

**Reflection in policing: A study of how student constables in the  
Metropolitan Police conceptualise reflection**

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**The thesis is submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements  
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# Declaration

I confirm that, except where indicated through the proper use of citations and references, this is my own original work. Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

Signed:

James Wingrave.

Date:

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# List of abbreviations

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers (England and Wales)
BCS	British Crime Survey
BOCU	Borough Operational Command Unit
CENTREX	Central Police Training and Development Authority (NPIA)
CMU	Crime Management Unit
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CRIMINT+	Criminal Intelligence Database
CAIT	Child Abuse Investigation Team
CRIS	Crime Reporting Database
CSU	Community Safety Unit
DC	Detective Constable
DCI	Detective Chief Inspector
DI	Detective Inspector
DPS	Directorate of Professional Standards (MPS Complaints)
DS	Detective Sergeant
HAT	Human Awareness Training (Latterly PST)
Hendon	Metropolitan Police Training College
HMIC	Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
NPIA	National Police Improvement Agency (previously CENTREX)
NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
OCU	Operational Command Unit
PC	Police Constable
PNC	Police National Computer
PST	Police Skills Training (formally HAT)
PS	Police Sergeant
SRDU	Strategic Research and Development Unit (MPS Research)
TP	Territorial Policing (front line policing in the MPS)

# Abstract

Reflection and reflective learning has been established as an effective approach to improving the standards of professional knowledge and professional practice of employees whose work involves a high degree of social interaction; particularly during the training phase of their careers. Published research on reflective learning within health care and education agencies is prevalent, but there is a noticeable absence of literature examining reflection and reflective learning within policing. This research project fills a gap in that knowledge by answering the questions how do student constables training with the Metropolitan Police conceptualise reflection and what motivates those student constables to reflect?

A qualitative phenomenographical approach has been taken to conduct and analyse semi-structured interviews with a representative sample of 24 student constables training in North, Central and South London. Extracts from the interviews have been presented as vignettes to illuminate how students conceptualise reflection including examples of personal experiences from the training environment and real world. Those conceptions range from a superficial awareness of physical surroundings to a profound appreciation of how individual behaviour impacts on public confidence in the police. The research discovered that the students conceptualise reflection in seven qualitatively different ways; distilled from a wide range of contributions made during the interviews.

This research has established that despite inconsistencies with the quality of instruction given to reflective learning during foundation training, reflection is an essential process by which students develop policing skills. Reflection was also identified as an effective means by which training interventions could be invoked; addressing behavioural issues such as inappropriate use of force and how unnecessarily confrontational attitudes can provoke aggression from members of the public. A hierarchical model has been developed illustrating the depths to which reflection is conceived with propositions made as to how potential limitations of reflection can be mitigated and what opportunities there are for further research.

# Chapter 1

## Purpose and background to the research

### Introduction

The purpose of this research is to establish how student constables training with the Metropolitan Police conceptualise reflection and to determine how those conceptions impact on social interactions during operational policing. For the purpose of this thesis 'social interactions' refer to encounters between police officers and members of the public during law enforcement or other public service activities. Understanding how reflection is conceived in the context of these interactions enables students or their supervisors to identify undesirable traits in attitude or behaviour. In turn intervention strategies can be developed to support individuals improve standards of professional knowledge and professional practice thus protecting the values and objectives of the organisation. Recognising the positive aspects of reflection will also enable student constables to engage with reflective learning; taking personal responsibility for their own continuing professional development.

This research is important because, the attitude and behaviour of police officers during social interactions can have far reaching consequences for the image and reputation of the police service. Whilst the Home Office and senior police management control changes in legislation, policy and strategy the manner and style of enforcement by individual officers has a direct impact on how the police are perceived by the public. How police officers interact with individuals also has a lasting effect on wider communities, particularly those from vulnerable or minority groups. Behaviour that is believed to be repeatedly unfair or interpreted as being discriminatory can undermine the legitimacy of the police as an organisation. As Rix (2009, p. 1) outlines "it is important that the public feel confident in the police".

Whilst confrontation is inevitable in some situations (Bull & Horncastle, 1994, p. 144; Fielding, 1988, p. 44) public confidence has a bearing on how communities

perceive the police and to what extent officers can be trusted by the public. Some confrontation arises from police being deployed en masse to control public demonstrations whilst others may involve smaller numbers down to just one or two individuals. How individual officers respond in any given situation from personal encounters to large scale public disorder portrays an overall image of police officers and hence levels of confidence in the police collectively. An officer's ability to resolve potentially confrontational situations diplomatically without either party resorting to violence are amongst the most difficult lessons for officers to learn. Thus, as discussed by Fielding (1984, p. 571), the situations that are the most influential on public confidence "demand acquisition of the most difficult skills to accomplish".

The background to this research is influenced by the significant changes made by the Metropolitan Police in the 1980s to professionalise standards of policing by introducing Human Awareness Training to new recruits passing through the police training college in Hendon, North London. This change to the training regime was provoked through a combination of concerns from within the organisation, and political pressure about a drop in public confidence, linked to a rising number of complaints made against officers. Bull (1994, p. 143) notes that during the early-1980s police managers were concerned about the increasing number of complaints made against police and in particular in relation to the attitude and behaviour of officers towards the public. Maguire (1989, pp. 178-182) notes that over half of all complaints recorded in England and Wales were about "some form of aggressive verbal or physical behaviour". Complaints in the Metropolitan Police District accounted for nearly a third of all cases with the majority of complaints being made against constables of between two and seven years service. The response from the Metropolitan Police in 1982 was to introduce Human Awareness Training (HAT) for new recruits which included training to develop interpersonal skills to improve the recruit's "self-knowledge and insight into one's effect on social situations" (Bull & Horncastle, 1994, p. 143).

HAT also included training on community awareness aimed at "improving awareness of different cultures" (Bull & Horncastle, 1989, p. 97). A five year

evaluation of the effectiveness of HAT was undertaken that involved conducting questionnaires, observations and interviews with officers, training staff, supervisors and members of the public. The outcome of that evaluation suggested that HAT trained officers, although tending to underestimate the impact their policing skills had on the public, received 17% fewer complaints compared to officers who had not undergone the same training (Bull & Horncastle, 1994, p. 146). The introduction of HAT also coincided with the number of complaints made against Metropolitan Police officers falling from “9,178 in 1981 to 5,236 in 1987” (Maguire & Corbett, 1989, p. 177).

Increasing self-awareness, improving professional practice and understanding how individuals influence social interactions are desirable outcomes synonymous with other providers of public services including education and health care. Both these agencies have sought to develop those desirable traits of employees through reflection and reflective learning. Learning through reflection has, as observed by Mallik (1998, p. 52), become an essential part of “learning how to be a nurse”. Similarly Loughran (2002, p. 33) discusses how reflection forms the basis for “many teacher education programmes”. Parallels can be drawn here between the positive outcomes of Human Awareness Training for the Metropolitan Police and perceived benefits of reflection for teachers and nurses. However, when compared to the available peer-reviewed literature in education and health there is little or no published research discussing reflective learning in policing or how police officers conceptualise reflection.

## **Motivation for the research project**

I am currently a detective inspector with the Metropolitan Police and the impetus for this research came from a small scale research project I undertook in 2006 during the pursuit of an MSc in Criminal Justice Studies. The paper ‘Stepping Out of the Darkness’ (Wingrave, 2006) examined the outcome of 170 allegations of domestic abuse reported to the MPS during June 2005 and evaluated to what extent the police response met the needs of victims. Four years ago whilst responsible for a specialist team in South West London investigating domestic

abuse, personal interest turned to how officers on that team reflected on the outcome of their investigations.

My specific area of interest was whether officers considered to what extent a victim's decision to support an investigation was influenced by the attitude and behaviour of the investigating officer. However, this idea was not pursued for two reasons. Firstly the value of this research could have been compromised by focusing on managerial quality assurance aspects of the investigations rather than how individual officers conceptualised reflection. Secondly, I realised that understanding how student constables conceptualised reflection would provide an opportunity to analyse experiences and attitudes from a group of officers at the very early stages of their careers. These officers would be required to demonstrate competence across a far wider range of policing skills; beyond the specialist area in which I was working. This had an attractive added benefit of being able to broaden my own perspective on main stream operational policing and gain an insight in to how officers conceive of reflection before choosing to pursue specialist roles.

Undertaking the Professional Doctorate also inspired my personal interest in the perceived value of reflection; a phenomenon that has gathered momentum since the early 1980s and forms a key part of individual professional and personal development. The benefits of applying learning derived through reflection, leading to critical reflective practice, are discussed by practitioners including Schon (1983), Boud (1985) and Palmer (1994). However, there is a notable absence of literature on reflection in policing and none on how student constables recruited into any police force conceptualise reflection. This research project fills a gap in knowledge of reflection and reflective learning in policing, providing an opportunity to assess the practical implications of those conceptions on the professional development of officers policing London.

## **Research objectives**

The purpose of this thesis is fulfilled by asking two research questions; how do student constables training with the Metropolitan Police conceptualise reflection and what motivation do those students have to reflect? These questions are answered by addressing five key objectives that deal with specific aspects of the research. These objectives, whilst distinct from each other, are not pursued in isolation as the outcome of each objective interlinks and influences subsequent phases of the research strategy. The first objective is to determine how reflective learning was established in the Metropolitan Police recruit training programme. This is discussed in the context of how national police recruit training was adapted in response to rising crime figures and falling public confidence in the police nationally during the 1980s. This section also explains how the Metropolitan Police introduced, and evaluated, Human Awareness Training to the recruit training programme.

The second objective is to identify an appropriate methodology to answer the research questions which includes establishing the existing knowledge on reflection in policing and the content and structure of the current recruit training programme. It is acknowledged that methodology is not always placed before the literature review in academic papers. However, it was necessary to conduct some research in to the content and structure of the Foundation Training Programme as part of planning the wider research strategy. As such a decision had to be made about the most appropriate way to structure this thesis without fragmenting the content with multiple discussions on methodology; as Trafford (2008, p. 56) discusses; how best to sequence the chapters. The most elegant solution was to deal with all such matters in one chapter. This is addressed in Chapter Two that also explains the rationale behind choosing a qualitative phenomenographical approach to gather and analyse data through semi-structured interviews and the method of identifying volunteers to contribute to the data collection. Chapter Two also discusses the approach taken to reviewing the existing academic and professional literature underpinning reflection and reflective learning; the outcome of which is discussed in Chapter Three.

The third objective is to examine what opportunities are provided for recruits on the Foundation Training Programme to engage with reflective learning. The opportunities to reflect are established through a review of the recruit training curriculum encompassing interviews with training staff and supported by an analysis of the content and structure of lessons delivered during the training programme. The outcome of this aspect of the research is discussed in Chapter Four and informs the construction of questions put to the student constables during interview.

The fourth objective is to develop a hierarchical model from the data to illustrate the varying depths of the students' conceptions. The research data is illuminated with vignettes from the semi-structured interviews and include examples of when students have reflected on real life experiences during the Foundation Training Programme and from actual encounters with members of the public. The findings are discussed in Chapters Five and Six, supported by a critical analysis of the data, triangulated against corporate policy towards reflective learning. Triangulation is based on a review of documents from the training curriculum and responses from staff who deliver foundation training. This section also highlights the range of responses contributed towards the research questions, compared against variations in demographic data from the 24 students interviewed during the research.

The fifth and final objective is to determine the benefits and limitations of reflection and reflective learning. This is discussed in Chapter Seven by drawing parallels between examples of practice as articulated by the student constables and case studies from research examining professional practice in education and health care. This illustrates how immediate and practical interventions can be implemented if inappropriate attitudes or behaviours become apparent during the Foundation Training Programme. Chapter Seven also considers what further research could be undertaken to build on the outcomes and conclusions of this thesis; including a reflexive account of the research process and what influence pursuing the professional doctorate had on the researcher.

## **Evolution of recruit training**

The first objective of this research project was to establish how the current regime of recruit training has developed, providing the background to how reflective learning was introduced in the Metropolitan Police during the late 1980s. This is discussed by providing an overview of the evolution of recruit training across England before focusing on training delivered in London. Gaining a full appreciation of the historical development and current structure of recruit training is an essential part of understanding how reflection became embedded in the Foundation Training Programme of the Metropolitan Police. Whilst this thesis is not preoccupied with the development of police training per se an understanding of how a national review of recruit training influenced developments in the Metropolitan Police is necessary to place this research project into context. This includes an overview of the national political and social pressures that influenced and shaped changes in the Metropolitan Police leading to the introduction of HAT in 1982. However, Bull (1994, p. 143) does make the observation that the Metropolitan Police was already considering the introduction of HAT before the social unrest and political upheavals described below.

Reiner (1992, p. 73) describes how revelations of corruption, incompetence and complacency in the police during the 1960s and 1970s were followed by serious public disorder during the 1980's. These heightened periods of industrial unrest coincided with increasing political concern about "expenditure and the rising number of complaints against police" (Reiner, 1992, p. 88). After the Brixton Riots in 1981 Lord Scarman was commissioned to investigate and deliver a report into the underlying causes of the disorder. Scarman cited ingrained racist attitudes of some officers, lack of community engagement at an organisational level and inexperience of younger officers as cumulative factors leading to conflict with the black community in Brixton. However, Scarman also applauded the observations of some senior officers that "whilst age was no guarantee of wisdom...young constables need to treat people in the street with respect" (Scarman, 1981, p. 85).

The Conservative government, at the time led by Margaret Thatcher, had significantly enhanced the powers available to the police and courts in an attempt to reduce crime and disorder. However, rising crime rates and the first televised images of police in riot gear subduing protesters during the miners' strikes in 1984 provoked accusations from the opposition Labour Party that the public were losing confidence in the police (Downes & Morgan, 2002, p. 290). This combination of politically driven confrontation between the police and industrial workers and continued racial tensions with the black communities provoked calls for a Royal Commission to reform policing (McLaughlin, 1992, p. 473).

Policy makers recognised that implementing a change in police culture and enhancing service delivery required a fundamental change in police training (Oakley, 1989, p. 61). At a national level, for police recruits to secure a realistic understanding of the police role required a combination of "formal and informal training" (Fielding, 1986, p. 319) to start rebuilding public confidence. A perceived lack of empathy and sensitivity towards the public, and particularly minority ethnic communities, saw a further reduction of public confidence in the police. Even attempts in the 1970s to introduce social and humanitarian skills in recruit training had been described by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies as poorly conceived. In particular community and race relations training was described as "lacking focus with a direct link being made to the negative impact of police culture on public perception and minority ethnic communities" (HMIC, 1997, p. 18). The completion of a training needs analysis in 1973 recommended that police training should "concentrate less on law, drill and first aid and more on relations with the public" (HMIC, 2002, p. 16).

Police training had traditionally taught recruits the technical aspects of law and procedures but did not emulate the nuances of police work: how to ameliorate responses in different circumstances or understand the impact of individual personalities, attitude and behaviour. The practical delivery of policing was learnt through trial and error resulting in an inconsistent delivery of services by inexperienced officers. This was particularly damaging in an environment where there was considerable scope for "individual discretion, or rules of thumb, between

the application of legislative requirements and actual events” (Manning, 1977, p. 147). There was also an ingrained occupational culture of resistance from experienced officers to share tradecraft knowledge with new constables who were expected to “learn from direct experience” (Fielding, 1984, p. 574). Recruits also found they could not rely on learning from colleagues with similar length of service largely owing to those officers finding themselves in the same position of having to work things out for themselves (Moore, 1969, p. 879). This put recruits who had left the police training schools in an invidious position. Without specific advice, guidance or support there were few options left but to endure what van Maanen (1974, p. 83) described as “rites of passage” in the hope that they would survive by learning from experience. This left recruits and the public vulnerable to the painful, and as observed by Waddington (1991, p. 21) sometimes fatal, consequences of officers learning from mistakes which in turn undermined public confidence in the police.

These issues were not uncommon with commentators on police culture and socialisation referring to the difficulties experienced by new recruits who struggled to comprehend the apparently “illusive acuity” demonstrated by colleagues of longer service (Rubinstein, 1973, p. 219). Fielding (1984, p. 583) also observed that there were considerable difficulties in getting experienced officers to “think reflexively of their own practice so they can enable novices to learn from them”. Fielding also discusses how “reflexivity grows amongst probationary officers” when they start evaluating their performance as compared to that of their colleagues (Fielding, 1988, p. 189). Similarly Elliot (1988, p. 153) noted that a “practical understanding of a particular policing situation cannot be structured by pre-specified categories of knowledge and understanding”.

1989 marked a watershed in police training that saw the creation of a National Training Programme and a move away from what the Home Office had described two years earlier as “training preoccupied with the process of organisational and occupational socialisation” (HMSO, 1987, p. 19). The new direction of police training followed what Stubbs (1999, p. 6) noted “should have a significant impact on learning outcomes including helping to shape police culture”. The national

programme saw recruit training move away from a process of learning legislation and instructions by rote towards a more holistic approach of practical assessment including “simulated theory and participative skills based on the application of law” (J. Jones, 2004, p. 130).

## **The introduction of Human Awareness Training**

Prior to 1982 recruit training in the Metropolitan Police had followed a style similar to that of other forces in England. Training methods rested on providing didactic instruction to recruits as to the legal powers of the police taught through a regime of military style discipline and memorising legislation through rote learning (Rowe & Garland, 2003, p. 399). However, in 1981 the Metropolitan Police began the process of reviewing recruit training and started to introduce and evaluate Human Awareness Training (HAT). The new style training encouraged a culture of critical self-evaluation to identify areas of strength and weakness in the understanding and practical application of knowledge as well as “role-play exercises, and video feedback of students’ performance” (Bull & Horncastle, 1989, p. 97). This represented a significant development for an occupation whose practical skills had traditionally been thought of as being an intuitively learnt, rather than a specifically taught, craft (Bowling & Foster, 2002, p. 993). Key elements of HAT included teaching individual officers to be self-aware of how personal attitudes, prejudice and behaviour could influence the outcome of encounters with other people. HAT also included training in ethnic awareness to instil a culture of empathy and understanding in new recruits towards minority communities.

The introduction and evaluation of Human Awareness Training, later renamed Police Skills Training, to the Metropolitan Police recruit training programme was driven through collaboration with the Department of Psychology at, what was at the time, the North East London Polytechnic (Bull & Horncastle, 1986). The assessment process was based on two phases of evaluation with the first being what the authors described as “standardized, valid and reliable questionnaires” to determine, amongst other questions, whether recruits thought social science had a useful role during the training process (Bull & Horncastle, 1994, p. 144). The

second phase consisted of a psychometric evaluation in the form of a further questionnaire as well as observations of constables on patrol and interviews with officers and their supervisors. The researchers noted that one of the outcomes of the evaluation was “the recruits’ ability to self-monitor behaviour...and be sympathetic towards victims were not as good as it might be”. As such one of the final recommendations were that the process of self-evaluation and self-awareness should be enhanced (Bull & Horncastle, 1994, p. 149). Although the corporate memory of the Metropolitan Police is not specific as to an exact date a document described by Hendon as a ‘self-reflection sheet’ (see Appendix Two) was introduced during the early 1990s that recruits were required to complete after role-play assessments. The self-reflection sheet, discussed further in Chapter Four, was designed to provoke critical self-reflection of what had gone well during assessments and to identify areas in need of improvement.

Subsequent changes in the structure and delivery of training saw the evolution of an Integrated Competency Framework (ICF) which was designed to act as a “guide to competence and standards” (White, 2006, p. 389). However, this approach had the opposite effect of forcing probationary officers to learn specific responses to meet the requirements of the ICF without making the link to developing effective policing behaviour. A national thematic review of police training titled ‘Training Matters’ was published in 2002 by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC, 2002) which was highly critical of a perceived gap in what police officers were “required to know and what they needed to learn in order to execute their duties” (Alexandrou & Davis, 2005, p. 245). As a result the Home Office commissioned the University of the West of England and the University of East Anglia to conduct an independent review of learning requirements for police probationer training in England and Wales (Elliott et al., 2003a).

