
EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING PROTOCOL
FOR HIGH SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS

POLICING
— IN A —
MORE PERFECT
UNION

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER



High school participants in *Policing in a More Perfect Union* are prepared for their conversations with law-enforcement trainees using the following methodologies.

THE HARKNESS TRAINING

Policing in a More Perfect Union uses the Harkness Training to develop students' ability to discuss difficult topics.

Harkness Training is a pedagogical strategy pioneered in the 1930s by the Phillips Exeter Academy (PEA), located in New Hampshire. Teachers at Constitution High School in Philadelphia have employed the method for the last four years, both in the Police Project and to meet other needs. The method empowers students to “share, discuss and discover” issues that affect their lives and community, sometimes by expressing their own points of view, and sometimes by representing the points of view of others. Students are first trained in the technique, and then asked to apply it with their peers, within the school.

Policing in a More Perfect Union students have used Harkness Training to discuss difficult and highly emotional issues such as the U.S. Department of Justice's report, *Collaborative Reform Initiative: An Assessment of Deadly Force in the Philadelphia Police Department* (Fachner and Carter, 2015). Students have also used Harkness to lead conversations about police brutality that include images and video from major national incidents, such as the August 9, 2014, shooting in Ferguson, Mississippi, and the April 4, 2015, shooting in Charleston, South Carolina.

EMPATHETIC AND ACTIVE LISTENING SESSIONS

Policing in a More Perfect Union engages students in multiple workshops in which they express and discuss what they know about the role of police in a democratic society. These workshops employ Empathetic and Active Listening Skills, as presented in *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges* (Otto Scharmer, 2007). Through these workshops, the students express their emerging opinions, and examine findings and data to support their opinions. In so doing, they not only gain understanding of the issue, but also learn compassion for the opinions, stories, and experiences of others. They gain vital tools for keeping their minds open, and for pausing their reactions (“downloading”). They learn to bring officers into challenging conversations, while remaining open and participatory. The result is that they become more aware of ways to work together to solve difficult problems.

MODELING AND GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Policing in a More Perfect Union trains students by having them observe how more seasoned students engage with the officers, as well as by having them join conversations with peers.

All students working with the project are given guidelines on how to begin their conversations with law enforcement officers, and on which initial questions to ask. New students shadow other students to watch these questions and techniques in action, and after each workshop the full group, with *Policing in a More Perfect Union* staff, discusses what worked, what didn’t, and how the next discussion could go differently. These post-mortems take place at the National Constitution Center, and at Constitution High School, with teaching staff.

Techniques are modified from group to group, to meet specific needs. In every case, however, the students are supported as they explore new ways to engage in conversations. The goal is to empower the students with the tools they will use to lead conversations with police and police recruits, to be objective, and to allow them to see that they—and democratic dialogue—are a part of a solution to a serious social problem.

POLICING IN A MORE PERFECT UNION

STUDENT TRAINING

SYLLABUS AND OUTLINE OF TRAININGS

OBJECTIVE

- ◆ For students to understand background and objectives of *Policing in a More Perfect Union*
- ◆ For students to understand and acquire the skills needed to lead reflective conversations
- ◆ For students to understand the trainees' experience
- ◆ For students to be able to articulate their own thoughts on issues relevant to the training

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- ◆ How can students lead reflective conversations in a constructive way?
- ◆ What are the meanings of the words "justice" and "fairness?"
- ◆ What is the role of police in American society?
- ◆ How do people, including police officers themselves, form perceptions of the police?

OUTCOMES

- ◆ Students feel confident in leading conversations using Reflective Discussion techniques
- ◆ Students are able to express their own thoughts on policing issues
- ◆ Students have awareness of trainees' day-of experience prior to leading conversations

MODULE I: INTRODUCTION TO POLICE PROJECT (1 WEEK, 30 MINUTES)

OBJECTIVE

- ◆ For students to understand background and objectives of *Policing in a More Perfect Union*

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- ◆ What is *Policing in a More Perfect Union*? How and why was it created? What does it look like?

MATERIALS NEEDED

- ◆ *Policing in a More Perfect Union* packet
- ◆ Commissioner Ramsey video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PLIL_pq9F0)
- ◆ Voelker and Palmer readings on Reflective Dialogue

PLAN OF LESSON | (30 MINUTES)

1. **GREETING:** Introduce yourself to the students in the room. Describe the background of *Policing in a More Perfect Union*, including its creation by the National Constitution Center and the Philadelphia Police Department under the guidance of Commissioner Charles Ramsey. Explain the goals of the program: to familiarize recruits and current police officers with the history of citizens' rights, as well as the history of law enforcement; to explore the ways in which people understand concepts such as justice and fairness; to examine historical episodes in which law enforcement failed to protect citizens' rights; and to participate in a discussion about police-community relations with members of the local student community.
2. **VIDEO:** Play the video in which Commissioner Ramsey explains the rationale behind the Police Project. The video is 6m 22s long and can be found at the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PLIL_pq9F0
3. **DISCUSS:** Engage the students in conversation about the video. Encourage them to summarize Ramsey's words to make sure they understand the rationale behind the Police Project.

