **Geographic context** (2 - Central Canada and 2 - Western Canada)
- **Size of agency**
 - Small = 500 members or less
 - Medium = 501 – 1500 members
 - Large = 1500 member or more
- Training duration ranged from 4 days to 10 days.

The Police Agencies in Study (A, B, C, & D)

A

- Large
- Central Canada
- 2 weeks (10 Days)

B

- Large
- Central Canada
- 1 Week (5 days)

C

- Medium
- Western Canada
- 1 Week (5 Days)

D

- Small
- Western Canada
- 4 Days

The Police Agencies – Curriculum Analysis

- Access obtained to training curriculum
- Police Sector Council 2013 – Competency Based Management Framework (CBMF) & Police Leadership Model (PLM) utilized as lens to compare how curriculum was mapped to 14 “leadership competencies”.
- Classes and sessions were coded 1 – 14 based on the intended or perceived competencies being developed from the framework.

PERFORMANCE - Change Management (1), Decision Making (2), Financial Management (3), Human Resource Management (4), Information Technology Management (5), Strategic Management (6)

PARTNERING - Community Relations & Media Management (7), Fostering Relationships (8), Interactive Communication (9), Organizational Awareness (10)

ACCOUNTABILITY- Ethical Accountability (11), Public Accountability (12), Public Safety (13), Valuing Diversity (14)

The Police Agencies – Curriculum Analysis

- 2 competencies did not appear in any of the curricula

PERFORMANCE - Change Management (1), Strategic Management (6)

Lack of these competencies being targeted is likely due to rank Sergeant level training.

- Most classes appeared to target multiple competencies.
- Few classes were difficult to tell what the intended goal or competency was (coded as unclear)
- Did not attend any sessions, did not speak with any instructors or participants (did not have ethics approval)
- All of the programs were “in-service” (Primarily internal instructors, no SME’s outside of policing circles)
- Exception (1 agency – had an external company deliver training for 1 topic).

The Police Agencies – Curriculum coding examples

B

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Session 1	Unclear	4, 9	14, 7, 8, 9	11, 12, 13	9, 4, 11
Session 2	Unclear	13, 11, 4, 5	5, 4, 9, 12	14, 8	9, 4, 11
Session 3	14, 10, 11	13, 11, 4, 5	5, 4, 9, 12	9, 10, 11, 12	8, 9
Session 4	3, 4, 11	13, 11, 4, 5	5, 4, 9, 12	9, 11, 12, 13	9, 10, 11, 12
Session 5	3, 4, 11	13, 11, 4, 5	5, 4, 9, 12	9, 11, 12, 13	

Competencies observed in this figure: 3 = Financial Management; 4 = Human Resource Management; 5 = Information Technology Management; 7 = Community Relations & Media Management; 8 = Fostering Relationships; 9 = Interactive Communication; 10 = Organizational Awareness; 11 = Ethical Accountability; 12 = Public Accountability; 13 = Public Safety; 14 = Valuing Diversity

C

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Session 1	13, 2, 12	Unclear	11, 12, 9	13, 2, 12, 11	13, 2, 12, 11
Session 2	13, 2, 12	2, 9, 13	14, 9, 10	13, 2, 12, 11	13, 2, 12, 11
Session 3	13, 2, 12	9, 4, 11	5, 9, 11	13, 2, 12, 11	13, 2, 12, 11
Session 4	4, 2, 7, 12	9, 4, 11	5, 9, 11	13, 2, 12, 11	Exam
Session 5	14, 9	No class	14, 9, 10		

Competencies observed in this figure: 2 = Decision Making; 4 = Human Resource Management; 5 = Information Technology Management; 7 = Community Relations & Media Management; 9 = Interactive Communication; 10 = Organizational Awareness; 11 = Ethical Accountability; 12 = Public Accountability; 13 = Public Safety; 14 = Valuing Diversity

NOW WHAT ???

Themes emerged from Data and Experience

The *administrative leadership* theme encompassed classes that aim to develop sergeants' ability to manage worker performance, work products (reports), and resources.

The *operational leadership* theme captured training and classes that surrounded tactical operations, crisis management, decision-making, and critical incidents.

The *engaging leadership* theme included classes designed to enhance relationship-building abilities, communication skills, emotional intelligence, and the appreciation of diversity.