The review determined that probationary constables needed to be able to demonstrate competence across a range of activities. These ranged from non-controversial activities such as completing crime reports to those requiring complex interpersonal skills when interviewing suspects (White, 2006, p. 393).

One of the recommendations from the review was that a set of “principles should be adopted that separated learning indicators from the Integrated Competency Framework (Elliott et al., 2003b, p. 4). As a result the then Police Training and Development Authority (CENTREX) recommended that an adapted version of Kolb’s model of Experiential Learning be used as a basis for probationer training in England and Wales (White, 2006, p. 396).

In part those recommendations were implemented in a new approach to training; the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) which was piloted by five police forces including the Metropolitan Police. The IPLDP was directly linked to 22 National Occupational Standards covering aspects of policing such as the initial response to incidents, searching suspects, interviewing victims, witnesses and preparing case files (Bryant, 2009, p. 26; Skills For Justice, 2003). One of the desirable outcomes of the IPLDP was to provide a “more focused approach to practical training and assessment, which emphasises problem-solving while maintaining the necessary background knowledge requirements” (Adult Learning Inspectorate, 2005, p. 3). As such, Chapter Two discusses the methodology used to determine how the current Foundation Training Programme in the Metropolitan Police is structured. This chapter also examines the methodology used to identify what opportunities are provided for students to engage with reflective learning and how the current literature that is available was identified. Chapter Two also discusses the methodology that underpins the wider research strategy and establishes a link to the phenomenographical approach adopted to understand how student constables conceptualise reflection.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Methodology**

As discussed in Chapter One each stage of the research informs the subsequent phase, which required a choice having to be made about where the methodology chapter should be placed within this thesis. In order to gather research data to discuss how student constables conceptualise reflection it was necessary to determine what opportunities were available to reflect during the Foundation Training Programme. This also requires an explanation of the methodology used: detailing how an initial review of the available literature and the structure of the Foundation Training Programme was conducted. This informs decisions such as the size and distribution of the data sample and choice of interview questions, which also requires an explanation of why a phenomenographical approach was selected. Rather than have multiple sections on methodology dispersed throughout this thesis the decision was taken to deal with methodology in one place before discussing the outcomes of any research or literature review. As such Chapter Two begins with a discussion of the ethical considerations that were given to the access and collection of data from student constables before outlining the philosophical principles that underpin social research. This chapter also outlines the options that were available for the collection and analysis of data and discusses the outcome of a series of pilot interviews conducted to finalise the interview questions. The final part of this chapter concludes with a discussion on the experience of gathering interview data, transcribing the interviews and the choice of technique used to analyse the interview data.

#### **Ethical considerations and access to data**

The ethical implications of the research were approached with two main considerations. Firstly, at an organisational level, approval had been secured from the University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee, the Metropolitan Police Strategic Research Unit (SRU) and the head of recruit training at Hendon. This ensured that the research was approved by the three organisations that had a vested interest in

the conduct of the research. By securing agreement from the SRU there could be no accusations of having an unfair advantage over other researchers as the SRU acted as gatekeepers for internal and external research applications. Secondly because the class tutors and students were all police constables the potential influence of rank had to be addressed in addition to broader ethical considerations, as discussed by Grinyer (2002, p. 1), of confidentiality and anonymity.

The first part of determining how student constables conceptualised reflection required an understanding of what formal input, if any, was provided on reflection during the Foundation Training Programme. This required access to the staff that manage and deliver foundation training before attempting to secure data from the students. The point of access for training staff and students was the manager for each training area; a police officer who held the rank of inspector. Having identified the inspector in charge for each area written contact was made with a covering letter and a copy of the research information sheet (see Appendix Three). Permission was sought to interview staff from Hendon and three Area Training Units from locations in North, Central and South London. Permission was also sought to interview students attending the three Area Training Units who had completed the first five weeks of the Foundation Training Programme. In each case positive responses were received with directions to contact a named training manager from each training unit. In all cases at this level the training manager was a police officer at the rank of sergeant. Written contact was made in the same format with further agreement secured from each training manager to approach two members of staff who had responsibility as class tutors to facilitate access to one class of students under their supervision.

The class tutors and students being interviewed were all at the rank of constable and hence two ranks lower within the organisational structure of the Metropolitan Police than that of the researcher. Although there was no personal responsibility for the management or supervision of the students an officer of inspector rank would ordinarily be the second line manager to an officer at the rank of constable. The responsibility of that management role would include influence over matters of performance, applications for promotion and the first point of appeal if there was

disagreement with first line managers at the rank of sergeant. Thus an initial concern was that of the influence of rank and potential risk of consent being given as a consequence of organisational conditioning or obedience to authority.

The Metropolitan Police Service is a hierarchical disciplined organisation that still maintains recognised boundaries between lower and higher ranking officers. New recruits are subjected to a regular process of conditioning that teaches deference to higher ranking officers thus establishing boundaries for future supervision (Brehm & Gates, 1993, p. 556). Student constables are at their most impressionable during the early stages of training and all constables are conditioned to follow directions given by senior officers. This is enforced at an early stage of recruit training with a routine of morning parades and scrutiny of dress code; often conducted by officers of inspector rank or higher. Consideration had to be given to constables feeling unduly influenced either to participate or to provide answers that would be perceived as compliant or non-contentious. Whilst there was no direct comparison to the circumstances of the Stanford prison experiment (Blass, 2000, p. 158; Milgram, 1974, p. 11) respondents might acquiesce to participation rather than through genuine free will. Parallels can also be drawn with Pavlov's experiments with repetitive conditioning (Pavlov & Anrep, 1927) with students agreeing to participate on the basis of responding to a senior officer's request rather than volunteering as a fully informed participant.

## **Securing informed consent**

In all cases fully informed consent to participate in the research was secured from staff and students (see Appendix Three). In the case of staff at Hendon and the Area Training Units approaches were made directly to respondents. In the case of students at the Area Training Units an agreement was reached where the training manager passed the details and conditions of research onto the class tutors. The class tutor acted as a point of access to provide an explanation, in broad terms, of the nature of the research and to facilitate introductions to students who could volunteer to be interviewed. Personal meetings were then arranged privately with each volunteer to discuss fully the purpose and conditions of the research, without

the presence of the training staff or manager. This followed an acceptable practice approved by the University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee as well as emulating methodology used for other published research projects (Jormfeldt, Svedberg, & Arvidsson, 2003, p. 610; E. Walsh et al., 1993, p. 1137).

To ensure that participation was undertaken with fully informed consent the information sheet included with the covering letters also formalised the relationship between the Metropolitan Police, the University of Portsmouth and the respondent. This also addressed data protection, intellectual rights and copyright issues (Robson, 2002, p. 33). The information sheet made it clear that respondents had an opportunity to make a fully informed choice about whether they participated. If respondents chose to be interviewed they were reassured of complete confidentiality and anonymity. Steps were also taken to negate other potential concerns by including a specific section in the covering letter and research information sheet that provided reassurance that participation, or non-participation, would have no influence over any future professional relationship.

Although some officers could be described as being less intimidated by the police organisational structure than others (Worden, 1995, p. 58) there is still an ingrained rank and file culture within the police (Graef, 1989, p. 459; Reiner, 1992, p. 107). There was also a risk that the detective role might be treated with suspicion given the perception that the culture within the Criminal Investigation Department is elitist, treating uniform colleagues with disdain and mistrust (Bowling & Foster, 2002, p. 994; Graef, 1989, p. 313). As Chan (1997, p. 45) describes; solidarity between uniformed officers is also not uncommon as a way of responding to the perceived dangers of external scrutiny. To mitigate this risk each meeting included an informal rapport building stage before the beginning of the interview. This reinforced the message that the interview was being conducted by a student researcher from the University of Portsmouth and not a senior ranking detective. Having addressed the potential issues of the influence of rank, role and potential obedience to authority attention was turned to other ethical considerations including organisational, personal and professional concerns.

## **Broader ethical considerations**

Key ethical considerations for any research, as discussed by Oppenheim (1992, p. 83), is that no harm should come to a respondent as a result of their participation. To ensure anonymity each participant was assigned a unique numerical code that was referred to on all documentation instead of their name. Consideration also had to be given to dealing with unethical or illegal activity discovered during the course of the research. It was also possible that respondents might feel embarrassed about giving honest answers to questions that might indicate unethical or illegal practice (Bachman & Schutt, 2007, p. 251). In this respect respondents were allowed to take the lead on how they answered interview questions, without being directly challenged or having potentially difficult aspects of their answers condoned or disparaged.

A balance had to be established between maintaining professional standards and not stifling spontaneity from respondents and as such a short statement of expectations was included in the research information sheet. This explained that there was an expectation of strict adherence to professional standards at all times and that serious transgressions or disclosure of unethical or illegal activity could be referred to the Metropolitan Police Directorate of Professional Standards. Respondents were also provided with information on how to contact the University research supervisor if they had concerns about professional conduct during the research process. This included the full postal address of the University as well as the email address, business telephone number and contact information for the research supervisor should they feel the need to raise any issues of concern.

Whilst it was possible to ensure that the identity of respondents would not be revealed by the research process or data derived from the interviews other threats to anonymity were identified over which there was less control. As Burns and Walker (2005, p. 69) observed issues around confidentiality could be complicated by any conversations that took place between participants who chose to talk to each other about their experiences of taking part. In this respect there could be no control over participants who chose to discuss the interviews outside of the

research environment. Consideration was also given to the impact the research might have on the respondents such as Bosworth's (2005, p. 258) observations of the risk of invoking strong negative reactions or emotions resulting in respondents reliving personal unhappy experiences. For all encounters consideration also had to be given to personal welfare, although there was not the same threat of physical danger as Gomez-Cespedes (1999, p. 166) did when she researched organised crime in Mexico. Acknowledgment was given to the fact that the subject matter raised might be emotive and as such details of the dedicated Metropolitan Police Occupational Health Service were made available for direct confidential referrals if necessary. These details were also included in the research information sheet (see Appendix Three). Respondents were also given the opportunity to maintain contact with the researcher and to indicate whether they were willing to be contacted again, either for follow up questions or to have sight of the final report. In order to further maintain confidentiality these responses were made on a separate form with the corresponding respondent reference number attached (Bachman & Schutt, 2007, p. 252).

There was also a professional risk that the research findings might not be well received by the Metropolitan Police as an organisation. There was no guarantee that the research would not undermine existing training practices and to what extent that might be harmful to personal career prospects. Consideration had to be given as to whether this would influence sharing such information as well as the impartial and critical assessment of the research data. As observed by Robson (1997, p. 411) "several parties were likely to be concerned with what is reported and how it is reported". In respect of the organisational concerns authority had been sought from the Strategic Research Unit and head of recruit training to pursue the research and in respect of the methodology support was already available through the university research supervisor. It was necessary to take a pragmatic view and to maintain a continued critical awareness and reflexivity as a researcher, not a police manager. This would ensure the methodology would be robust, objective and unbiased thus also avoiding the risk of "going native" (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007, p. 66). Having considered the ethical implications for the research attention was focused on establishing a structure to undertake a

review of the available literature. The purpose of this was two-fold; firstly to establish what was already known about reflective learning in policing and secondly to identify a suitable methodological approach to the research.

## **Undertaking the literature review**

Given the volume of literature potentially available for review it was necessary to establish a process to determine the extent of existing literature. The intention was to identify existing research of how police officers conceive of reflection and reflective learning in the context of operational policing. This process began with a review of documents internal to the Metropolitan Police and particularly those concerned with recruit training. The second phase focused on publications held by academic libraries including online resources from the libraries at the University of Portsmouth, University of Surrey and the British Library. The review also included published peer review journals through providers including Ingenta, Informaworld, Wiley Interface, EBSCOHost and Blackwell Science. Publications were identified, referenced and retained using Endnote Software in conjunction with Microsoft's Office Word 2007 and Internet Explorer 8 software packages. The reference database was constructed to include electronic copies, where available, of the documents thus maintaining an accurate record of the publications and original sources.

The first phase of the literature review identified a number of internal documents including lesson plans for tutors and lesson notes for students. A fuller explanation of those documents is discussed in Chapters Three and Four. The second phase of research from the academic resources focused initially on the International Journal: Police Practice and Research. This journal included a review paper identifying trends in what police research had been conducted during the previous year and was a regular feature for the seven year period encompassing 2000–2006. The review placed research topics into different categories and then correlated the number of articles devoted to each type of research. The journal claimed to provide a comprehensive overview of all peer reviewed police related articles that had been published over each preceding 12 month period (Varriale,

Gibbs, Ahlin, Gugino, & Na, 2007, p. 462). The outcome of this review is discussed further in Chapter Three. The next stage for discussion for the research methodology is the process of deciding whether a qualitative or quantitative approach should be taken to the research.

## **Qualitative or quantitative research**

The purpose of the research was to determine how student constables training with the Metropolitan Police conceptualise reflection and to then discuss the implication of those conceptions on operational policing. This required a research methodology that would capture individual concepts of reflection in a format that could be analysed and interpreted. In this respect there could be no right or wrong responses from the student constables and the research did not seek to prove or disprove a particular theory or proposition. As such the most appropriate methodology appeared to require a qualitative approach where interpretation of the data would capture the essence of reflection as described by the student constables.

However, consideration had to be given to whether pursuing a qualitative approach would increase the risk of the researcher influencing the outcome of the research and to what extent this could be minimised. The comparative merits of qualitative and quantitative research and opportunities to discuss reliability, objectivity, trustworthiness and subjectivity are worthy of a lengthy and detailed discussion in their own right. However to simply acknowledge that the research would be influenced to some extent by personal subjectivity and that it was necessary to remain consistent and objective would understate significantly the influence of the researcher on the research process. From a personal perspective it was necessary to consider the philosophical aspects of social research starting with the historical divergence between quantitative and qualitative research.

Weber described something of a revolution in the interpretation of social phenomena; a move away from the natural scientific positivist approach he coined as “Verstehen” or the interpretation of human understanding (Bachman & Schutt,

2007, p. 23; Morrison, 2006, pp. 274-275; Platt, 1985, p. 449). Weber's interpretation of social research methodology made it clear that he believed the interpretation of concepts associated with sociology could not be determined as simply correct or incorrect. Weber (1968, p. 4) emphasises the distinction between this and the "dogmatic disciplines such as logic...which seek to ascertain the true and valid meanings associated with the objects of their investigation". This epitomises the philosophical divisions between quantitative and qualitative research. Values and hence positivism have a limited role in an irrational world and, as discussed by Lazar (2004, p. 16), there is no rational or empirical way to choose between those values. The starting point was to establish the relationship between the philosophical concepts that would underpin the research.

Understanding the philosophical concepts of social research methods involved acknowledging how knowledge as a researcher is understood from personal epistemological and ontological positions. The philosopher Descartes encapsulated the phrase "Cogito ergo sum" or "I am thinking therefore I exist" (Aune, 1991, p. 8). From this comes the concept, discussed by Hart (1998, p. 51), of how knowledge is known, rationalised and understood; in other words an individual's epistemological perception. In turn understanding how knowledge is known is interdependent with an ontological perspective, or the position from which an individual views that particular concept of reality. For example Bryman (2001, p. 266) discusses how an ontological, or world view, founded in realism is interdependent with an epistemological perspective founded in positivism. However, Hart (1998, p. 82) notes that positivism is limited in that it can only be used to interpret what can actually be established. Conversely an ontological view based on constructionism is interdependent with an epistemological perspective grounded in interpretivism (Bryman, 2008, p. 16) but could be vulnerable to the subjective influences of the researcher. These differing philosophical positions lent themselves to distinct approaches of whether to undertake a qualitative or quantitative approach to the research and the strengths and weaknesses of each approach needed to be considered.

## Options for gathering research data

Determining how student officers conceptualise reflection would benefit from an interpretivist epistemological position to establish the meaning behind responses provided by the students. As discussed by Filmer (2004, p. 36) as a researcher this required empathy with the ontological perspective of the students being interviewed. An analogy was to consider the concept of how focus groups “capture the dynamics of group interaction” Hyde (2005, p. 2588) by examining the meaning behind the opinions expressed; what Krokfors (2006, p. 30) explained as “the way” in which respondents express themselves. On this basis the methodology needed to construct a theory from the data and not impose theory on it (Corbin & Holt, 2005, p. 43). This would avoid a traditional positivist approach of simply producing a literature review and following a hypothesis based on a pre-determined research question (Heywood & Stronach, 2005, p. 116). However, this inductive approach had the potential to produce a great deal of ambiguity and personal interaction with the participants might influence or contaminate the outcome of the research (D. Walsh, 2004, p. 229).

Some considerable thought was given to using questionnaires as part of the data gathering process on the basis that a structured approach would produce hard reliable data whose validity and consistency could be tested and evaluated through repetition (Bryman, 1988, p. 94; Seale, 2004b, p. 72). The relationship between the researcher and data subjects would also satisfy the criterion of detachment that Comte (1875, p. 201) determined as necessary for consistent and reliable research and provide some immunity from the influence of the researcher’s subjectivity (Bloch, 2004, p. 166). Another advantage of using questionnaires would be the production of data in a language that an epistemologically positivist organisation such as the Metropolitan Police would understand. This prediction being based on the fact that, like other public service organisations, evaluating achievement is based on interpreting performance against predetermined targets (James & Raine, 1998, p. 26; Maguire, 2002, p. 368). However, it appeared unlikely that quantitative data collection and analysis

would be able to determine how student constables conceptualise reflection. This led to an irresistible conclusion that a qualitative approach would be required.

An initial review of the different approaches to qualitative data collection indicated there were an almost overwhelming number of options available. Whilst there is insufficient space to discuss in full the entire spectrum of choice some approaches stood out as less appropriate than others. Whilst the preferred method for data collection was eventually decided as semi-structured interviews, alternatives of ethnography, focus groups, journal keeping and document analysis were evaluated and subsequently dismissed.

Ethnography has, as described by Sanday (1979, p. 527), a long and distinguished history notwithstanding Hammersley's (1992, pp. 124-125) observations that the validity of ethnography is sometimes over-estimated and is not necessarily superior to other methods of research. Despite the depth and richness of data this approach could provide (Graef, 1989, p. 11) ethnography was determined not to be suitable for the purposes of this research project. This was based partly on the amount of time required to become emerged in the foundation training process and mainly from the complex ethical considerations involved. From the perspective of a covert insider-researcher Holdaway gave an excellent practical insight into the challenges of conducting ethnographical research. The difficulties he encountered trying to record contemporaneous notes illustrated the complexities of trying to balance accurate data recording without disclosing his activity (Holdaway, 1983, p. 10) negating this approach for the purposes of this thesis.

The next method considered was arranging and conducting focus groups. Marshall and Rossman (1995, p. 84) discuss the strengths of this method that assumes that an individual's attitudes and beliefs do not form in a vacuum and as such could provide a broad range of views and opinions. However, there are also a number of documented problems with this type of research methodology. This method of research would require a significant element of trust (Pithouse, 1999, p. 175) and the identity of the participants would inevitably be disclosed to the rest of

the group. Other commentators observe that focus groups generate data that is difficult to analyse and require an experienced group discussion leader (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 171; Poso, Honkatukia, & Nyqvist, 2008, p. 77). It could also be reasonably anticipated that there could be problems if participants voiced opinions, even if done hastily, that could leave them vulnerable if other group members considered those issues should have remained unspoken (Barbour & Schostak, 2005, pp. 41-42).

Another method that was given serious consideration was seeking respondents who would be prepared to maintain a journal or diary. The key advantage would be having the opportunity to gather a substantial amount of rich data (Robson, 2002, p. 254) that would be indicative of how the respondents conceived of reflection. However the conclusions drawn by Oppenheim (1992, p. 254) suggested that problems would be encountered if participants failed to sustain their own motivation to maintain the journal entries. Consideration was also given to a content analysis of reports written by student constables. Initially it was envisaged this would enable research of underlying themes using brief extracted quotations from the text (Seale, 2002, p. 109). It was also perceived that this would also enable a 'mixed method' approach (R. B. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 14) by combining qualitative analysis with an initial systematic and quantitative coding of the reports (Berelson, 1952, p. 18). However this approach would not be able to determine with certainty how the authors of the documents conceived of reflection thus rendering the data vulnerable to criticisms of being unreliable (Ali, 2004, p. 276; Gidley, 2004, p. 254; Odih, 2004, p. 287). It became apparent that the most effective way to determine how student officers conceptualised reflection was to ask them, which would require the use of interviewing to secure the required data.