4. **DESCRIBE:** Distribute the *Policing in a More Perfect Union* packets. Provide the students with an overview of the day's progress, focusing specifically on the community dialogue with the students.
5. **CALL TO ACTION:** Conclude the session by introducing the idea of Reflective Discussion, in which the main goals are not to build consensus or to solve a specific problem, but instead to encourage individual reflection and clarification and build trust and capacity to listen. Distribute the Voelker and Palmer readings and ask students to read them in preparation for the next session.

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MODULE 2: REFLECTIVE DISCUSSION TECHNIQUES (2 WEEKS, 60 MINUTES)

OBJECTIVE

- ◆ For students to understand and acquire the skills needed to lead reflective conversations

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- ◆ What is Reflective Discussion? What are the skills needed to lead it?

MATERIALS NEEDED

- ◆ Otto Scharmer video on Active and Empathetic Listening
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLfXpRkVZaI>

PLAN OF LESSON | (60 MINUTES)

WEEK ONE | (30 MINUTES)

1. **DISCUSS:** Review the content of the Voelker and Palmer readings from the previous week. Encourage the students to share their opinions about the points raised in each document, including points with which they may disagree. Allow students room to share their views and to respond to one another's views.
2. **VIDEO:** Show the students the video of Otto Scharmer talking about Active and Empathetic Listening. The video runs 8m 26s and can be found at the following link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLfXpRkVZaI>
3. **DISCUSS:** Lead the students in a conversation about Scharmer's points. Ask the students to describe Scharmer's thesis. Encourage them to restate his points in their own words to ensure understanding and prepare them for the process of Reflective Discussion.
4. **CALL TO ACTION:** Wrap up by encouraging students to revisit the Voelker and Palmer readings and compare them to Scharmer's video. Tell the students to come to next week's session prepared to connect these ideas to the work of the Police Project.

WEEK TWO | (30 MINUTES)

- 1. DISCUSS:** Review the contents of the handouts and the video with the students. Encourage them again to restate key points in their own words as a means of practicing Reflective Discussion. This should also extend to their efforts to restate one another's statements as well.
- 2. APPLY:** Get the students talking about how the principles of Reflective Discussion apply to the Police Project in particular. Ask them which elements of the Reflective Discussion method they think will be most challenging to use with law enforcement figures. Encourage them to help one another find pre-emptive solutions to those challenges.
- 3. BUILD IT TOGETHER:** As a group, work with the students to devise a list of ground rules for Reflective Discussions with law enforcement figures. Use a whiteboard, blackboard, or large sheet of poster paper to write down suggestions from the group. After three minutes of taking suggestions, display the list to the students as a whole and have them select what they believe to be the four most important ground rules from the list. Save the final list for use in future sessions—if it is on poster paper, keep it on the wall, or in a place in which it can be easily retrieved; if it is on a whiteboard or a blackboard, take a photograph and ensure that each student has the photograph in digital form for future sessions.

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MODULE 3: JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS (2 WEEKS, 60 MINUTES)

OBJECTIVE

- ◆ For students to understand and acquire the skills needed to lead reflective conversations
- ◆ For students to understand the trainees' experience
- ◆ For students to be able to articulate their own thoughts on issues relevant to the training

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- ◆ What are the meanings of the words "justice" and "fairness?"
- ◆ Where do you see fairness or the lack of justice in your communities or your lives?
- ◆ What does a Reflective Discussion look like/sound like/feel like?

MATERIALS NEEDED

- ◆ Justice and Fairness Worksheet

PLAN OF LESSON | (60 MINUTES)

WEEK ONE | (30 MINUTES)

1. **REVIEW:** Restate the group's four main ground rules for a Reflective Discussion. Display the ground rules from previous session at the front of the room so students can refer to them during the lesson. Inform the students that these ground rules will also be in place for their own training sessions, and that they should look at the sessions as opportunities to practice Reflective Discussion.
2. **REFLECT AND WRITE:** Announce to the group that the subject of this module is the definition of two important terms: *justice and fairness*. Ask them to consider the meanings of these terms carefully, as we don't usually spend a lot of time thinking about how we form our perceptions of them. Distribute the Justice and Fairness Worksheet to the students and have them spend seven to 10 minutes writing their own personal responses to the questions. The worksheet also prompts the students to explain how they reached their definitions.