The Police Agencies – From coding to themes

B

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Session 1	Unclear	4, 9	14, 7, 8, 9	11, 12, 13	9, 4, 11
Session 2	Unclear	13, 11, 4, 5	5, 4, 9, 12	14, 8	9, 4, 11
Session 3	14, 10, 11	13, 11, 4, 5	5, 4, 9, 12	9, 10, 11, 12	8, 9
Session 4	3, 4, 11	13, 11, 4, 5	5, 4, 9, 12	9, 11, 12, 13	9, 10, 11, 12
Session 5	3, 4, 11	13, 11, 4, 5	5, 4, 9, 12	9, 11, 12, 13	



	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Session 1	Unclear	Leadership	Leadership	Operational	Administrative
Session 2	Unclear	Operational	Administrative	Leadership	Administrative
Session 3	Leadership	Operational	Administrative	Leadership	Leadership
Session 4	Administrative	Operational	Administrative	Operational	Administrative
Session 5	Administrative	Operational	Administrative	Operational	Administrative

The Police Agencies – From coding to themes

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Session 1	13, 2, 12	Unclear	11, 12, 9	13, 2, 12, 11	13, 2, 12, 11
Session 2	13, 2, 12	2, 9, 13	14, 9, 10	13, 2, 12, 11	13, 2, 12, 11
Session 3	13, 2, 12	9, 4, 11	5, 9, 11	13, 2, 12, 11	13, 2, 12, 11
Session 4	4, 2, 7, 12	9, 4, 11	5, 9, 11	13, 2, 12, 11	Exam
Session 5	14, 9	No class	14, 9, 10		



	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Session 1	Operational	Unclear	Administrative	Operational	Operational
Session 2	Operational	Operational	Leadership	Operational	Operational
Session 3	Operational	Administrative	Administrative	Operational	Operational
Session 4	Administrative	Administrative	Administrative	Operational	Exam
Session 5	Leadership	No class	Leadership		

C

The Police Agencies – Curriculum Analysis

- In your view, what area of training should be prioritized in Sergeant level training?

MENTIMETER POLL

- **Administrative Leadership (%)**

worker performance, work products (reports), and resource management (budget)

- **Operational Leadership (%)**

Tactical operations, decision making during critical incidents

- **Engaging Leadership (people skills) (%)**

relationship-building abilities, communication skills, emotional intelligence, and the appreciation of diversity.

The Police Agencies – In-class learning only



A

Administrative Leadership	35.9% (14 sessions)
Operational Leadership	25.6% (10 sessions)
Engaging Leadership	25.6% (10 sessions)
Unclear	12.3% (5 Sessions)

The Police Agencies – In-class learning only

B

Administrative Leadership	40.0% (10 sessions)
Operational Leadership	28.0% (7 sessions)
Engaging Leadership	24.0% (6 sessions)
Unclear	8.0% (2 Sessions)

The Police Agencies – In class & Practical sessions



C

Administrative Leadership	28.5% (6 sessions)
Operational Leadership	52.0% (11 sessions) – practical sessions (2 days)
Engaging Leadership	14.2% (3 sessions)
Unclear	4.7% (1 Sessions)

The Police Agencies – In-class & Practical sessions

D

Administrative Leadership	26.3% (5 sessions)
Operational Leadership	21.0% (4 sessions) – practical session 1 day
Engaging Leadership	47.0% (9 sessions)
Unclear	5.0% (1 Sessions)

Practical Application of these findings

- Surrey has hired experienced Sergeants from All of the Agencies in this study (A, B, C, & D)



Administrative Leadership
Operational Leadership
Engaging Leadership

28.5% (6 sessions)
52.0% (11 sessions)
14.2% (3 sessions)

- Sergeants originally from Agency C that now work for Surrey are great at
- Sergeants originally from Agency C that now work for Surrey are not great at
- How is this influencing the Constables they supervise ?

What does this all mean / What have I learned ?

- Established that there are differences in Sergeant training development within and between provinces.
- Differences in content focus and delivery.
- These differences have their strengths & weaknesses that may be impacting organizational performance.
- Study had limitations.

The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles

- Submitted, reviewers have recommended the study for publication
- 1 Minor revision

What does your agency do ?

What kind of training does your police agency require for promotion to Sergeant ?

Larger Research Study (Phase 2)

- Initial study provided some insights, but looking to build upon it in my Doctoral research study.
 - Expanding scope over next (12-16 months)
- 5 – 6 agencies across Canada (Municipal & First Nations Police Services)
- Multiple data sources: curriculum review, interviews, and observations.
 - Learning transfer model – extent to which learning transfers into work environment
 - Focus on **training design factors & organizational factors** to influence learning transfer.

Why Your Agency Matters

- Already have had discussions with some police agencies who are interested in participating.
- Police leadership is shaped differently across regions and size (of agency)
- Your agency insights, practices, and experiences are crucial to building a national picture. Importance of learning from and sharing with one another.
- Not a critique, Not an evaluation.
- Practical outcomes of this study is to share findings and provide evidence-based recommendations.

Agency C influence on Surrey Police Service.

Operational Leadership **52.0%** - Surrey has adopted practices and training utilized by Agency C.

How to connect

My Contact Information:

Aman Nasser – 416 809 8388 (cell)

aman.nasser@surreypolice.ca

aman.nasser@royalroads.ca

Linkdin (QR code)