## **Interviewing as a research option**

Having made the decision to conduct the research by way of interview a choice had to be made as to whether they would be unstructured, semi-structured or fully structured. Each has their own strengths and weaknesses and the use of

unstructured interviews is supported strongly, based on the comments made by Hammersley (1992, p. 165) who observed that they can be interpreted as being close to a natural conversation. This would allow the interview to be started with an opening question allowing the interviewee to lead the direction of the interview. The drawback of an unstructured interview was the interviewee might go off at tangents or be unable to answer the questions. At the other extreme a fully structured approach would provide an opportunity to probe and clarify specific responses but had the disadvantage of being rigid and inflexible (Robson, 2002, p. 231). From this assessment the ideal option emerged as semi-structured interviews. This would allow a degree of planning to cover the necessary topics yet provide flexibility to modify the format of the interview based on the responses received (Robson, 2002, p. 231). This approach also provided the option to incorporate responses from one interview into subsequent questions, if necessary, as part of the research process (Seale, 2004a, p. 241). This also suited a phenomenographical approach to conducting and analysing the interviews making the process of planning the questions an integral part of the research strategy.

## **Phenomenography as a research technique**

Phenomenography is described by Barnard (1999, p. 212) as a little known research technique that aims to identify how individuals “collectively experience and understand phenomena in the world around them”. The term ‘phenomenography’ translates from the Greek language as “a description of appearances” (Hasselgren & Beach, 1997, p. 192) and was developed in the late 1960s by the Swedish researcher Ference Marton. Marton was seeking to identify discourse from individuals in order to understand how they experienced the world around them (Barnard et al., 1999, p. 212; Marton, 1994, p. 4425). Marton’s approach states that there are only a limited number of ways an individual will conceptualise a phenomenon and some individuals will conceive that phenomenon in more complex ways than others (Baker, 1997, p. 45). The collection of data is usually based on a particular group of people and their relation to a phenomenon in a designated context (Barnard et al., 1999, p. 215). This appeared to be well suited to the approach of this research as student constables

would qualify as a particular group of people conceptualising reflection in a specific context. The strength of this research approach is that it seeks to establish how individuals “conceive of various aspects of their reality” (Marton, 1986, p. 42). An initial concern was that phenomenography had been criticised as taking a positivist research approach in that the data gathered is presented as an empirical table (Webb, 1997, p. 198). Although the representation of the data is discussed further in Chapters Four and Five this approach would also enable a further discussion on the depth at which student constables conceive of reflection.

Having considered access, ethical issues, data sampling and the research methodology it was necessary to consider the structure and planning of the interviews. Part of this process was to devise a way of triangulating the responses given by the student constables to determine the accuracy of the responses. Whilst no information had been shared about the planned locations for conducting interviews between the training sites it was possible that students could have been advised to be cautious by the training staff before being interviewed. Whilst there was no suggestion that this was the case it is a recognised consideration when securing access through multiple gatekeepers where there might be a vested interest in the outcome of the research (Bryman, 2008, p. 407). However, it was first necessary to determine the extent and distribution of the data sample and at what point during the Foundation Training Programme students should be interviewed.

## **Selecting the data sample**

The background research from Hendon, discussed in Chapter Four, confirmed that the self-reflection sheet was introduced in week two of the Foundation Training Programme and by week six each student would have participated in at least six role-play assessments. It was determined that the optimum time to interview students would be after they had completed their first five weeks at Hendon but before they completed attachments to their Boroughs after week 17 of their foundation training. This would ensure that each student would have had the same training input, including an introduction to the self-reflection sheet, whilst avoiding

contamination of being exposed to different experiences from actual police postings.

The full extent of the sampling frame (Bryman, 2008, p. 458) was initially identified as being 810 student officers who were placed across six training units during the period April 2010 to March 2011. However, cuts to recruitment in June 2010 saw the last available class of police recruits completing their training in November 2010. The ideal representative sample size (Bryman, 2008, p. 168) was determined to be a minimum of 24 interviews comprised of eight students from three of the available Area Training Units. In total 24 interviews were conducted from a potential total of 53 students across the three training sites from a maximum of 90 students available across all six training units. For the purposes of maintaining confidentiality and anonymity the training units were designated as Site 1, Site 2 and Site 3. Having canvassed potential candidates from each training unit interviews were conducted with eight students from Site 1 from a class of 18. Interviews were also conducted with 12 students from Site 2 from a class of 19 and four interviews were conducted from Site 3 from a class of 16 students.

The data sample was also comparable to other small scale phenomenographical studies including research conducted by Alsop (2006, p. 246) of 24 design students who collaborated on a multi-media design module. Other small scale research projects included the participation of 24 teachers during research conducted by Hazel (1997, p. 217) into the implications of gender in phenomenography. Also 20 nurse managers were interviewed by Hyrkas (2003, p. 50) to establish their conception of quality management. A smaller study conducted to research the experience of students participating in a networked learning environment comprised of interviews conducted by Jones (2001, p. 315) with ten respondents. As such the target of interviews with 24 students was a reasonable number for the purposes of this research and, as discussed in Chapter Five, was sufficient to reach saturation point in terms of the data gathered.

## **Interviews: structure and planning**

The background research, discussed in Chapter Four, provided additional data against which the responses made by the student constables could be triangulated. This data provided an alternative perspective on what the training staff at Hendon expected students to know about reflection compared with what was actually disclosed. Conducting interviews with the students and trainers would provide an understanding of what should be known about reflection as well as what was disclosed by the students. In this respect it would be possible to cross-reference the declared knowledge of the students against the information known to be delivered during their training. This approach would enable data to be triangulated from two different sources but using the same method of collection.

This approach addressed a potential vulnerability of the research identified from the observations of authors who believe there is a certain naivety in using a single research methodology. One such example being Cesare Lombroso's positivist claim to predicting criminal behaviour after examining the physical appearance of subjects convicted of violent crimes (Garland, 2002, p. 25; Soothill & Peelo, 2006, p. 11). This also addressed potential criticisms from detractors of mixed method research who advise on the potential difficulties of comparing data from different research paradigms (Bryman, 2008, p. 606; Kuhn, 1970, p. 204). As such it was necessary to conduct two series of interviews; firstly with the staff who manage or deliver the foundation training and secondly the student constables. The selection process for the questions required careful consideration given that the aims of the interviews sought different outcomes. Interviews with the training staff were less complicated and sought to establish the structure of the training programme and identify any specific content referring to teaching or encouraging reflection. The interviews with the student constables were more complex and sought to establish how they conceived of reflection with the data having to be gathered and analysed in line with the planned phenomenographical approach to the research.

What had to be identified were questions that would establish how students conceptualised reflection enabling that knowledge to be interpreted and applied in

the context of the Foundation Training Programme and latterly discuss the implications of those conceptions in the correct context (Cartney, 2004, p. 53) of operational policing. The literature review, detailed in Chapter Three, enabled potential questions to be identified and grouped into broad categories. The first was to establish whether student constables had any understanding of the concepts of reflection and reflective learning which are outlined in Table 2-1.

What is reflection?	(Lyons, 1998, p. 125)
What do you understand as 'an interaction'?	(Newton, 2004, p. 160)
How do you know what you don't know?	(Burton, 2000, p. 327)
How do you improve practice?	(Whitehead, 2000, p. 93)
How do you think professional knowledge and professional practice are interdependent	(Gibbons et al., 1994, p. 19)

Table 2-1: Specimen questions on concepts of reflection

The second category of questions was aimed at identifying if the interviewees reflected on events after they had happened; ie reflecting on action (Schon, 1983, p. 276) and are summarised in Table 2-2.

Consider a particular thing you dealt with, do you ask yourself what you have learnt from an incident? Do you ask yourself how you will put into practice what you have learned? Do you ask yourself how you feel after an incident? Do you ask yourself what you think after an incident?	(Shepherd, 2006, p. 336)
Do you think back and consider the consequences of your actions?	(Gustafsson & Fagerberg, 2004, p. 274)
Has thinking about it affected your actions?	(Husu, Toom, & Patrikainen, 2008, p. 47).

Table 2-2: Specimen questions on reflecting on action

The third category considered were questions to establish if the interviewees were aware that they learnt and adapted experience whilst dealing with an incident; ie reflecting in action (Schon, 1983, p. 50). These are summarised in Table 2-3.

When you are working with a colleague how you do determine who does what? Do you show empathy to victims?	(Holgersson & Gottschalk, 2008, p. 369)
How do you observe your surrounding/form suspicion?	(Holgersson & Gottschalk, 2008, p. 371)
Do you consider new ways to dealing with situations that are unfamiliar to you?	(Russell, 2005, p. 200)
What do you think about if you are dealing with a situation where you are uncertain what to do?	(Pereira, 1999, p. 343)
How do your frame a problem you want to solve?	(Reynolds, 1998, p. 186)
How do you recognise obstacles and respond to them? How do you improve what you do?	(Arcand, Durand-Bush, & Miall, 2007, p. 25)
Do you imagine a way forward?	(Whitehead, 2000, p. 93)
What sort of things pop into your head?	(Loughran, 1996, p. 42)

Table 2-3: Specimen questions on reflecting in action

The forth category considered was to establish whether the interviewees reflected on reflection (Cushway & Gatherer, 2003, p. 7) which are summarised in Table 2-4.

What are your feelings about the experience? What have you learned from the experience? What sense do you make of this experience?	(M. Fox, Green, & Martin, 2007, p. 184)
Have the struggles and successes you encounter changed over a period of time?	(Romano & Gibson, 2006, p. 3)
What does success mean to you?	(S. Lee, Shaw, Chesterfield, & Woodward, 2009, p. 295)
Has this been a useful process for you to think about your own reflection?	(Hilsdon, 2005, p. 65)
Are there things you feel you can do well in the police?	(Aremu & Lawal, 2009, p. 244)
What impression do you think you leave people with?	(Birzer, 2008, p. 205)
Do you deal with incidents based on your values rather than police policy?	(Perez & Shtull, 2002, p. 180)
Are you satisfied with your job?	(Rosenberg, Sigler, & Lewis, 2008, p. 294)
How do you improve your practice?	(Whitehead, 2000, p. 91)
Does the perception the public has of you alter your satisfaction with your job?	(Yim & Schafer, 2009, p. 18)

Table 2-4: Specimen questions on reflecting on reflection

The fifth category was to determine what understanding the interviewees had on the process and outcomes of training in the context of learning skills for making decisions (Dreyfus, Dreyfus, & Athanasiou, 1986, p. 32), These are summarised in Table 2-5.

Is there a point where you realise you can let go of a stifling security blanket and begin to react more naturally to situations as they unfolded?	(Schon, 1983, p. 54)
Are you expected to simply regurgitate processes rather than actually understand what you have been taught?	(D. Fox, 1983, p. 154)
Is there a point where you realise you are acting instinctively? [become unconsciously competent]	(Burton, 2000, p. 327)
Is there a sense of a “reality shock” when confronted with the opinions of experienced practitioners that appears to render possession of the most recent [training] information ineffective given the lack of skills to put that knowledge to good use?	(Bromme & Tillema, 1995, p. 261)

Table 2-5: Specimen questions on awareness of learning

Despite the breadth and depth of the questions that could potentially be asked none seemed to get to the crux of determining how the students conceptualised reflection. The conclusion was that initially they would need to describe their understanding of reflection and articulate the different ways reflection is experienced (Booth, 1997, p. 135). The planned use of prompt questions (Barnard et al., 1999, p. 221) would be of particular importance given the emphasis on needing to identify how the interviewees conceptualised reflection; and understanding why they expressed those concepts (Eklund-Myrskog, 1998, p. 302).

For a phenomenographical approach to the research it was necessary to ensure that there were not too many questions prepared in advance and that personal experience should not impose any interpretation on the responses (Frank, Asp, & Dahlberg, 2009, p. 2556; Marton, 1994, p. 4427). Without care this could cause misinterpretation of the responses given by the interviewees (Byrne, 2004, p. 183).

The most suitable questions were framed from the research objectives aimed at determining how student constables conceptualised reflection and identifying the basis for that understanding. From this a small series of four pilot interviews were conducted to test different combinations of potential questions (Bryman, 2008, p. 247).

## Piloting the research questions

In order to determine how reflection is conceptualised by student constables open questions were devised that did not provide a suggested direction for the answers (Gustafsson, Asp, & Fagerberg, 2009, p. 1462). From the pilot interviews five base questions, summarised in Table 2-6 were developed. The combination and timing of each question was informed by the outcome of the background research conducted at Hendon (discussed further in Chapter Four) and was designed to establish how students articulated different aspects of how they conceived of reflection.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Underlying objective</b>
Do you recognise the self-reflection sheets?	Recognition of the self-reflection sheets
What does reflection mean to you?	Attitude and understanding of reflection
Why reflect?	The conceptualised importance of reflection
Where does your understanding of reflection come from?	Testing the basis for responses given to questions two and three
Provide an example of when you have reflected	Determine when/if students have actually reflected

Table 2-6: Questions selected for interviews

During the pilot interviews it became clear that there were some significant variations between the meaning and understanding of what might ordinarily be considered common phraseology. It also appeared from the pilot questions that there was a varied understanding of the concept of reflection by the respondents; and questions dealing with the emotional response to reflection provided little or

no useful data. Sometimes the context of answers left no ambiguity as to what was meant based partly on personal understanding of the organisation and partly from having undertaken the background research prior to the interviews (Roulston, 2009, p. 103). However, it was still necessary to prompt for clarification by probing for a deeper meaning behind some explanations (Kvale, 1983, p. 175). An ongoing awareness was also maintained of the risks associated with imposing personal interpretation on what could be considered to be everyday words and phrases (M. Lynch, 2000, p. 32). In line with previous studies data from the pilot interviews was not used in the main research project (Gustafsson et al., 2009, p. 1462). It was also necessary to decide on a process of transcribing the interviews from which a significant amount of experience and learning was secured.

## **Transcribing the interviews**

Having researched options for transcribing the interviews there were no surprises to find the process was, as Bryman (2008, p. 456) described, time consuming and arduous. Whilst this provided the opportunity to become very familiar with the content of the interviews it was necessary to pay constant attention to the detail and context. As Gerson (2002, p. 208) describes even the more mundane explanations within a response could disclose a particularly interesting piece of information. There were also risks of paraphrasing and care was necessary to ensure that the exact words were used: referring back to the original audio files and written notes made at the time as necessary. In this way it was possible to avoid placing interpretivist values on the responses or replacing the actual words with inaccurate terminology (Bell & Opie, 2002, p. 167; Clark, 1996, p. 12). The most obvious flaw in this process was a habit of paraphrasing what was being said; something attributed to an attempt to save time and speed up the process. For the purposes of clarity all questions were denoted with the prefix "JW" with responses from the training staff prefixed with "TS" and responses from the students prefixed with "T". All prefixes are followed with a unique sequential reference number and this format is also used within the body of this thesis.

Having established from VanderStaay's (2003, p. 390) research that personal beliefs can prevent researchers hearing what is actually being said there was an identified risk of contaminating the interpretation of responses with personal bias and prejudice. The solution was to focus not only on what was being said but to maintain what Landström (2009, p. 136) described as a "neutral attitude with personal assumptions and interpretations bracketed out". This was maintained throughout the process of conducting and transcribing the interview data. Common assumptions came from applying a management perspective to what was being said. For example clarifying a phrase used by the students to describe a physical problem of restraining suspects (having a strong grip) that is also common management terminology for having a thorough understanding of a situation. Another common error was altering the grammatical context of what was being said, for example expanding words that are commonly abbreviated or having the interpretation contaminated by words spoken with a strong regional accent.

This brought home the comments made by Bryman (2001, p. 323) that "transcribers need to be trained in the same way that interviewers do". Consideration was given to subscribing to a professional transcription company to produce complete transcripts of all the interviews. However even the cheapest available rate would have generated an unaffordable cost leaving the existing option of manually processing the data. However, this did have the advantage of enabling greater familiarity with the content that might otherwise have been missing or would have required a further investment of time during the analysis phase of the research. A drawback to this was re-living the emotions experienced during interview whilst completing the transcript. One particular interviewee had spoken with a particularly strong regional accent punctuated with long pauses. In this instance the process of transcribing the data was as frustrating as conducting the original interview making the task a particular test of commitment and endurance. However, the time devoted to completing the transcripts formed a crucial part of the seven stage process adopted for analysing the data, which is discussed in the next section.

## Data analysis

Throughout the planning, preparation and data gathering stages of the research one question repeatedly arose, as posed by O’Leary (2004, p. 184); “what am I going to do with it?”. The method of coding the interview data presented another set of choices: whether to use a manual system of post-it notes and florescent marker pens or use computer software. The computer option provided a number of options including using Microsoft Excel, Access or OneNote. The alternative was to secure a library loan of an analytical package such as the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) or purchase a product such as NVivo. The initial impression from evaluating trial versions of SPSS and NVivo was that the process of setting the parameters for coding the data was a subjective and time consuming process. For the time it took to create the coding structure it was as easy to cut and paste extracts from the interviews into an Excel spreadsheet, an observation Bryman (2001, p. 423) fully agreed with.

Another drawback of trying to establish variables before analysing the data when using NVivo were the automatic restrictions placed on what would have to be anticipated outcomes (Wilkinson, 2000, p. 84). The purpose of undertaking a phenomenographical approach was to describe the qualitatively different ways student constables conceptualised reflection (Linder & Marshall, 2003, p. 272) not to produce data in a format that suited the software packages. The approach followed for this paper was to use an Excel spreadsheet to analyse data using the seven phase process, shown in Figure 2-1, as described by Dahlgren and Fallsberg (1991, p. 152).

1. Familiarisation: Listening to the interviews at least three times and repeatedly checking transcripts for accuracy.
2. Condensation: Reducing transcripts to a short statement representative of the overall interview.
3. Comparison: Establishing and comparing which short statements were similar to others and those that differed.
4. Grouping: Placing those short statements that were similar together for initial categorization.
5. Articulating: Describing categories with no commonality giving a specific, theme for each different category.
6. Labelling: Allocating a specific description and expression for each denoted category.
7. Contrasting: Comparison of the final categories with regard to similarities and differences based on individual perceptions and understanding.

Figure 2-1: Seven step process for data analysis

Adapted from Dahlgren and Fallsberg (1991, p. 152)

At the beginning of stage one each interview was reviewed repeatedly with transcripts made of key statements and short bullet point notes to begin the process of constructing how individual students conceptualise reflection (Boyd & Fales, 1983, p. 101). During this initial phase great care was taken to ensure that the exact words and phrases were used. This involved referring back to the original audio files and any written notes made at the time as necessary, bracketing out personal values, emendations to grammar and interpretations of what was being said. In this way it was possible to reduce significantly subjective values being placed on the responses or replace the actual words used with personal terminology (Bell & Opie, 2002, p. 167; Clark, 1996, p. 12). From there it was possible to begin stage two of processing and condensing the raw data (Wilkinson, 2000, p. 79).

Stage two was a process of extracting the most significant statements made by each respondent to each of the key questions. To structure this part of the process a simple table format was devised using Microsoft Word that allowed responses to the key questions to be placed under specific headings. From this a short but representative version of each interview was prepared for stage three of the process. This was the most time consuming aspect of the analysis because although there had been an initial process of familiarisation it was necessary to continually check the original audio files and notes to ensure the integrity of each quotation being used. Here again preconceived ideas and interpretations were identified and bracketed out with the focus kept on how the phenomenon of reflection was being articulated by the participants (Marton, 1994, p. 4428).

Stage three involved establishing and comparing which statements were similar to others and those that differed by seeking out key words or phrases. These were recorded using Microsoft Excel spreadsheet software using the horizontal axis to denote the transcript code and the vertical axis to denote the particular experience being expressed (as illustrated at Table 5-1 and Table 5-2). This enabled new responses to be highlighted as they were made during each interview and to identify where responses had already been made in previous interviews. Each new response or theme was transferred to the 'Themes' column on the spreadsheet as it emerged. This enabled a record to be kept of themes as they appeared and to identify the point at which new themes stopped emerging.