- 3. SHARE:** Have each student in the room share their own responses to the question. Encourage more reticent students to give their responses first, to ease discomfort and build confidence. Make sure that the entire group is following the ground rules for Reflective Discussion and allowing for their peers to participate and share their responses openly and honestly.
- 4. CALL TO ACTION:** Conclude the session by collecting the response sheets from the students. Inform them that the next session will build upon the conversations begun in the room today.

WEEK TWO | (30 MINUTES)

- 1. REVIEW:** Revisit, briefly, the reasons for the definition-of-terms exercise. Remind the students that by describing their understandings about words, they are refining their own mental definitions of them.
- 2. REFLECT:** Distribute the response sheets from the previous session to the students, making sure that no student receives their own sheet. Have the students spend three minutes reading the sheet they received, making notes in their own notebooks or scratch paper if they feel so inclined.
- 3. DISCUSS:** For ten minutes, have the students interact with each other individually regarding the sheets. Students should seek out the person whose sheet they read and discuss the responses to ensure clarity. Doing so provides an opportunity to practice restating for clarity, a key component of Reflective Discussion.
- 4. SHARE:** Each student in the room shares the contents of the sheet they read, describing the person's answers and explaining how talking to that person helped to clarify their understanding of the responses. Continually reinforce to the students that by doing so, they are building their skills at Reflective Discussion.
- 5. CALL TO ACTION:** Conclude the session by encouraging students to begin thinking about their own perceptions of law enforcement.

MODULE 4: PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE (2 WEEKS, 60 MINUTES)

OBJECTIVE

- ◆ For students to understand and acquire the skills needed to lead reflective conversations
- ◆ For students to understand the trainees' experience
- ◆ For students to be able to articulate their own thoughts on issues relevant to the training

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- ◆ How would you describe your PERSONAL experiences with police officers?
- ◆ What is your perception of the police in society at large?
- ◆ How do police officers see themselves?
- ◆ How do police officers see their role in society?

MATERIALS NEEDED

- ◆ Student Views on Policing Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcmZ1CHXSCg>
- ◆ Rose article on Interpreting Difficult Knowledge

PLAN OF LESSON | (60 MINUTES)

WEEK ONE | (30 MINUTES)

1. **VIDEO:** Show the video of the Constitution High School students answering questions about the police. The video runs 14m 30s and can be found at the following link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcmZ1CHXSCg>
2. **DISCUSS:** Lead the students in a discussion of the video. Ask them questions such as: How did you respond to the answers you heard? Did you agree with all of them? If not, with which ones did you disagree? How do you think a law enforcement professional would respond to seeing this video? Would it make them uncomfortable? What questions do you think they would like to ask the students?

- 3. CALL TO ACTION:** As you dismiss the students, tell them to spend the time before the next session thinking about their own perceptions of the police. Ask them to consider how they formed those perceptions and what, if any, interactions they have had with police.

WEEK TWO | (30 MINUTES)

- 1. DISCUSS:** Students discuss their own perceptions of, and interactions with, police. The teacher should be an active presence, encouraging open dialogue, asking follow-up questions to enrich student responses, and reminding students to keep to the practices of Reflective Discussion as agreed upon in Module 2.
- 2. CALL TO ACTION:** As you dismiss the students, tell them to think about potential challenges they see in leading these conversations with police. Distribute the Rose article and encourage them to read it with an eye towards how to notice when someone is struggling with processing new information.

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MODULE 5: TROUBLESHOOTING AND REFLECTION (1 WEEKS, 30 MINUTES)

OBJECTIVE

- ◆ For students to understand and acquire the skills needed to lead reflective conversations
- ◆ For students to devise mutually-beneficial strategies for navigating difficult conversations
- ◆ For students to recognize when a learner is struggling with new information and perspectives
- ◆ For students to reflect on their own views of justice, fairness, and law enforcement

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- ◆ How can we recognize when someone is struggling to process new information and perspectives?
- ◆ How can we find successful strategies for navigating difficult conversations?
- ◆ How has the experience of attending these training sessions affected me personally?

PLAN OF LESSON | (30 MINUTES)

- 1. DISCUSS:** Lead the students in a conversation about interpreting difficult knowledge. Ask the students how they can recognize when someone is struggling to process new information and perspectives. Encourage the students to devise strategies for helping trainees through these moments.
- 2. REFLECT:** Have the students spend five minutes writing out three ways the student training experience has changed their views. Encourage them to consider the following areas: their own perceptions of themselves, their perceptions of police, their understanding of concepts like justice and fairness.
- 3. SHARE:** Have each student share briefly their own responses, reminding the students once again to follow the ground rules for Reflective Discussion. Conclude by congratulating the students on completing the training and encouraging them to continue the process of self-reflection and Reflective Discussion.