Stage four involved placing those short statements that were similar together for initial categorisation and was managed by placing similar statements together and colour coding that part of the spreadsheet. This began to establish the hierarchical alignment of responses whilst retaining information of which interview produced the data. This enabled the use of further extracts from the interviews whilst placing responses within the groups in their shared context. Progression could then be made to stage five and the process of describing those groups of responses that held no similarity with responses contained within other groups.

Stage five involved describing each category that held no commonality with other groups and differentiating between them to identify specific themes. This process again relied on the key words and phrases identified during stage three and were illuminated using direct extracts from the interviews. This stage allowed the natural theme of each category to be described enabling a specific description or expression for each theme to be developed for stage six. Stage six involved allocating a specific expression for each category based on the descriptions distilled during stage five. This provided the basis upon which the limited number of qualitatively different ways student constables' conceptualised reflection could be identified.

Stage seven provided the opportunity to examine the depth to which student constables conceptualised reflection and provided a critical comparison of the final categories with regard to similarities and differences of the data. As Dahlgren and Fallsberg (1991, p. 152) highlight it would be wrong to assume that a dogmatic approach was required for each stage of the process. Stages four and five were concluded only after a number of attempts and numerous revisions before nominating a suitable description and expression at stage six. The actual process of data analysis was not as clear cut or straight forward as the seven stage process might indicate and was the source of a great deal of apprehension and revision before a final hierarchical model, discussed in Chapter Six, could be developed.

## **Conclusions on research methodology**

The apprehensions and emotions encountered to identify and implement a successful research and analysis methodology are clearly ones shared with other researchers (Wincup, 1999, p. 118). This leads to the inescapable conclusion that despite the best intentions the research process could always be criticised as being subjectively flawed by the beliefs and interests of the researcher. However this is not necessarily a negative revelation if there is a receptiveness and acknowledgment to respond to this in anticipation of conducting the actual research. Recognising the importance of maintaining an ongoing awareness and

reflexivity towards personal views is also an important aspect of the research process (Bryman, 2001, p. 23). This is particularly apt given that “individuals with different ontological perspectives will inevitably place their own interpretation on the outcomes of a particular research method” (King & Liebling, 2008, p. 444).

Chapter Two has consolidated and discussed the methodology used across different phases of this research project with each stage informing and influencing the next section. Whilst this has resulted in some aspects of the methodology being discussed out of sequence it allows for an uninterrupted discussion throughout the rest of this paper of the outcomes and subsequent analysis of the literature review and data gathering stages of the research. The next chapter sets out the literature that underpins the theoretical basis of this research project and identifies the gap in existing knowledge of reflection and reflective learning in policing. This forms the basis upon which the research is conducted setting the foundations for determining how student constables pursuing the Foundation Training Programme with the Metropolitan Police conceptualise reflection.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Theoretical models of reflection**

This chapter explores the available literature discussing theoretical models of reflection and discusses the concept of improving the standard of policing through the acquisition of professional knowledge and professional practice. The first section of this chapter discusses theoretical models of reflection and the concept of reflective learning. The second section discusses professional knowledge and professional practice in the context of policing with reference to internal and external documents that discuss police training. The third section discusses the current gap in knowledge of reflection in policing in contrast to the depth and breadth of published knowledge that exists in education and health care. Understanding the link between improving professional standards and accepted models of reflection provides a key link to appreciating how reflective learning is currently encouraged in recruit training. This also establishes the basis upon which student and organisational conceptions of reflection can be interpreted and understood for further discussion in Chapters Four and Five.

#### **Models of reflection**

This thesis makes an assumption that reflection and reflective learning is based on thinking (Svensson, 1997, p. 165) and that individuals can learn from different situations and life experiences. This assumption follows a rationale that gaining knowledge is followed by a process of learning that can be applied to any given subject (Marton, 1981, p. 182). However, Dunning et al (2003, p. 83) observed that people are not necessary adept at spotting the limitations of their knowledge and often greatly overestimate the extent of their skills and talent. The process of reflection builds on the concept of thought, taking its roots from the early works of psychologists and educational theorists such as Jean Piaget and John Dewey. Kolb credits both Piaget and Dewey as taking the first steps towards publishing research on the foundations of cognitive thought and how intelligence is shaped by experience (Kolb, 1984, p. 12). Indeed Piaget's work on how children think

discusses there being more than one type of thought process: directed and undirected (Piaget, 1932, p. 43). This is echoed in more modern work and on the most basic level reflection has been described as common sense thinking in the form of everyday thoughts (Moon, 2004, p. 82). Dewey places a more dynamic interpretation on the process describing it as the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief (Dewey, 1933, p. 6).

The information that drives those beliefs is derived through the sensations of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste or a combination of those five senses. That information is interpreted by the brain as visual images, audible sounds, physical or emotional feelings (Knight, 2002, p. 17). These factors enable individuals to make judgements on situations basing interpretations and responses on their previous experience. Information received can be from subtle sources such as aromas, non verbal communication and discreet body language or blatant signals such as aggressive acts of physical or verbal abuse. The evaluation process of analysing the information comes from a process of questioning and challenging the perception of what is being received. The way that these concepts are utilised is the basis of understanding reflection and subsequently reflective learning.

The term reflection is used to cover a wide spectrum of attentiveness from a basic awareness of physical surroundings to complex interwoven cognitive concepts of self and others. Authors that advocate reflection and reflective learning consider it worthwhile as it “converts action that is impulsive into intelligent action” (Dewey, 1933, p. 17). At primordial levels comparisons can be made to how an “infant reacts when it is hungry but without it understanding why” (De Board & Grahame, 1998, p. 101; van Manen, 2007, p. 18). At more profound levels reflection is to “acknowledge differentiation between the meaning of understanding when viewed from different perspectives” (Mezirow, 1981, pp. 12-13). When considering reflection in the deeper sense it involves conceiving an understanding of how interactions are influenced by experience and understanding as conceived by other individuals. Reflection can take many forms and may be undertaken through an informal process of thinking or in a more structured format such as maintaining, and reviewing, a diary or journal (Cooper, 1998, p. 48). One of the earliest models

of reflection comes from the American Educational theorist David Kolb whose model of experiential learning (see Figure 3-1) was one of the first by which reflection could be operationalised for practical use.

Kolb drew upon the work of Lewin (1951) to develop his model of experiential learning. Starting with a specific event Kolb envisaged the experience would provoke inward self-critical feedback in the form of reflection. This would begin the process of developing a new theory or concept on how to deal with the original experience in a different way the next time it was encountered (Kolb, 1984, pp. 21-22). This process of reflection was also identified by Schon (1983, p. 277) who coined the phrase 'reflection-on-action' which he described, in the context of a series of vocational examples, as allowing a person to analyse their actions to improve future performance. Kolb, unlike Schon, was able to produce the process of reflection into a tangible model that could be followed and repeated from any point in the process.

Kolb does not provide the only modular concept to promote reflection. Taylor (2006, p. 72) developed her own explanation of reflection as did Gibbs (1988, p. 47). However, Kolb's model was selected out of deference to it being one of the earliest models that was sufficiently influential to provoke discussion and attempts to emulate the original work. Taylor's model was structured on a mnemonic of the word 'REFLECT', although Lipp (2005, p. 95) observes that Taylor's approach could be criticised as a variation of Jurgen Habermas' critical theory. Conversely Gibbs' model of cyclic reflection (Gibbs, 1988, p. 47) was easy to follow although it appears, as Burton discusses, to be an extension of Kolb's model of experiential learning (Burton, 2000, p. 325). However, having access to models of reflection does not in itself assist to conceptualise reflection or reflective learning and requires a clear link to a practical application in the workplace.

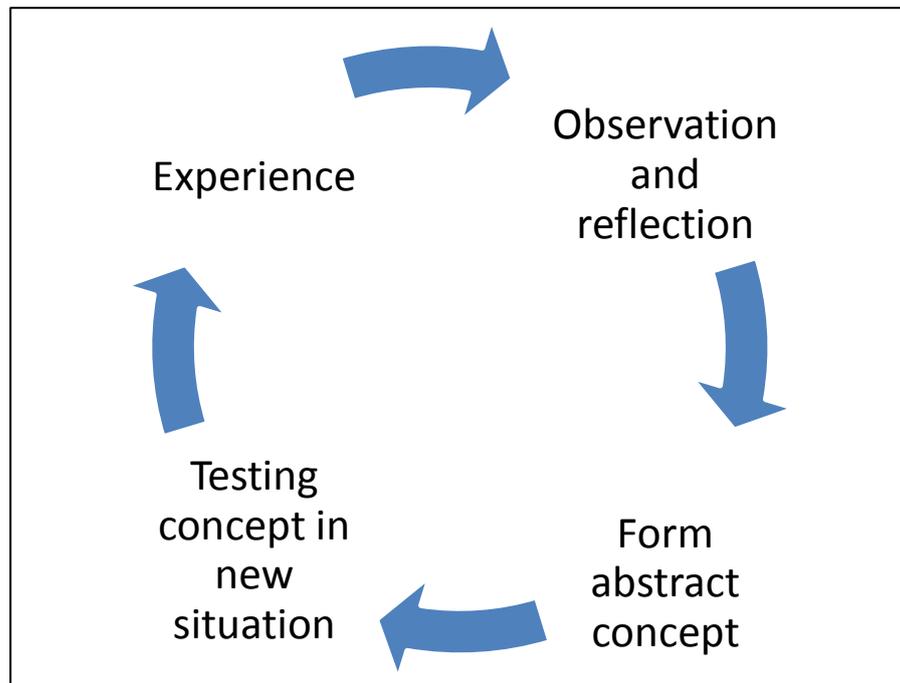


Figure 3-1: Kolb's model of experiential learning  
Adapted from Kolb (1984, p. 21)

References to Kolb's model can be found in critiques by authors discussing learning in topics including industrialism and entrepreneurialism. This provides an ideal opportunity to consider and apply the model to a range of situations and assists with establishing the link between professional knowledge and professional practice. The point at which this learning begins is any time there is an experience that triggers a change in the learning process (Boyd & Fales, 1983, p. 99; Huber, 1991, p. 89). Triggers for this can include what Sullivan (2000, p. 167) describes as a "critical incident" that forces change or could simply be taking a moment to step back and reflect on what is happening. The next phase of forming an abstract concept is the beginning of the learning process where the individual recognises the change in circumstances (Cope & Watts, 2000, p. 106). This process of testing the concept in a new situation can refer either to an immediate response or sometime later in the future (Pierson, 1998, p. 167). The act of applying the newly found knowledge or experience then becomes an action of expanding existing boundaries from which the reflective process can begin again (Kalantzis & Cope, 2004, p. 54).

Schon (1983, p. 5) suggested that the process of reflection was restricted to the higher echelons of academics and professional bodies. However, these elitists gradually lost their exclusive claim to reflection and reflective practice has now become an integral part of personal development in so called 'blue-collar' professionals including nursing (Clegg, Tan, & Saeidi, 2002, p. 131; Torsvik & Hedlund, 2008, pp. 389-396), social work (Eraut, 1994, p. 3) and education (Vazir, 2006, pp. 445-454). The relevance of reflection for law enforcement becomes much clearer in this context because policing has traditionally been seen as a vocation requiring the practical application of both professional knowledge and professional practice. At street level officers need to address issues which cannot be easily compartmentalised, placing far greater emphasis on emotional complexities, which are almost impossible to quantify (Kolb, 1984, p. 185).

### **Professional knowledge and professional practice**

Traditionally professional knowledge was considered as being acquired through practice and repetition of a particular skill, taught by experts through apprenticeships or working with a mentor (Eraut, 1994, p. 38; Leinhardt, Young, & Merriman, 1995, p. 401). This gave rise to a small number of skilled workers with a very narrow field of expertise with little in the way of explanation or codification of the knowledge that was being passed on (Leinhardt et al., 1995, p. 402). Other drawbacks, articulated by Eraut, were that students were reliant on the availability and influence of their mentors and could be easily exploited as a cheap source of income (Eraut, 1994, p. 6). The rise of academic institutions increased the availability of specialised knowledge to a wider audience and provided an element of consistency with the creation of occupational standards. From here it became possible to apply the term professionalism to almost any occupation where there is a desire to achieve the highest standards; not just doctors and lawyers that Schon (1983, p. 4) described as the "highly esteemed professions".

Schon discusses how the early models of understanding knowledge emerged in the early 1940s as a result of rapid industrial and technological expansion from which he coined the Model of Technical Rationality (Schon, 1983, p. 21). The

resulting knowledge, derived from these tradition based scientific communities, was “hierarchical and constant” (Yam, 2005, p. 568). However, because of the complex and obscure nature of the areas being studied access to the information became restricted to a small section of the academic community (Simpson, 2000, p. 169). This resulted in a smaller number of specialists developing an increasing level of knowledge about a decreasing number of specialist subjects. Fryer (2004, p. 175) describes how researchers became unregulated and self-serving and instead of seeking to develop knowledge for the good of society sought to protect their own specialist interests. This generated an increasing perception by the public that they were being excluded from a learning process that made little contribution to social issues such as crime control and education (Kemmis, 1985, p. 149).

It was also becoming clear that the specialist knowledge of technology and engineering professionals was incapable of resolving those social issues which became the responsibility of the so called minor professions such as workers in law enforcement, education and health care. Yet these guardians of social stability were viewed with suspicion by academics on the basis that there were no reliable method of developing systematic ways to measure professional knowledge (Schon, 1983, p. 23). Schon also outlines Glazer’s view that social problems could not be resolved by stable and standardised scientific practice (Glazer, 1963 in Schon, 1983, p. 23). This logic is something of a dichotomy as it implied that reliable scientific research cannot be carried out unless the subject itself adheres to scientific processes (Aastrup Rømer, 2003, p. 86). As such the model of Technical Rationality was limited in how it could be used to interpret knowledge and practice in relation to social sciences.

The rise of the so called “softer professions” (Mead, 2000, p. 113) led to a train of thought that knowledge must come from experience (Mitchell, 2007). Or as Abbott phrased it “professional practice evolves from applying knowledge to practical situations” (Abbott, 1981, p. 826). This was most relevant for professions such as education and nursing whose work did not fit easily into repeatable or structured processes for evaluation. Further difficulties were also encountered when

addressing the context in which knowledge is used (Dickson, 2007, p. 13; Eraut, 1994, p. 33). Intangible knowledge cannot be properly expressed simply through writing, which makes validation extremely difficult (Eraut, 1994, p. 42). This view was supported by other academics, for example Gergen made the observation that “human behaviour cannot be readily assessed through empirical means” (Gergen, 1982, p. 74). This shift in emphasis was also recognised by Eraut who identified that research into professional practice makes professional knowledge more relevant (Eraut, 1994, p. 47).

Professionalism in the context of law enforcement has evolved slowly as policing dislodged a historical image of being “a vocation that evolved from an uneducated, ill-disciplined working class background” (Reiner, 2000, p. 14). This negative heritage had persisted for some considerable time and historically some officers have been described even less favourably as being “scarcely removed from idiotism” (Critchley, 1978, p. 18). Indeed Schon neglects to include law enforcement at all in his definition of those careers that hold sway over issues of great social importance (Schon, 1983, p. 4). A contemporary view of the police lacking professionalism is hardly surprising after the ‘Dixon of Dock Green’ image of the police was shattered in the 1970s by the exposure of corruption, racism and malpractice (Reiner, 2000, p. 81). This then is hardly the image of an organisation aspiring to qualities that might be described as professional: implying credibility, responsibility and sound knowledge (Atherton, 1999, p. 86). Professionalism is, as discussed by Parker (2006, p. 93), a difficult concept to define and has distinct connotations in different organisations. In the context of policing it would not be unreasonable to suggest a definition that includes the aspiration to, and maintenance of, the highest standards of integrity and competence demonstrated in the daily routines of officers. With those high standards in mind it might be expected there would be an abundance of literature discussing reflection and reflective learning within the police. The reality is that there is little if any; despite the overwhelming volume attributed to other public service agencies such as education and health care.

## Literature on reflection and reflective learning in policing

As discussed in the process to identify existing literature focused initially on the 'International Journal: Police Practice and Research'. A keyword search of the titles and abstracts of 2877 publications over the period 2000–2006 showed that only eight papers included any reference to reflection in the context of policing. Those articles were drawn from a varied range of international publications including 'The Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice', 'UK Home Office Research', 'Journal for Women and Criminal Justice' and 'The British Journal of Criminology'. The categories reviewed included topics such as public confidence, citizen satisfaction, training, corruption, policing strategies, misconduct and community policing. However none of them included a specific category for reflection or reflective learning in policing. This appeared unusual given the prominence of research into public confidence, citizen satisfaction and training that suggested professional service delivery was of paramount importance to policing across the world. The summary of police research in the International Journal: Police Practice and Research extended only to 2006 so more recent literature was also reviewed to focus specifically on reflection and reflective learning and journals specialising in police performance and recruitment; a summary of which is shown in Table 3-1 below:

Key words searched	Subject discipline
Reflection, reflective learning, training, satisfaction, public confidence, community policing, police corruption, policing strategies, police misconduct	Policing, criminal justice, criminology
Reflection, reflective learning	Education
Reflection, reflective learning	Health Care
Reflection, reflective learning	Social Care

Table 3-1: Summary of initial search criteria and subject disciplines

The positive influence of the selection process, mentoring and supporting professional development for new recruits to the Nigerian police force is discussed by Aremu and Lawal (2009, p. 242). The authors discuss how receptive recruits were to being mentored in emotional intelligence, acknowledging how little research there is in the context of policing. Birza (2008) also conducted research into the importance of the recruitment process with the selection of high calibre applicants. These articles contained discussions on how recruitment and selection processes should be able to identify positive attributes in applicants and the value of qualities such as effective communication as well as physical ability (Birzer, 2008, p. 200; Lord, 1998, p. 284). What the authors do not discuss is the role reflection might have in the development of communication skills for officers who have already been selected or how those officers conceptualise reflection.

Other researchers have clearly undertaken work that demonstrates police officers reflecting in the workplace. Lundin and Nulden (2007, p. 237) for example investigate how police officers talk about their perception and use of police tools such as cars and radios. However, whilst this research is presented as a way of learning about procedures and equipment there is no notion about how the officers conceive of reflection or reflective learning. There is little doubt however that the research identifies an ability by the officers to reflect on activities such as learning to use new equipment. Whilst some further analysis of work by authors such as Haberland (Haberfeld, 2002) and Leishman (Leishman, Loveday, & Savage, 1996a) showed an availability of literature discussing police training there were no references to how officers conceptualise reflection or reflective learning within the training process. A more recent publication, 'reflective practice for policing students' (Copley, 2011), discusses models for reflective learning and how they can be applied when dealing to policing scenarios such as a fight in the street or giving evidence in court. However this publication does not discuss the experiences of officers reflecting on police practice or how police officers conceive of reflection.

This raised the question as to whether the subject matter had already been considered and dismissed as irrelevant to policing. However, this seemed unlikely

as there is a reasonable expectation that there would be some published work outlining why the subject did not warrant further research. It was more likely that up to now there was insufficient understanding of reflection and reflective learning within the police or inadequate access opportunities for academic institutions to generate professional research. This led to a review of the literature published on reflection in agencies dealing with education and health. The intention was to establish how practical interventions in the work place can be implemented by understanding how teachers and nurses conceptualise reflection and discuss what the implications would be for applying those concepts to policing.

## **Reflective learning in health and education**

The benefits of reflective learning in nursing and teaching are well documented and have been credited with improving practice, learning to manage change, problem solving and empowering decision making (Roffey-Barentsen & Malthouse, 2009, pp. 16-19). Reflection is also recognised as benefiting organisations, not just individuals, by developing learning opportunities within the work environment (Hoyrup, 2004, p. 443; Jarvinen & Poikela, 2001, p. 282). Other advocates of reflection acknowledge the flexibility of professional learning that enables individuals to respond to changes in practice and policies within the structured approach provided by work based assessments (Hyde, 2009, p. 117). These then are adaptations not just in working practices but, as described by Lewin (1948, p. 49), interdependent cultural changes in values, beliefs and conduct. Like nurses, doctors and teachers; police officers need to address areas arising from social interactions which cannot be easily compartmentalised, placing far greater emphasis on what Kolb (1984, p. 185) describes as “emotional complexities”.

Within the health care professions roles, such as nursing, simply having extensive medical knowledge is insufficient unless it is “integrated with the intuition to apply that knowledge in situations that are emotionally as well as clinically complex” (Gustafsson & Fagerberg, 2004, p. 272). These are skills that cannot be taught easily at universities or training colleges and are an evolving practice of learning to

apply knowledge to practical situations (Abbott, 1981, p. 826). This concept was also recognised by Eraut who identified that research into professional practice places great emphasis on the application of professional knowledge (Eraut, 1994, p. 47).

Research that has been conducted on reflection and reflective practice in nursing covers a wide range of skills from clinical interventions in accident and emergency situations to long-term palliative care. Studies focus on the experience of health care staff including physicians and nurses examining how experience informed the judgement of those responsible for critical decisions and the subsequent outcomes for those in their care. Whilst the studies conducted were varied the outcomes were broadly positive. These included raising awareness of securing patient participation (Frank et al., 2009, p. 2561), improving decision making, job satisfaction (Baker, 1997, p. 46) and maintaining the dignity of patients (Dahl, Nyberg, & Edéll-Gustafsson, 2003, p. 297). Other studies conclude that reflection in nursing is conceived as providing a broad range of benefits by practitioner nurses themselves. Gustafsson (2009, p. 1460) concluded that reflection was also conceived of as an “instrument for learning, understanding and encouraging change as well as managing, handling and coping with near impossible working conditions to manage difficulty and stress”.

Reflective learning in education, as in nursing, requires more than just an erudite understanding of academic subject matter. Teaching skills require an ability to deliver knowledge to students whilst recognising varying levels of individual understanding or abilities to understand. Some authors advocate the view that because of the nature of teaching there is “no such thing as an unreflective teacher” (Zeichner, 1996, p. 207). Others believe that learning through reflection in teaching is “central to professional development” (Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006, p. 1022). Lynch (2000, p. 26) supports this view and comments that reflection is an “academic virtue”. Reflection within education has developed in two main directions: reflection on the delivery of education to students and reflection within the training programme for teachers themselves. Even within the delivery of education reflection is conceived of as developing a greater understanding of

various elements of professional knowledge and practice. Aspects of reflection in teaching can encompass the professional relationship between students and teachers, as discussed by Regmi (2009, p. 559), as well as understanding the learning needs of the students themselves. In this respect reflective learning in teaching extends beyond securing a deeper understanding of interactions in the workplace and becomes a key milestone during the early stages of a teacher's career (Hatton & Smith, 1995, p. 33). This also comes with recognition that the early stages of a newly qualified teacher's career are, as described by Yaffe (2010, p. 381), the "most demanding".

Education has seen a variety of interpretations and expressions of reflection that include classifications of different types of reflection, published narratives of teacher reflective experiences and manuals providing step-by-step guidance on how teachers can become reflective practitioners (Fendler, 2003, p. 18). This attention to reflective learning in education has seen increased focus on individual and collaborative reflection; which Baird (1991, p. 170) observes is particularly beneficial during the early development stages of student teacher training. The diversity of literature discussing reflection within teaching and teacher training has extended beyond its inclusion in professional development and has become the subject of research in its own right, forming the foundation for "many teacher education programmes" (Loughran, 2002, p. 33; Valli, 1997, p. 85). Thus sharing knowledge, practice and experience becomes an evolving cyclic process with each element informing and developing the others.

The education system has embraced mentoring and reflection to the point where Harrison (2005, p. 419) notes that "professional learning is an entitlement and responsibility for all teachers". This view echoes that of the General Teaching Council in England with the publication in 2003 of a code of professional values and practice which stated:

*"Teachers continually reflect on their practice, improve their skills and deepen their knowledge. They want to adapt their teaching appropriately to take account of new*

*findings, ideas and technologies...teachers support their colleagues in achieving the highest professional standards. They are fully committed to sharing their own expertise and insights in the interests of the people they teach and are always open to learning from the effective practice of their colleagues”*

(General Teaching Council, 2003, p. 12).

Parallels can be drawn here between the challenges faced by newly appointed nurses, teachers and police recruits in that the realities and demands of the role cannot be easily replicated during initial training. As discussed in Chapter One police recruits have historically faced an ingrained culture of resistance from more experienced officers to share tacit knowledge of policing skills. In a similar way those new to the professions of teaching and nursing experience initial difficulties at the early stages of their careers with pressures that Christie (2007, p. 484) describes as “demanding workloads and unfamiliar processes”.

Chapter Three has mapped-out some of the existing literature that deals with theoretical models of reflection and the current published knowledge discussing reflection and reflective learning in education and health care. This chapter has also identified a gap in the existing published knowledge of reflection and reflective learning in policing; whilst drawing parallels between the challenges faced by other newly appointed professionals managed in agencies providing services for education and health care. Despite this commonality between these agencies there is a dearth of published research into reflective learning in policing when compared to nursing and teaching. This underpins the relevance of this research project to determine how student constables in the Metropolitan Police conceptualise reflection. With this in mind Chapter Four looks at the structure of recruit training and discusses what opportunities are available for student constables to engage with reflection and reflective learning during the early stages of recruit training.

# Chapter 4

## Reflection in the training regime

Having established in Chapter Three there is limited published literature that discusses reflective learning in policing Chapter Four discusses what instruction student constables receive about reflection whilst training as recruits. This chapter begins with illustrating historical and current Metropolitan Police objectives for recruit training showing how key objectives have changed since 1985. This chapter also discusses to what extent reflective learning is embedded in the recruit training programme and what opportunities exist for student constables to experience reflection.

In 1985 the training objectives for the Metropolitan Police, as summarised in Figure 4-1 below, placed a strong emphasis on officers understanding the impact they would have individually and as a group on other people:

1. Reflect credit upon the police force in appearance and behaviour on and off duty;
2. Be capable of dealing impartially with people irrespective of background or circumstances;
3. Identify how his/her personality affects others and display knowledge of how people are likely to respond in given circumstances;
4. Identify the effects of group behaviour upon members of the police and the public;
5. Apply a wide variety of interpersonal skills when dealing with members of the public;
6. Understand the customs, viewpoints and traditions of minorities;
7. Demonstrate flexibility and judgement when dealing with varied situations.

Figure 4-1: Metropolitan Police Recruit Training Objectives (1985)

Adapted from Bull & Horncastle (1994, p. 144)

Current Metropolitan Police training objectives are more broadly stated although they retain the essence of maintaining effective interpersonal skills and responding to the needs of local communities:

*“Enable a measurable increase in the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and behaviours of students that have been defined as necessary for the effective execution of their duties leading to a desired improvement...understand the communities they serve, have effective communication skills, be competent and have the necessary skills to perform the role of constable” (MPS, 2009).*

Despite being over 20 years apart both sets of training objectives strive for a minimum accepted standard of service from recruits in the Metropolitan Police. These can also be distilled into core elements of professional knowledge and professional practice. The 22 National Occupational Standards, upon which recruit training is structured, draw on the importance of developing professional knowledge and practice across a range of policing skills linking directly to reflecting on experience and incorporating new knowledge into practice. However, the only set of National Occupational Standards found to make specific mention of reflection were contained within course notes aimed at increasing trust and confidence in policing amongst minority ethnic communities that stated “reflect on and evaluate own values, priorities, interests and effectiveness” (MPS, 2003, p. 2).

## **Structure of recruit training in the Metropolitan Police**

Recruit training is currently structured over a two year probationary period managed in four phases (see Figure 4-2 below). Each phase of training covers specific areas of learning starting with basic time management skills and culminating with officers who complete the training programme undertaking unsupervised uniformed patrols.

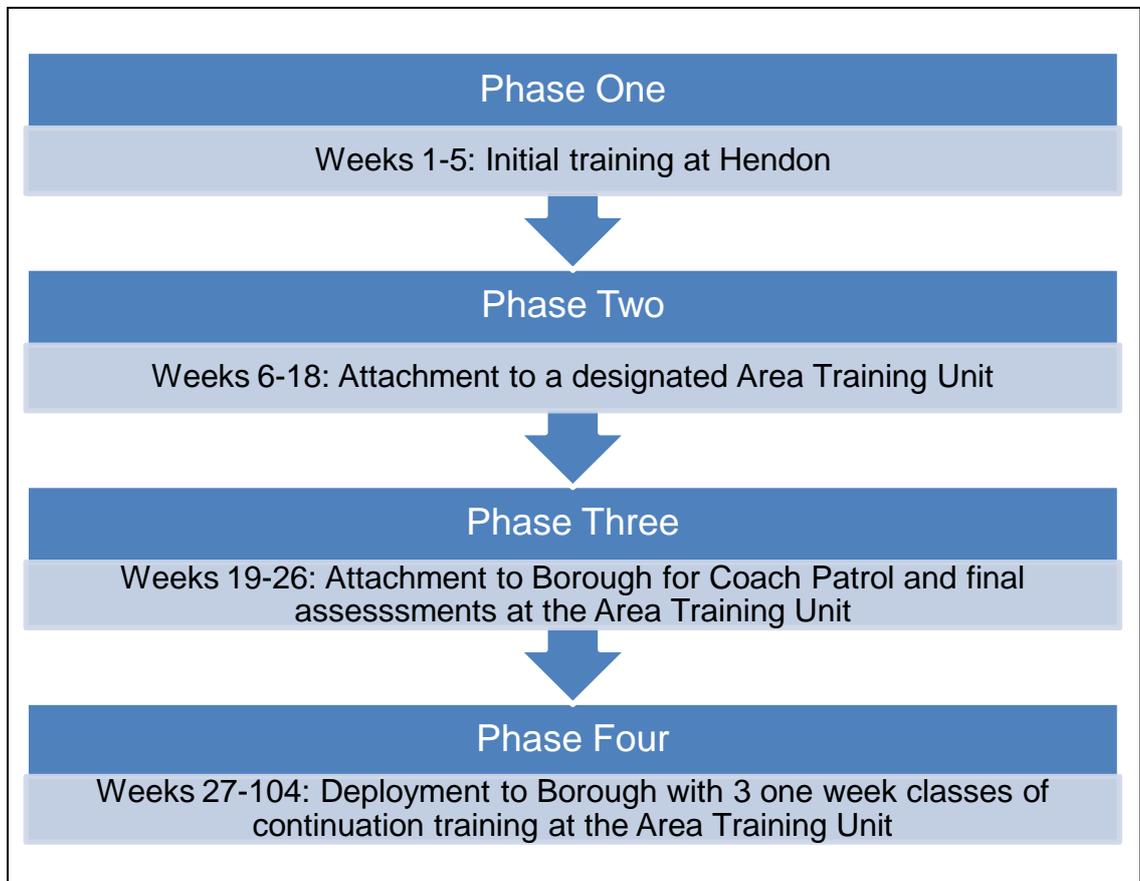


Figure 4-2: Overview of the MPS recruit training programme (MPS, 2010b)

Phase one comprises five weeks initial training at Hendon where the basic principles of policing are taught. These include lessons in study techniques, time management, officer safety, emergency life saving, use of police radios and simple concepts of crime (MPS, 2010b). Phase two takes the recruits to a nominated Area Training Unit where they continue to build up the depth and complexity of legislative knowledge and theory until phase three at week 19. Phase three takes the recruits to a nominated Borough Operational Command Unit (BOCU) where they remain until week 26 under the supervision of a coach patrol tutor.

From week 19 student constables are deployed to their BOCU where it is intended they will complete their two year probationary period under the supervision of an experience “coach patrol” constable. During the coach patrol module phase of training recruits must complete a certain number of “Police Action Checklists” (PAC) that are activities observed and assessed by the coach patrol tutor (MPS,

2010b). These activities include dealing with specific tasks such as making at least two arrests and investigating a domestic or racial incident. Guidelines for this process acknowledge that not all officers will get the opportunity to deal with every type of incident so knowledge and understanding is assessed through a recorded professional discussion with the coach patrol tutor. The completed PACs are returned to the training units and form part of each officer's permanent record. Weeks twenty-four and twenty-five are completed at Hendon with successful officers participating in a formal graduation ceremony before being returned to their training unit the final phase four (MPS, 2010a).

This final phase extends to the end of the two year probationary period and includes three one week training sessions using a computer based immersive training system known as "HYDRA" (MPS, 2010b). The HYDRA sessions recreate live enquiries based on scenarios such as locating a person who has been reported as missing. Actions and decisions made by the recruits are observed through audio and video links. Information is drip-fed throughout the scenario in the form of documents, video feeds and other interactive media that changes the direction of the enquiry depending on how officers respond to each piece of new information. If all stages of the training and assessments are completed successfully the officer is confirmed as a substantive constable at the end of the two year probationary period.

## **Coach patrol tutors**

Officers undertaking the role of coach patrol receive instruction in what student constables are expected to achieve during their probationary period and references to "reflective practice" and "professional reflective practice" (MPS, 2007, pp. 7-8) are included in their training manual. The model for professional reflective practice (Figure 4-3 below) mirrors that of Kolb's model of experiential learning (Figure 3-1) and discusses factors that influence the assessment process including the background, personality and experience of the tutor. The model of professional reflective practice is designed to assist coach patrol tutors support

student constables and is augmented with references to other models of learning such as the Johari window, Herzberg's steps and Batari's box.

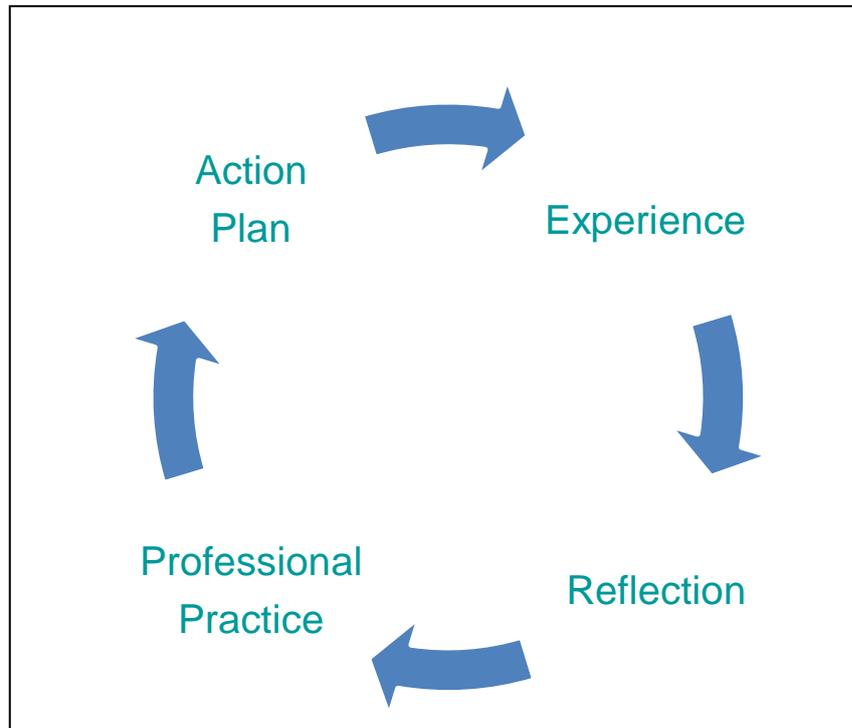


Figure 4-3: Model of professional reflective practice (MPS, 2007, p. 7)

The text that supports this model provides an explanation for each stage of the learning cycle which is designed for coach patrol tutors to support student constables reflect and learn from specific experiences:

**“Experience:** *The professional reflective practice cycle usually begins with an experience. Here the considerations open to you can be taken from any experience that is considered appropriate. This can come about as the result of feedback from the Tutor PC/MS or it can be generated by the students themselves.*

**Reflection:** *Following the experience the next step is to think about it. It is helpful to ask yourself a number of questions such*

*as: What happened? Why did it happen? How did it happen? Here it is useful to think about the subject from a number of different perspectives. This process can take a number of days as you mull over the cause and effects”.*

**Professional Practice:** *It is useful to have some method of evaluating the experience, for example, you can ask yourself, how does this relate to my professional practice? The questions that could be asked here include: What did I learn? How does this relate to my professional practice exactly? What will I do differently as a result of this? What did I like, or not like and why? How does this relate to me? Am I being objective or subjective? Am I being positive or negative? Why?*

**Action plan:** *The final plan of the cycle involves the action plan: this can take the form of specific goals. These goals are derived from considerations of your professional practice. Make your goals SMART, in other words they should be measurable, achievable, relevant and be time bound. When you have achieved your goals you are ready for the next experience and so on”. (MPS, 2007, pp. 8-9)*

## **Reflective learning within the Foundation Training Programme**

The background research for this thesis involved establishing contact with the head of recruit training at the Hendon training school and conducting interviews with members of staff who deliver the training programme. The interviews were conducted with fully informed consent with staff at Hendon and three Area Training Units. During those interviews access was granted to documents used during the Foundation Training Programme including those used to record observations during assessments, a document described as ‘the student self-reflection sheet’ and the foundation training time-table. Where permission has been given copies of these documents are included in the appendices of this thesis.

From the training school perspective recruits are encouraged to reflect on the outcome of all assessed practical activities throughout the course by completing the self-reflection sheet (see Appendix Two) to identify strengths and weaknesses in a particular area of knowledge. The aim is to improve knowledge, understanding and the correct application of law in practical situations to improve the standard of service to the public by maintaining professional standards in policing. However, there appears to be no formal instruction on the process of reflective learning or means by which to assess how student officers apply their concepts of reflection to the role of policing.

A detailed examination of the 26 week time-table that covers the first three phases of recruit training showed little more detail than an overview of the general topic and location at which each subject would be taught. The time-table also had a section that was annotated with comments indicating when instructors were away or when specific students required additional support or attention. Whilst the time-table gave a general overview of the lessons being taught the exact content appeared to vary considerably depending on how, and who, delivers the training. Some training instructors openly discussed deviating from the published time-table to bring their own perspective on training whilst ensuring that the focus remained on specific areas that were known to be included in formal assessments. Whilst there was no specific mention of reflection or reflective learning in the time-table there were several references to “self-reflection” in the section of the time-table titled “Instructor’s Comments Section”. However, these were limited to written work such as witness statements, arrest notes and intelligence reports.

The time-table for the Foundation Training Programme is published weekly giving recruits an opportunity to prepare for lessons either by rehearsing practical skills such as handcuffing or reading study guides referred to as “white notes” (MPS, 2010b). There are over 100 sets of white notes that provide an overview of the lesson content with simplified extracts of legislation illustrated with case studies to place specific aspects of law into a practical context. Formal assessments are held at weeks seven, 10, 12, 17 and 24 of the Foundation Training Programme known as Key Knowledge Evaluations (KKE). A KKE will involve each student completing

a multiple choice question paper to assess technical knowledge followed by an observed role-play to assess the practical application of skills. The role-plays form an important part of the assessment process providing, as discussed by Clements and Jones (2008, p. 123), students with the opportunity to experience how they react in different situations. Students go through the Foundation Training Programme having to complete the course with a minimum pass rate of 60 percent for all KKEs and be determined as “competent” during practical assessments (MPS, 2010b). Students who fail to achieve 60 percent or be determined as “not yet competent” on more than two assessments are offered the provision of specialist support; and further failure to improve results in the student being back-classed. Back-classing involves the student being moved back five weeks within the Foundation Training Programme thus having to integrate with a new class of recruits and repeat that part of the course content a second time. A student who is back-classed twice and still fails to meet the required standard faces dismissal proceedings.

Each assessed activity uses an observation and feedback sheet referred to as a “student practical skill observation sheet” (MPS, 2010b) which is completed by the training staff and marked against specific objectives. These include aspects such as whether the officer had effective physical control of a situation and sufficient legislative knowledge such as providing the correct information upon arrest as required under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. The observation sheet also covers aspects such as the depth of any initial investigation, communicating grounds for arrest, use of force, following legal procedures, observing human rights, health, safety and professional behaviour. These are completed following a discussion between the student and member of staff and should be used in conjunction with the student self-reflection sheet.

## **Use of the self-reflection sheet during recruit training**

The initial response of staff from the Central Training Unit at Hendon suggested that reflection is incorporated from the very beginning of the foundation programme. One of the first questions asked of those staff was whether the self-reflection sheet was still in use during recruit training:

TS5: *“The self-reflection sheet is introduced during phase one [weeks 1-5] of the foundation course.”*

A copy of the self-reflection sheet was provided (see Appendix Two) and found to contain six aspects of performance that the student should consider having completed each activity. These include describing what happened, what went well, what was learnt, areas of improvement, what action will be taken to improve and reflection on behaviour during the activity. The last aspect of the process encourages the student to look at a specific behaviour profile for student officers that forms part of the National Occupational Standards. The student then comments on how they felt their behaviour matched specified listed positive indicators such as effective listening skills and demonstrating empathy or negative indicators such as displaying a disinterested or dismissive attitude. The final part of the self-reflection sheet has space for the assessor to make comments of their observations of the student's actions and behaviour. Once this is completed both student and assessor sign the self-reflection sheet that should then form part of a permanent training record.

This process of self-reflection appeared to encourage students to consider aspects of an activity that went well and not so well; implying there are opportunities for continuing professional development at all stages of the training programme. The expectation of staff at the Central Training Unit is that the self-reflection sheet should be used consistently throughout the two year probationary period. Whether this was stated as a pre-approved corporate response is difficult to say although, as discussed in Chapter Five, only two of the 24 students interviewed had any recollection of seeing the self-reflection sheets during their Foundation Training

Programme. Responses from training staff on the extent of the self-reflection sheets being completed at the Area Training Units included:

TS6: "Yes all the time."

TS11: "Not hard and fast."

The general view of training staff interviewed in respect of completion of the sheets whilst with coach patrol tutors was:

TS5: "Variable."

TS11: "Not consistent."

Any student who does fail an assessment is automatically referred to the Skills to Achieve Results Team otherwise known as "START". Whilst all students are required to achieve the same standard during assessments staff on the START follow a method of intervention to encourage students to identify their own way of developing skills for effective learning. The objective of the START is to support students to identify why they think they do not achieve the desired outcome for assessments and then encourage the students to identify effective solutions. This was clearly focused on encouraging the students to reflect and explore different ways of learning to achieve success in the formal assessments. This could be in the form of identifying an effective technique to study or manage time during examinations. There was clearly a great deal of experience amongst the staff on START not least those with qualifications in Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) and the experience of what was described as using "clean language". The technique of NLP in this context was described as encouraging a process by which students could identify and solve problems for themselves. Examples of this were given as asking students where they perceived themselves to be on a scale of zero to 10 where 10 represented 100 percent success. If a student placed themselves anywhere other than 10 they would be presented with a series of follow up questions such as "why eight?" If a student identified that their revision technique needed to be improved then the process would be repeated after a

given period of time. If the perceived scale of success was subsequently identified as nine the follow up question would be “what are you missing?”

These were clear examples of recruits being encouraged through a process of reflection without any specific structure or direction having been given as to understanding the concept of reflective learning. There were however three specific models found to be utilised during the Foundation Training Programme that sought to teach recruits how to think critically about interactions with other people. These featured predominantly in the arrest and restraint training for recruits and were identified as the Johari window (Figure 4-4), Herzberg’s steps (Figure 4-5) and Batari’s box (Figure 4-6). All three are used in the Foundation Training Programme as models upon which student constables are encouraged to consider awareness of their own influence on interactions with colleagues and members of the public. However, one fundamental problem was, with the exception of the Johari window, the supporting academic literature on how they evolved is somewhat oblique. Each model is used to stimulate critical thinking about how recruits perceive other people and how others might perceive the recruits.

### Johari window

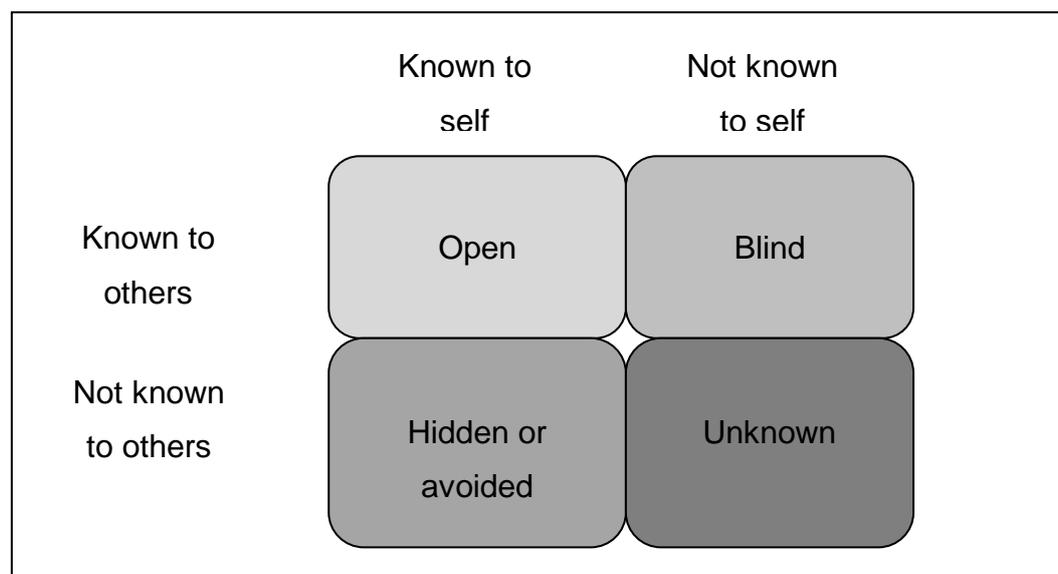


Figure 4-4: Johari window.

Adapted from Luft (1969, p. 11)

Named after Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, who are credited with developing this model in 1969, Johari's window is used to indicate aspects of human awareness and interaction (Roffey-Barentsen & Malthouse, 2009, p. 50). Luft describes how the size of each of the four boxes, relative to the other three, provides a model upon which individuals can determine what they know about others and what others might know about them. The size of the boxes is dynamic (Choo, 2002, p. 260) and the larger the 'open' box the more an individual is determined to be receptive to new ideas and sharing personal information with others.

Other boxes represent things an individual wishes to hide from others and the unknown window are things that neither the individuals, or others, are aware of: for example how someone will react to an unfamiliar or previously unknown experience (Luft, 1969, p. 13). However, critics of this model observe that individuals can manipulate the outcome of an assessment by withholding information; either for competitive or personal advantage (Newman, 1997, p. 124). Similarly an individual might choose to misrepresent information about themselves to exaggerate or invent positive qualities or to obscure what they perceive to be undesirable personality traits (J. A. Johnson, 1997, p. 81). This model is found within training guides for the police particularly in literature dealing with arrest and restraint training and managerial development (Greene, 1982; R. G. Lynch, 1986).

## Herzberg's steps

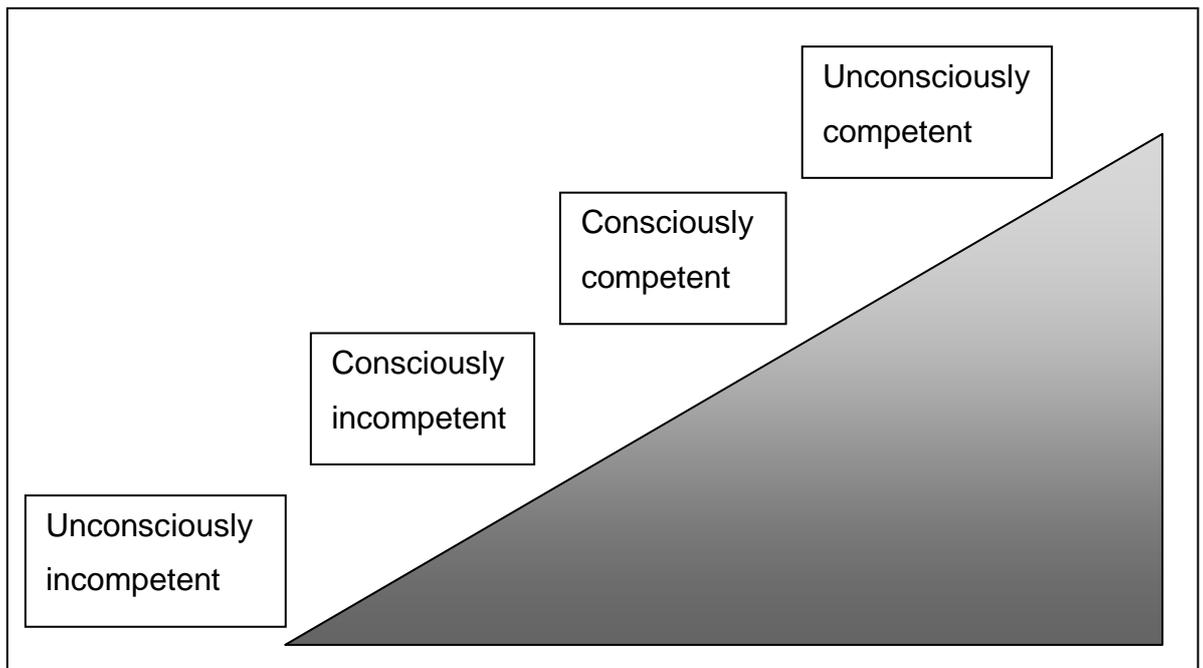


Figure 4-5: Hertzberg's steps.

Adapted from Burton (2000, p. 327)

The academic provenance of this model is less clear although it features regularly in training manuals for recruit training in the Metropolitan Police, including those aimed at constables undertaking the role of coach patrol tutor (MPS, 2007, p. 4). The model suggests that when encountering a new concept or situation an individual's competence progresses through four stages. At the lowest level an individual is not aware of what they do not know and as such are described as unconsciously incompetent. As an individual begins to realise they are unable to perform a particular task due to lack of knowledge or ability they are described as becoming consciously incompetent. At the point where an individual is aware they can apply knowledge and experience to a situation to complete the task they are described as becoming consciously competent until the task becomes 'second nature' at which point they are described as having become unconsciously competent (Burton, 2000, p. 327).

Whilst there is a clear link between using this model and understanding the development of policing skills (Zhao, Thurman, & He, 1999, p. 165) there is no

reliable academic references to indicate how this model has evolved (Roffey-Barentsen & Malthouse, 2009, p. 48). However, the concept of individuals becoming aware that their competence increases with experience is documented (Benner, 2004, p. 198; Burton, 2000, p. 327) and as such could be considered indicative of a capacity to have critical awareness of personal ability. In the context of public order and physical restraint this model is used to illustrate to recruits how activities involving complex physical manoeuvres, such as restraining and then handcuffing suspects, become more familiar with practice.

### Batari's box

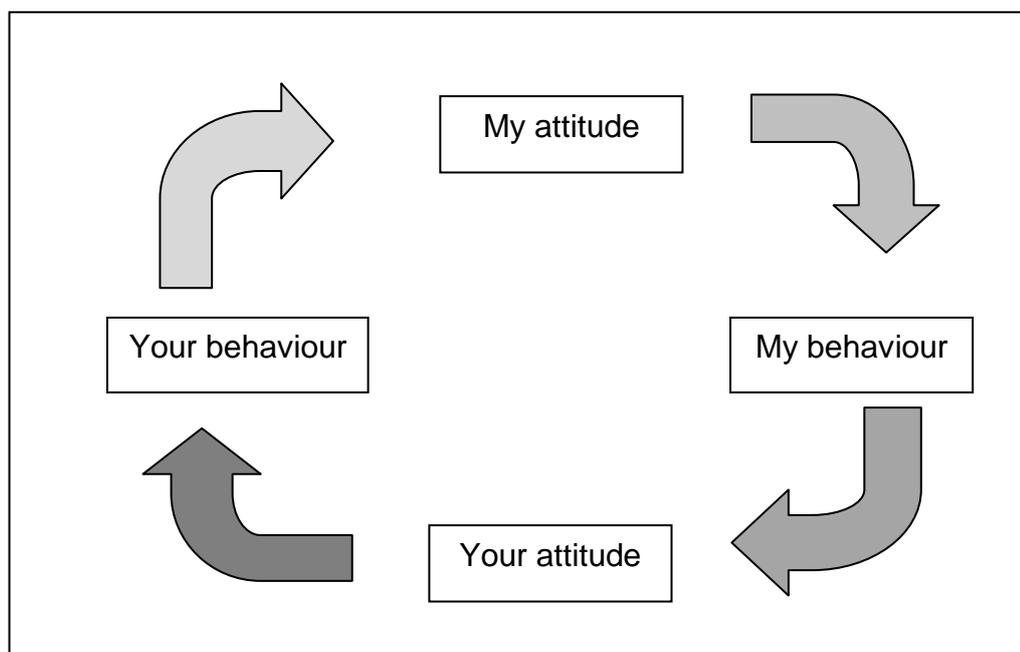


Figure 4-6: Batari's box.

Adapted from Johns et al (1997, p. 142)

Batari's box is a model used to demonstrate how the attitude and behaviour of one person can influence the reaction, attitude and behaviour of another (Johns et al., 1997, p. 141). Like Hertzberg's steps it is also a model whose academic provenance is unclear. This model is used as a core part of teaching officers how to either avoid, or diffuse, escalating aggression and violence during officer safety training involving crowd control, self-defence and the physical control of suspects. The model is used as a simple way for students to understand how to recognise

and manage their feelings, breaking the cycle of escalating aggression through negotiation rather than confrontation (Beech & Leather, 2006, p. 35).

Whilst academic references to these three models in policing terms are rare they are documented as being utilised in training programmes for education and health care agencies (Amery & Lapwood, 2004, p. 731; Ançel, 2006, p. 252; Roffey-Barentsen & Malthouse, 2009, pp. 48-51). As such aspects of the recruit Foundation Training Programme appear to have clear links to methods recognised to encourage learning through formal and structured processes (Marsick & Watkins, 1990, p. 12). In the context of delivery as part of the Foundation Training Programme references towards reflection were included in lessons dealing with how community cultures and the behaviour of officers influences interactions between the police and public. Behavioural awareness is one such area that extends the link between knowledge and reflection to “respond effectively to all communities and contribute to effective team practice” (MPS, 2005, p. 4). References to Batari’s Box are also found in the training manual for coach patrol tutors (MPS, 2007, p. 6) as discussed at Page 66.

## **Summary of reflective learning during recruit training**

It appeared from the accounts secured from the training instructors that recruits are encouraged to reflect on success, achievements, development needs and failures during the Foundation Training Programme. It was also apparent that with the exception of providing some awareness of critical thinking there was no obvious taught element to empower mainstream students to consider or conceptualise the process of reflective learning. There was however a great deal of understanding of reflection and reflective learning amongst the training staff, and in particular the START who utilise a range of formal and informal methods to empower the learning process. It also became apparent that there was an acceptance at Hendon that there was some considerable inconsistency with the perception of how reflective learning was maintained once students were released initially to Area Training Units and then borough coach patrols. Whilst trained coach patrol tutors are provided with a clear structure to encourage reflective

learning (Figure 4-3) it appeared that not all officers assigned as coach patrol tutors had undergone any formal training for the role. Nor did it appear there were any consequences or sanctions for students or tutors if they chose not to use the self-reflection sheets.

The diversity of training standards on the 32 Boroughs and the quality of the coach patrol tutors was seen by staff on the Central and Area Training Units as having a huge impact on how students learn as was the location to which students are posted. Officers training on more rural outer-London posts would not experience the pace or variety of work found at inner-London locations. The Area Training Units were also viewed differently by staff at Hendon. Some locations were praised for delivering imaginative and varied opportunities for role play in the 'real world', for example in local shopping centres, supported by enthusiastic training staff. Others locations were perceived to provide a less dynamic training environment, in some cases restricted by the geographical location and lack of opportunity to interact safely within the local community.

Chapter Four has confirmed an important element of the research: corporately the Metropolitan Police expects student constables to engage in reflection and reflective learning and have mechanisms in place to support the learning process. However, at all stages of the Foundation Training Programme there appears to be limited formal instruction in respect of reflective learning and inconsistent enforcement once students leave Hendon. With this in mind Chapter Five discusses the results of semi-structured interviews conducted with 24 student constables participating in weeks 5-17 of the recruit training programme. This provides the raw data upon which it will be possible to discuss how those officers conceptualise reflection and from which a hierarchical model can be developed to represent those conceptions. Chapter Five also reveals the extent to which the self-reflection sheet is recognised by the student constables interviewed and provides an opportunity to triangulate those responses against the accounts already given by staff on the training units.

## Chapter 5

### How student constables conceive of reflection

Chapter Four established the content and structure of recruit training and discussed the organisational expectation that all students should use a self-reflection sheet from the very early stages of the Foundation Training Programme. Chapter Five continues with the outcomes from the interviews with students and compares the organisational expectation with responses given when asked about use of the self-reflection sheet. The second part of this chapter explores how student constables conceptualise reflection starting with a summary at Table 5-1 that illustrates the various different ways in which student constables articulated those conceptions. The third part of this chapter explores what student constables consider to be the imperative to reflect and includes a summary of those responses at Table 5-2. The summary of the data enables a further discussion of the limited number of qualitatively different ways in which student constables conceptualise reflection. This forms the basis for Chapter Six that develops the data to provide an interpretation of the depth and meaning behind those conceptions.

#### Recognition of the self-reflection sheet

As discussed in Chapter Four staff on the Central Training Unit made it clear that reflection is instilled and encouraged throughout recruit training with the self-reflection sheet introduced during week two of the Foundation Training Programme. However, the responses from all students were unanimous in that none of those interviewed recalled using it during their foundation training:

T2: *"We have not actually completed one of those yet."*

T15: *"I have not seen it before but since getting here we do have self-reflection time slots within our time-table so I imagine it is coming up in the next week or two."*

T17: *“When do we do those?”*

T20: *“I think they introduce it later on as part of this course.”*

This initially appeared to conflict with the response given from staff at the Central Training Unit but two students thought that the self-reflection sheet had been introduced at the beginning of foundation training:

T4: *“I don’t think we have actually written one of those yet, I can’t remember doing one. I think it might have come up in one of the lectures on studying generally in the first five weeks.”*

T21: *“I think we saw it once at the beginning of the course.”*

Other responses suggested that whilst the self-reflection sheet was not actually in use the concepts contained within it were still included in the Foundation Training Programme:

T5: *“I don’t think we have them physically but this is what we do; the staff ask how do you think you did, what do you think you did right, what would you do differently and then the other students who were watching give what I would call constructive criticism. We are just having a debate.”*

T6: *“I haven’t seen that before but yes those are the questions that are asked. After a role-play we give each other constructive feedback. We get positive and negative feedback from the staff why it was wrong as well as colleagues.”*

T24: *“A lot of [those] questions is what they are asking but not on this form.”*

Once the student interviews were completed these responses towards the self-reflection sheet were put to training staff on the Central Training Unit with the response corresponding with the accounts given by T4 and T21:

TS5: *“They are told about the self-reflection sheet during the first five weeks, week two or three I think it is. There is so much input during the first five weeks it is not unusual for students to forget what they have been told.”*

However, responses from training staff on the Area Training Units about the self-reflection sheets gave different perspective on the reality of how often they were actually used:

TS11: *“Do we use the reflection sheets...it’s not hard and fast.”*

TS12: *“We don’t use them but we do encourage them to reflect in other ways.”*

This corresponded with responses from all the students, and confirmed personal suspicions, that whilst the self-reflection sheet still formed part of the formal training syllabus actual usage had ceased beyond the stated expectations of the Central Training Unit:

TS5: *“Not all BOCUs have Coach Patrol Tutors and the consistency is not great. There are no sanctions if the Coach Patrol doesn’t use them [the self-reflection sheets] so compliance is not consistent.”*

TS11: *“On BOCU I would say the take up [of using the self-reflection sheets] is variable.”*

From the responses given by students and trainers it would appear that the self-reflection sheet has dropped out of use during recruit training. However, there was sufficient recognition of the concepts contained within the self-reflection sheet to

confirm that reflection was considered an essential part of the Foundation Training Programme. It was however necessary to ensure that there was a shared understanding between the researcher and the students of what was understood by the term reflection. The first question put to students was phrased to determine that initial understanding by asking “what is reflection?”

## **What is reflection?**

Only one student appeared to struggle with providing an initial explanation of what they thought reflection was although having considered the question did contribute a response:

*T1: “The word itself is pretty much what it means. Beyond that I have never really thought about it in great detail. It is a very abstract concept...it is not something I can grasp completely.”*

This resulted in a far higher number of informed responses than perhaps had been expected given the concept of reflection is, as described by Morrison (1996, p. 317), “difficult to grasp.” In fact once the interviews had been completed all 24 students had been able to give a cogent explanation of how they experienced reflection and in all but two cases provided examples of when they had reflected. These responses have been illustrated in Table 5-1 that plots the responses as they were given during the interviews. For example T14 contributed three responses to how reflection was conceptualised with reflection being conceived as a means by which to improve or do better expressed by 19 other students. Once all the responses had been plotted it was possible to condense them into a smaller number of groups that were representative of the themes as contributed by the students. Each group was given a specific description of reflection, of which the first was conceived as a process of evaluation.

Themes	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	T11	T12	T13	T14	T15	T16	T17	T18	T19	T20	T21	T22	T23	T24	Total
What has gone badly	x			x					x				x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12
What has gone well	x			x			x	x	x							x			x	x	x				10
Analysis of performance				x														x					x	x	4
Self evaluation					x													x					x	x	4
Identifying weak points		x																							1
Identifying being effective/strong points					x						x														2
Looking back/ hindsight					x	x					x	x	x					x	x		x				9
Understanding event			x				x	x									x								4
Learning					x				x	x	x				x	x	x		x		x	x			10
Learning from mistakes		x			x					x			x							x					6
Learning from self			x					x					x												4
Feedback from others on performance					x	x				x				x									x	x	6
Being self critical																			x	x					3
Fill gaps in knowledge															x	x									2
Improve/Do better	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	20
Doing things differently/adapt/develop	x			x		x	x	x	x	x		x													11
Different perspective		x				x						x													3
Understanding yourself							x													x					3
Understanding how you learn						x									x		x								3
Recollection of an event			x																						1
Total:	4	4	3	5	7	6	5	6	5	3	4	4	5	3	4	5	3	3	6	6	6	4	4	9	7

Table 5-1: How reflection is conceptualised by student constables

## Reflection as a process of evaluation

The most common contribution was reflection being conceived as a process of evaluation although there were several facets to this experience. In total reflection was described as a process of evaluation by 21 of the students representing the single largest theme that emerged from this part of the research. In this context the process of evaluation is illustrated within Table 5-1 as the outcome of specific activities with a greater focus by students on activities considered to have gone badly as opposed to those that went well. Evaluation was also articulated by students in the context of analysing performance, identifying weaknesses and looking back to understand the outcome of particular events:

*T2: "I am not really sure to be honest with you, it's sort of err <cough> shows me what I need to improve on, what I need to look into and shows me my weak points."*

Other students focused on what was described as negative feedback, focusing on learning not having completed a particular task or recalling specific information.

*T4: "It is assessment of how well I have performed, my own assessment of how well I have performed based on various standards."*

T4 went on to give a specific example of this from a role play where the emphasis was on what had gone wrong rather than the things that had gone right:

*T4: "Arresting for robbery. Everything was moving so quickly I did not separate the witnesses and it did not occur to me to do it at the time although I knew it. There is a framework of all the things you are supposed to have done or said and certain order in which you have to do things. You are very aware of whether you have done well or badly."*

Others took a more pragmatic view of such outcomes taking the opportunity to reflect with a measured evaluation of the feedback:

T13: *"It is important, for example when we come out if we've forgotten something it's a good time to think about it then hopefully next time you're in the same situation you're remember bits you left out."*

T21: *"It's the best way of learning, opportunity to look back on what you have done and what you have not done so well. More reflecting on the negative points, it's natural to focus on the criticisms, it's always what did I do wrong. They are more likely to pick holes in what you have done wrong that credit you with something you've done well. It you don't tick every box it's is not such a big deal but if you do something badly it is a big deal, it's negative."*

T23: *"Thinking about something you have done, should I have done that and thinking, I should not have said that or should have done that."*

Reflection was also conceived as a positive learning experience with a greater emphasis on what had gone well:

T8: *"It means evaluating doesn't it, understanding what happened and putting it into context, evaluating whether the objectives of the exercise have been met, was it successful was it useful."*

On the whole reflection was seen as a balanced process of evaluation between what had gone well and what had gone badly with students making the point that there was room for both in how they conceived of reflection.

T1: *"It's about thinking about how to improve yourself, what you did right and what you did wrong, what you did badly and what you could do a little bit better."*

T9: *"Thinking about what you've done during the day, the good things you have done and not so good things."*

T16: *“Self-reflection is just look back at what you done how you could possibly improve, positive and negative points.”*

T24: *“Analysing my performance of a task or the role. Always like to do the job to the best of my ability, performance in particular areas, did I do it well, why did I do it well, did I have the knowledge or if it went badly why it went badly.”*

In total 14 students conceived reflection to include the process of identifying what went well or what went badly with three making the distinction between specific aspects of strength and weakness in performance. These differing expressions of emotion came as no surprise; as described by Boud (2001, p. 14) the process of reflection can unleash both “positive and negative feelings”. The concept of reflection as a process of evaluation was extended further by four students who made the distinction between two different types of performance; that demonstrated through written exams and that demonstrated through practical assessments:

T4: *“It is assessment of how well I have performed, my own assessment of how well I have performed based on various standards. There is like a sheet of what you are supposed to do, like a perfect model of what you should say and the order in which you say them, you’re never going to get there but as good as.”*

T18: *“I am a bit of a perfectionist so I look at what I have done wrong, even if I get something ninety-five percent right I will look at the five percent I got wrong just to make sure I do not do it again next time.”*

T24: *“So like yesterday I did actually fail my like erm an OST refresher day that ended with like a little role play that was pass or fail and I actually failed it and was really disappointed and really annoyed with myself.”*

In this context the students were referring to evaluation on two levels; firstly whether they could pass Key Stage Knowledge Evaluations, and secondly practical assessments through role plays. Reflection as a means for self-evaluation is well documented in the context of teaching as well as a process for problem solving and understanding the effects of teaching and learning (Leitch & Day, 2000, p. 182). The theme of focusing on poor performance was also consistent with other phenomenographical research studies. Gustafsson observed “nurses tended to focus on poor nursing care...good nursing care seemed to pass unnoticed” (Gustafsson & Fagerberg, 2004, p. 278).

Of the 24 interviews nine students also made a connection between reflection and looking back, or hindsight, having completed specific activities or assessments. Reflection in this context was also linked strongly to feedback provided by the student’s tutors or peer group:

T5: *“Reflection is going back to what you done, whatever it is, and thinking about how it went, assessing how effective it was if it was correct or picking up any, making mistakes,”*

T6: *“Reflection is a way of looking at what you’ve done and really sort of taking a mental step back, looking from the outside in.”*

T12: *“Reflection is sort of, reflection is like the amount of time you have to look back, look back and see things from a different perspective [punctuated with pauses]. You can sit back and look at it in a different light because it’s a different situation or a different concept.”*

T19: *“Suppose hind sight really, looking back on something you have done, analyse it for better or worse, picking out good points, bad points.”*

Reflection was also conceived as the way of understanding an event, including new experiences of having recently joined the police. These responses gave a

glimpse as to how students were adapting to unfamiliar rules and requirements; adjusting to their new roles in the Metropolitan Police:

T3: *“In a professional context from being a new recruit and completely fresh, not knowing the processes in the police. Developing and understanding how it works.”*

T17: *“Looking at what the objective was, what was trying to be achieved, that sort of thing.”*

These responses highlight some inherent dangers of hindsight, or looking back after an event, not least the perceived unreliability of that recollection and then referring to it as a trusted frame of reference. Mackintosh (1998, p. 556) discusses this in the context of nursing how some students are incapable of looking back without imposing their own bias on the memory of the event rendering the process “unreliable and detrimental to future professional practice”. This so called hindsight bias is a recognised inhibitor to reflection and reflective learning which linked directly to how people look back on what they thought they knew having subsequently been told the outcome (P. R. Jones, 1995, p. 783). An example of this was given by T21 who articulated clearly how gaps in recall by an individual can be augmented by an independent observer. What T21 demonstrated was not only an acknowledgement that the recall of the event was flawed but that the process of reflection was also indicative of an experience of learning:

T21: *“I realised I hand-cuffed someone and was asking his name and without even realising it I was twisting the handcuffs and it was only afterwards when the stooge said you were twisting the handcuffs and asking my name. I didn’t even realise I was doing it but thinking about it afterwards looking back at the event I am very conscious now that if am talking to someone and holding the handcuffs I am not going to twist them to find something. As soon as he said it I did remember afterwards I realised, yes, I probably did.”*

## Reflection as a process of learning

Responses that fell into this category were articulated in five different ways, all of which involved a sense of learning either individually, by mistakes and from the feedback provided by others. In total reflection was expressed as learning by 19 of the 24 students interviewed:

T2: *“Oh yeah, I freaked out completely last week after we had, err, robbery. I studied it at home and thought I understood it completely a straight forward offence, very clear to me. Then when we did the knowledge check and some case studies I scored really really low and I was freaking out completely. I was like how is that possible, where did I go wrong?”*

T5: *“...making mistakes self evaluation I would say. I think it is the best way to learn, making a mistake is the best way to learn, if you make a mistake you will learn, you will always remember that. Make a mistake on a role-play you never forget it but if you do it right maybe there has not been so much talk about it, it don't stay in your mind as much, no? If you don't do a role-play right and have left something out you have let yourself down in a way, it will stay with me.”*

T5 went on to give a specific example of what was meant by learning from a mistake and the impact this had when dealing with similar scenarios in the future:

T5: *“When I did the practical for custody role-play I forgot the time of arrest so now next time I do the role-play I want to give the time before anything else; I must do that. Not always straight away but where it is right, where it fits in the narrative so when I am giving the grounds for arrest and all that I am thinking time, time, time so I learned that by making mistake.”*

This was clearly a view shared with other students whose responses in this context suggested reflection was predominantly conceived as a way of learning from mistakes and feedback. As with the responses described previously there appeared to be a stronger association between learning and making mistakes than learning and getting something right. These experiences also generated some of the most descriptive and animated explanations demonstrating that practical experience appeared to have a greater impact than simply learning legislation from the white notes. Reflection as process of learning is also described across similar research of reflection amongst teaching and health care professionals (Gustafsson et al., 2009, p. 1464; Watkins & Marsick, 1992, p. 287) and comes as no surprise that it was articulated as a concept during this research:

T11: *“The last thing you want when you get on to the street is to forget something really important or you forgot something during the arrest.”*

T15: *“Feedback is important for learning as well, doing all these role-plays I’ve learnt quite a lot already, sitting down, you don’t know how well you’re doing in a role-play, you walk in you’re nervous, you’re being watched. With all their [the tutors] experience they say you’ve done really well, done this, this and this, have you thought about something else?”*

T16: *“Like the subject of theft you can learn it from the notes twenty times but you don’t know if you’ve really learnt it until you get an exam on it and answer questions on it.”*

T21: *“They [the tutors] are more likely to pick holes in what you have done wrong than credit you with something you’ve done well. If you don’t tick every box it’s not such a big deal but if you do something badly it is a big deal, it’s negative.”*

T22: *“When we were doing search role play in custody I missed a small paper clip and I won’t miss that again, I should have found it.”*

T23: *“Role play yesterday, I was given CS Spray (filled with water) and I wasn’t looking at it properly, and hadn’t looked at it properly for probably a good ten weeks. And as a result during the role play when I took it out to spray nothing was happening, it didn’t spray properly because I hadn’t opened it properly and I wasn’t holding it the right way round.”*

T24: *“One of the practicals I thought I did everything really well and the tutor asked if I thought I was holding on as well as I could have been as they pulled away. They told me that if I had a good grip [physical hold] right from the start that would not have happened.”*

## **Reflection as a process of improvement**

This theme was contributed by 21 students and is constructed of just two elements. Improvement was seen in the context of increasing knowledge and improving the way that knowledge is put into practice during role-plays. In the context of improvement reflection was conceived as the way to improve knowledge and practice and is integral to feedback provided to support the learning process. This is again a consistent theme experienced during previous research conducted into reflection and reflective practice (Mamede & Schmidt, 2004, p. 1302). It was also a theme that developed further than just improvement with some students conceiving reflection as the means by which to gain a different perspective on a situation and find alternative ways to adapt future responses:

T1: *“what you would do next time or what you would not do. It leads to improvement ultimately.”*

T2: *“Sometimes you think you know everything in general and understand but when it comes to the detail and putting the theory into practice it can become a bit tricky so err it is good to talk through those things.”*

T5: *"I reflect I go through what I should have done and what I did or what others did before me, did I like what they did? Or something they did and I didn't do or something they did and I improved."*

T13: *"Reflection is looking back like when your role-playing what went on, what you were doing at the time might highlight something you might be better at next time round. With self-reflecting you want to improve that's the thing, continually improving."*

T19: *"Finding ways to improve, paying special attention to where I went wrong and why. It is a platform so you know where you are going wrong you know where you need to improve."*

T20: *"It's a way of knowing how to improve; it's a way of understanding how something should be done correctly and getting as close to the correct way of doing it as possible."*

T24: *"The ability to better yourself, continuously improving to perform as near as perfect as you possibly can."*

## **Reflection as a process of gaining a different perspective**

Reflection was also conceived as a way of gaining a different perspective on a situation either from feedback having taken part in a role-play or from having observed others who were role-playing. This experience was contributed by 12 students who also articulated this as a means to adapt future actions based on identifying alternative ways to manage particular scenarios. Reflection in this context was conceived not just as a process of learning but adapting skills to develop responses in the future. Learning from feedback was a key element of this interpretation of reflection although the way in which this was articulated indicted an outcome, rather than an experience of reflection. However, reflection as a means to focus on another dimension of a problem or situation is not a unique

interpretation (Jay & Johnson, 2002, p. 77) and in any event represented the way in which those students articulated how they conceived this aspect of reflection:

T6: *"It's not all about getting better maybe just learning a different approach and that is what you can learn from colleagues."*

T7: *"Towards the end I picked up on what other people had done and how I could benefit from their feedback."*

T8: *"...was it successful was it useful, did you learn from it, could I be done better in a different way."*

T12: *"That was a big part of self-reflection because I look back and think if I had that situation next time I know what I like if that was me, that's what I'll do."*

T22: *"How you've reacted in a situation and you think you can develop it next time, how to get better, you're always learning."*

## **Reflection as a process to know yourself**

Reflection was also conceived by a small number of students as a way of understanding themselves and how they learn. This was restricted to just two types of experience expressed by six students and was indicative of a deeper understanding of the cognitive process of learning (Trigwell & Prosser, 1997, p. 242). Reflection in this context involved a process of thinking about how feedback from themselves and others informed what students knew about themselves and their individual style of learning. Reflection here was seen as more than simply identifying mistakes and how to complete successfully specific assessments and demonstrates an understanding that individual perceptions of learning are different. These insights were indicative of a deeper form of reflection suggesting an understanding of what is known and how it has been learnt (Clarke, James, & Kelly, 1996, p. 177):

T6: *“Your perception of how you performed can be different from others. You might think you handled something quite well but others might tell you different.”*

T7: *“Reflection gives you a chance to think about how the class assesses you, whether you met required criteria or not and if not why did I not do that. It helps a lot. Having other people looking at you, you are only human so they might pick up on something you did not.”*

T15: *“Reflecting on my actions sort of how I have learnt, looking at the points I need to work harder or need to concentrate on to build up that knowledge...or how to learn something...we all learn at different rates.”*

T17 also touched on the emotional aspects of reflection, making a connection between a physical task with which there is familiarity and the anticipated trepidation of the more daunting prospect of writing an instruction manual on the same activity:

T17: *“It varies throughout life, during my apprenticeship I think I learned better practically, so stripping engines and putting them back together I could do it hands-on but to write an instruction manual on how to do it would be a total absolute nightmare I would imagine.”*

## **Reflection as a process for recollection**

For one student reflection was conceived as the process of recollection of a particular event:

T3: *“So at the weekend it was a sunny day and I thinking about what I didn't know at the start and what I do know now. Reflection in that sense is what I didn't know at the start, it is like a comparison and a natural progression.”*

Of all the contributions given as to how students conceptualised reflection this was one of the most ambiguous. There was no clear indication as to whether the concept of reflection was simply recalling a pleasant weekend in the sun or the weather triggering a conscious effort to recall the learning process of the previous week:

JW: "So what does reflection mean to you?"

T3: *"Having a thought of something, thinking something, based on memory, based on a certain event, not necessarily a course of action but literally just thinking about it."*

This response took the matter no further forward, prompting a further question:

JW: "Can you give me an example of when you have reflected?"

T3: *"For example a holiday I went on, I would try and reflect on all the good times I had. I would probably say reflection is more to do with the positive or negative things of a certain event. Specifically sunny days and going back to the holiday last year I was travelling...for about a month and I remember all the good times I had and particularly the sunny days. You don't get so many sunny days here ...that kind of jogs your memory of all the good times you've had and specifically the sunny days."*

For the purposes of this thesis it was taken that T3 conceived reflection as a recollection of a specific event that was not related directly to the Foundation Training Programme. However, previous responses suggested that reflection was conceived as being part of the learning process by contemplating what T3 did not know before and had subsequently learnt or understood. This combination of two different aspects of a particular phenomena is not usual and was described by Marton (2005, p. 336) as being "intertwined". Whilst the explanation was not in keeping with the intended context of the research it was necessary to include that

response as it was indicative of how T3 expressed their understanding of reflection (Ramritu & Barnard, 2001, p. 53).

### **Concluding comments on “what is reflection?”**

The responses to this question generated 118 contributions of how students conceived reflection illustrated through a variety of different examples and life experiences. The repeated process of reviewing the interview transcripts enabled new and existing themes to be recorded showing the theoretical saturation point to have been reached at T19. From this point no new themes emerged from the data with existing themes repeated from T20 through to T24. However, this did not expose the full extent to which students contributed to their concepts of reflection and further questions identified not only the motivating factors, giving an imperative to reflect, but revealed much richer data of when students had actually reflected.

### **The imperative to reflect**

Analysis to determine why students considered there to be an imperative to reflect identified 43 contributions to the data across 12 separate themes, which are illustrated in Table 5-2 below:

Themes	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	T11	T12	T13	T14	T15	T16	T17	T18	T19	T20	T21	T22	T23	T24	Total
To learn how to do things better/improve	x			x	x				x	x		x	x			x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	15
To understand what you have learnt		x	x												x		x								4
Chance to think about meeting criteria							x																		1
Improve public service						x			x		x	x	x						x	x					6
Be better at job	x													x											2
Becoming more confident										x													x		2
Passing the course													x												1
Provide for family														x											1
Told to as part of the course																									1
Understand impact of attitude				x	x	x			x		x	x	x												5
Assessment of performance				x	x	x																			2
To learn from mistakes		x			x																				3
Total:	2	2	1	3	2	3	1	1	3	1	1	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	2	1

Table 5-2: The imperative to reflect

## **Reflection as a way of learning**

The imperative to reflect as a way of learning was described in three different ways. Firstly as a chance to meet the criteria for assessments, secondly to learn how to do things better or improve and finally to understand what had been learnt. In this context the motivation for reflection is described as a way of understanding and improving what has been learnt; then developing that learning to improve how particular actions or tasks were performed in the future. As this was the most frequent occurrence of why students conceived an imperative to reflect there were overlaps with other motives given for reflection:

*T2: "Either I understand it or I don't and if I don't I need to look into it to get help, to have it explained. Like a puzzle it needs to fit in to that puzzle if the picture is not clear. Therefore I need to reflect on it to make sure the picture is clear and if all the pieces fit then it stays there but if there's a little piece of the puzzle that's not, that's not fitting right that means I need to do something about it to make sure that it fits."*

*T20: "You're not going to stay in the same place your entire career, it's a way of knowing how to improve..."*

## **Reflection as a way of improving public service**

Reflection as a way of improving public service was articulated by 6 students and one of a few responses that resonated with elements of the original ideals espoused by Lord Scarman that "constables should treat people with respect" (Scarman, 1981, p. 81). However, it appeared that improving public service was not the overriding motivation for reflecting, as indicated by T20 who gave three reasons for why reflection should be practiced. Expressing multiple interpretations of the same phenomena is entirely in keeping with other studies that showed a "rational link between different interpretations of the same concept" (Trigwell, 2006, p. 368):

T6: *“Reflection leads to more efficiency, better practice because the needs of the public are always changing.”*

T9: *“Learning from other people, like some police officers, see how not to do it, to do the best we can so when we are police officers we don’t cut corners or be rude to the public.”*

T19: *“To improve the perception of the public who we are working for.”*

T20: *“it’s a way of knowing how to improve to make yourself a better person, better at your job towards the public as well as yourself.”*

## **Reflection as a way of self-development**

This motivating factor for reflection was expressed by 4 students in the form of two themes that described the reasons for reflection as being becoming better at the job and for developing confidence. Reflection in this context focused on becoming more confident not only in terms of being a better police officer but as a way of boosting the perception of individual self-value:

T1: *“It’s about thinking about how to improve yourself.”*

T11: *“feeling more confident about things really, making sure you cover all the points you need to get.”*

T14: *“so I can be the best I can be; pass the course and be an effective police officer.”*

In this respect reflection is also conceived as a process and motivation for comparison of performance undertaken by T23 that has the potential to boost, or lower self-esteem (Tessa, 1999, p. 447) depending on how well they have performed during the day. T23 makes a connection between reflection and

emotion, articulating a process of positive or happy thoughts directly linked to activities undertaken during the day:

*T23: "Reflection is really important to how I feel about myself like here on the course if a day has gone particularly well and I am happy with myself I will be driving home and thinking in my head if the day has gone particularly well I am thinking positively then I will feel really good about myself and congratulate myself and that will boost my confidence a little bit."*

### **Reflection as a way of providing job security**

However, reflecting for self-improvement was not always so clear cut with mixed motivations being seen as an impetus to reflect by one student. The motivation for reflection in this context was to achieve competence in the workplace thus ensuring financial security. There are a number of closely linked factors articulated here with a number of intertwined considerations providing powerful incentives to improve performance. Reflection as a means to bolster job security is clearly a valid motivating factor for T14 who is considering that the implications of not completing the course could lead to an adverse change in personal circumstances. The concept of job security, particularly in periods of economic instability was also identified by Fielding (1988, p. 37) as being important to police officers during the early years of training. Pearce (1998, p. 43) also discusses how job security influences an employee's perception of their employer and subsequently attitude towards work:

*T14: "For me the motivation is I have young family, if I look back and reflect I can do the best not just for me but for my family for my kids and the job we are doing as well for members of the public it's a good idea to do the best of your ability: other people are affected by you. If I didn't do it to the best of my ability and lose my job then obviously my family are out of pocket it would affect your lifestyle as well the person you*

*are. I would be letting myself down, letting the public down and letting my family down.”*

## **Reflection as a way of demonstrating compliance**

For one student the motivation to reflect was simple and might, in isolation, seem to infer a dogmatic and inflexible regime of reflection during the Foundation Training Programme. However, T8 like the other students often articulated a far broader understanding of reflection and willingness to do so. This explicit comment also reinforces the corporate position that all students are encouraged to reflect and reflection remains an integral part of recruit training:

*T8: “Here at training school we are told to reflect, do this exercise then reflect and let me know what you found.”*

## **Reflection as a way of understanding the impact of attitude**

Five students indicated that reflection helped them recognise how their attitude as a police officer influenced the outcome of encounters with members of the public with the impact not just on public perceptions but the consequences of those actions:

*T4: “So in terms of what I say, how I say things and how I handle myself that is a bit more abstract.”*

T4 was explaining the necessity of having to remember completing certain tasks and giving specific information, in this case grounds for arrest, in a particular order. T4 also articulated that, whilst remembering the procedural aspects of an encounter, the pitch and intonation of their voice could also have a bearing on the outcome of social interactions. T6 also considered the same aspect of an encounter with a more direct explanation:

T6: *“It’s not very nice to say to someone you are rubbish but maybe do you understand what could have happened there, the way you said that you could have ended up in a whole heap of trouble.”*

T6 is discussing how, during a role play, feedback was given to a student that the manner in which the suspect was spoken to could have provoked a negative and possibly violent reaction. Here a connection was made with reflecting on the consequences of the student’s style of communication provoking a potentially aggressive response. T6 also demonstrates an understanding for the potentially negative impact of adverse feedback on the feelings of another student. However, the perception of how communication skills can influence the outcome of an encounter was also shared by T9 who drew on a real-life experience prior to starting the Foundation Training Programme:

T9: *“I went to help another officer who had put up for assistance and something was said that turned the situation really the other way. If it had been said another way it could have been different and the officer would not have got hit. He gobbled off to the suspect and ended up getting slapped. He could have dealt with it different and gone in lower, instead he went in too high at a level he shouldn’t have done.”*

Other students made the connection between how attitude and behaviour could impact on public perception of the Metropolitan Police as an organisation. The motivating factor for reflection in this context shows students recognising that their actions can have immediate and long-term implications for them personally and public perception of the organisation. This aspect of the research has identified direct links between the concept of reflection and learning with factors emerging that cannot always be appreciated without direct and sometimes blunt feedback on the consequences of particular actions. This also demonstrates that feedback from an individual’s peer group, as discussed by Beyth-Marom (1993, p. 555), is an important factor in the learning process. For the student constables this also assisted in making a link between public confidence and improving public service:

T9: *“Basically it’s your job to help anyone no matter what the problem is so you know you shouldn’t be moaning about it although it might be stupid to you to the people it’s something important to them.”*

T12: *“If the public see you being unprofessional it reflects not just on you but on the service as a whole so like your part of one big service and you want to keep up the professional image.”*

T13: *“The public need to have an amount of confidence in you to be able to deal with things, be able to see you as someone they can look up to, ask for help and support. I genuinely think that if you are rude to someone it will have a negative effect on the police so personally I like to pass on a positive image to all people.”*

## **The perceived value of reflection**

The overwhelming majority of students indicated that they conceived reflection to be a positive process and one that had been encouraged during the Foundation Training Programme. There was also a clear indication that students appreciated the risks and limitations of being overly reflective and the consequences that might have on restricting their performance:

T2: *“I guess you can over-reflect, sure if all you did was think about what you should have done or maybe could have done you would never do anything.”*

T5: *“...but not too much worrying about what I didn’t do, if I do one thing wrong but six things right is too much and could affect your self-confidence.”*

T6: *“If it was all negative that would be bad thing so they always say give your colleagues positive, not negative, constructive feedback.”*

T8: *“There can’t be disadvantages no way, unless you over reflect all the time, maybe a person who does not get on with things, double checking triple checking everything.”*

T18: *“It is important not to beat yourself up when you make a little mistake you must praise yourself. You must not be scared of making mistakes otherwise this will stop you doing the things you do very well.”*

## **Concluding comments on the imperative to reflect**

In this context the research identified 43 contributions articulating the factors motivating the imperative for reflection that could be condensed into 12 different themes. There were clearly overlaps between the motivation to reflect and how students conceived of reflection. However, the different emphasis of the questions distilled underlying motives that had not previously been identified adding to a clearer understanding of how students conceived of reflection during the Foundation Training Programme. Whilst learning, assessment, evaluation of performance and self development were determined to be amongst the strongest motivating factors for reflection clear links began to emerge with some students articulating a combination of reasons as why they reflect. Whilst the imperative to reflect was clearly influenced by training staff all students had clear, and sometimes complex, reasons as to why they reflected and the values they placed upon the process.

## **Summary of results and data analysis**

Chapter Five has outlined the data secured from the semi-structured interviews conducted with 24 student constables illuminating it with graphical representations and extracts from the interviews. The data has identified that use of the self-reflection sheet has all but been discarded during the Foundation Training Programme. Despite this it is apparent that students have a clear understanding of how they conceptualise reflection and these have been condensed to a small number of short explanations capturing the essence of each theme. This then

forms the basis of a critical discussion of the findings that are pursued in Chapter Six to identify the limited number of qualitatively different ways that student constables on the Metropolitan Police Foundation Training Programme conceptualise reflection.

# **Chapter 6**

## **Discussion**

Chapter Six provides a critical discussion of the data detailed in Chapter Five which is undertaken in two parts. Firstly a comparison is made between the range of contributions made by students compared to demographic variations and the training units at which they are located. The purpose of this is to determine whether age, gender, previous employment or the character of the training unit had a bearing on the range of responses contributed by the students to the research as illustrated in Table 6-1. Secondly the responses articulated by the students are discussed collectively and condensed into the limited number of qualitatively different ways students conceptualise reflection. This is shown in Table 6-2 which provides the basis for discussion on the depth of the contributions illustrated as a non-dualistic or dualistic relationship between the students and reflection. The development of Table 6-2 provides a working model (Figure 6-1) which illustrates the depth and extent to which students conceptualise reflection.

### **Demographic variations**

This section discusses demographic variances in the age, gender and previous employment history of the students. This section also considers to what extent, if any, the location of the interviews or approach to foundation training by the staff might have influenced the data outcomes. In order to maintain the anonymity of the students age and gender have not been attributed to specific transcripts or details of previous employment. Whilst the location of the Central Training Unit for the Metropolitan Police is known internationally as being located at Hendon in North London the locations of the Area Training Units are less high profile. As such the broad geographical references to the location of the Area Training Units are sufficiently generalised thus reducing further the risk that individual students might be identified from the information provided.

## Demographic overview of student constables

Table 6-1 shows the demographic breakdown of student data by each location compared to the extent and distribution of the data sample. The data should be interpreted along the rows for each site. For example Site 1 had a total of 18 students of which 14 were male and 4 were female. Eight interviews were conducted at Site 1 of which six were with male students and two with female students. The average ages of the students were 28 and 34 years respectively. Figures in Table 6-1 have been rounded to the nearest whole number in all cases.

Site	All Students	Male	Female	Total Interviews	Male Interviews	Female Interviews	Male Average Age	Female Average Age
Site 1	18	14	4	8	6	2	28	34
Site 2	19	16	3	12	9	3	27	27
Site 3	16	14	2	4	3	1	25	45
Total	53	44	9	24	18	6		
%		83%	17%	45%	66%	33%		
Av. Age							28	34

Table 6-1: Demographic breakdown of student data

Table 6-1 also details the demographic breakdown of student data by comparing age and gender against the distribution of the data sample. Of the total number of 53 students available 83% were male and 17% were female. The 24 interviews conducted represented 45% of the total number of students available of which 66% of interviewees were male and 33% female. This equated to interviewing 34% of the available male students and 67% of the available female students. The

mean average age for male students interviewed was 26 years and for females 35 years old; giving a mean average age of 28 years old.

### **Demographic variances across site 1**

Site 1 was located in North London with training staff who demonstrated an enthusiastic approach to reflective learning although there was no obvious indication that the self-reflection sheet was being utilised. Students at Site 1 were in week six of the Foundation Training Programme. Students from Site 1 had a wide range of previous employment history that included occupations disclosed as retail, private sector security, university students, entertainment and the aviation industry. The mean average age for the students interviewed at this site was 29 years old with the youngest student interviewed being 23 and the oldest 35.

### **Demographic variances across site 2**

Site 2 was located in Central London with training staff who demonstrated an enthusiastic approach towards encouraging reflection and reflective learning. There was an apparent visible commitment to using the self-reflection sheets with blank sheets placed on a table in a communal break-out area of the training unit. Students at Site 2 were in week six of the Foundation Training Programme. Students from Site 2 had all been previously employed as Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) for a minimum of two years. Prior to their employment as PCSOs student constables had undertake a variety of different roles including working in the entertainment industry and completing courses in higher education. The mean average age for the students interviewed at this site was 27 years old with the youngest student interviewed being 21 and the oldest 37.

### **Demographic variances across site 3**

Site 3 was located in South London with training staff who demonstrated a firm commitment towards students developing a sound working knowledge of

legislation and its practical application to real world policing. There was no obvious use of the self-reflection sheet or any acknowledgement that it was used at this location. Students at Site 2 were in week 14 of the Foundation Training Programme. Students from Site 3 had all been previously employed as Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) for a minimum of two years. Prior to their employment as PCSOs student constables had been engaged in public sector employment or higher education. The mean average age for the students interviewed at this site was 31 years old with the youngest student interviewed being 22 and the oldest 45.

### **Demographic variances and the range of responses**

The demographical variances between the students, their previous employment, location of the training units and circumstances in which the data was gathered suggested there were few, if any, variations that would have distorted the data or rendered it untrustworthy. However, some interesting trends began to appear when examining the comparative range of responses contributed to the research by the student constables. The analysis suggested that the age of students did not necessarily have a bearing on how they conceptualise, or at least articulated how they conceptualise reflection. The four students who were able to contribute nine or more different responses to the research questions were, without exception older than 25 years old. Students who contributed between four and eight responses to the research questions were predominantly between 22 and 26 years old. There were some notable expectations to this with students aged 26 and 37 years old contributing a range of 4 responses to the research questions and a student aged 21 contributing a range of 8 (see Appendix One).

These findings, whilst not conclusive, are broadly consistent with the findings of Levinson (1978, p. 53) who observed that adults over the age of 25 have been exposed to a wider variety of life experiences than younger contemporaries. However it would be equally plausible to consider that adults over the age of 25 have established a wider range of vocabulary with which to articulate their conceptions of experience. There has also been some limited previous research

examining the relationship between age and the capacity to reflect. A study conducted by Burrows (1995, p. 347) found that pre-registration nursing students were not capable of mature critical reflection until after they had attained at least 25 years of age. Research conducted by Kitchener et al (1993, p. 900) also suggested that the cognitive ability of individuals to undertake reflective judgement increased with age reaching an optimum level of between 25 and 28 years old. It would however be incorrect to suggest that experience comes exclusively with age, resonating with the views held by Immanuel Kant who observed “though all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not follow that it all arises out of experience” (Schacht, 1984, p. 230). The majority of the students interviewed had all held previous employment as PCSOs implying that exposure to the policing environment as community support officers may have provided a breadth of experience despite, not because of, their age.

The original purpose of this research was not to determine the influence of age, experience, gender or available range of vocabulary on how student constables conceptualise reflection. Other factors such as intellectual capacity, previous education, social and economic influences could all contribute towards the ability of students to express eloquently their previous experiences. Thus attempting to draw definitive conclusions from these observations is beyond the remit of this thesis. However, in testing the trustworthiness of the data the research has identified a potential correlation between the range of responses and ability of these students to articulate how they conceive of reflection. The reaction towards Burrows’ findings in nursing was to introduce a regular structure for reflective learning as a means to “instilling a process of embedding self-awareness in the workplace for effective learning” (Burrows, 1995, p. 348). This has implications for similarly structured interventions in policing that are discussed further in Chapter Seven. Irrespective of the potential links between age, experience and available vocabulary as factors influencing the research data the next phase of the analysis is to condense the themes that emerged from the interviews. This is undertaken by examining the depth of understanding articulated by the students during the interviews and drawing inferences from their relationship between reflection and operational policing.

## **Condensing the emerging themes**

From the initial analysis of the raw data it was possible to distil key elements of how students articulated their concepts of reflection and place these into categories of similar themes. This process involved identifying similarities and differences between the experiences as they were expressed and placing them into the groups described in Chapter Five. The analysis determined that no single student expressed an entire concept of reflection during the course of a single interview. This was consistent with the observations of Marton, Dall’Alba and Beaty (1993, p. 277) who found there were different interpretations, with varying degrees of emphasis, of an individual’s awareness of an experience at particular points in time. As such interpretation of the statements made was undertaken giving consideration to the entire context of the explanation rather than placing undue weight on isolated extracts. The interpretation of the data identifies what Marton (1996, p. 317) described as dualistic and non-dualistic relationships between how individuals conceptualise reflection and the impact of that perception on other agents. For the purposes of this thesis the term ‘agents’ refers to family or colleagues, members of the general public and the Metropolitan Police as an organisation. The range and variety of the contributions also indicate varying depths of understanding by the student constables who articulate physical, emotional and conceptual interpretations of reflection.

## **Non-dualistic and dualistic relationships with reflection**

In a non-dualistic relationship with reflection students demonstrate perceptions of an internal world that includes an awareness of self through thoughts, feelings and physical sensations but with no tangible link to the impact or consequences of these on the external world (McLaren, 2006, p. 1166). Here students make a connection between reflection and personal development that includes raising self-confidence, improving knowledge and learning from mistakes. Reflection is linked to positive outcomes for the individual such as achieving higher marks or passing assessments during the Foundation Training Programme. However, these are self-centred perceptions with no consequences of how these insights transfer

beyond the individual. In a dualistic relationship with reflection students demonstrate an understanding of how they interact with and influence their external world through cognitive functions such as knowing, recalling and understanding (McLaren, 2006, p. 1167). Here students make a deeper connection with the concept of reflection than those with a non-dualistic relationship. This includes an awareness of interlinking wider concepts such as the impact of attitude and behaviour on other agents, job security and public perception of the police.

These differing ontological perspectives are not necessarily cause for concern in the context of policing, merely indications of how different emphasis is placed on different aspects of an event. As described by Schon (1987, p. 107) a civil engineer planning the construction of a road might view the project from the perspective of drainage and surface stability of the ground not the financial benefits to the surrounding economies. Conversely an economist might focus on which route would generate maximum revenue without understanding the geological structure of the bedrock as to whether that particular route would provide a stable foundation upon which the road should be built. Similarly Mugler (1997, p. 229) discusses studies in higher education that suggest students adopt one of two approaches when learning: a surface approach or deeper approach. A surface approach is one where ideas are unoriginal and essentially reproduced; whilst a deeper approach is where the intention is to look for meaning and understanding behind those ideas. In the latter case Wood (2006, p. 58) notes that student teachers who took a deeper approach to learning were able to demonstrate a greater awareness of how reflection was influencing their professional activity.

Based on the concepts of non-dualistic and dualistic relationships with reflection it has been possible to determine the depth to which student constables on the Foundation Training Programme conceptualise reflection. From this it has been possible to identify the implications of embedding the principles of reflection and reflective learning within police training and potential directions for future research.

However, this paper must first outline the measure by which the depth of reflection can be determined from condensing the themes emerging from this research.

## **The depth of reflection**

As discussed in Chapter Three there are varying levels of reflection from a simple awareness of physical surroundings to critical self-analysis of interactions based on an erudite understanding of personal ontological and epistemological interpretations of the world. Whilst this paper is not concerned about undertaking a further discussion about reflection per se it is necessary to outline the principles upon which the outcomes of the research are framed. For example Mezirow (1981, pp. 12-13) suggests a model that represents an interpretation of reflection with seven levels of complexity ranging from a simple “specific perception” to a deeper understanding of theoretical concepts.

The first stage of being aware of a specific perception, or reflectivity, is described by Mezirow as simple awareness by an individual of how they behave, see or think. An incrementally more complex stage is affective reflectivity, described as awareness by an individual of the feelings they have about the way they are behaving, seeing or thinking. The third level of discriminant reflectivity is described as awareness by an individual of assessing the efficacy of the way they are behaving, seeing or thinking and identifying their relationship to that situation. The fourth level of judgemental reflectivity is described as awareness by an individual of placing value on their perception of how they are behaving, seeing or thinking. This includes whether they believe those values to be positive or negative, liked or disliked. The fifth level of conceptual reflectivity is described as critical awareness by an individual assessing the adequacy of the concepts used to support their own judgement. For example whether the descriptive terms of ‘good or bad’ are sufficient to judge or understand a person or concept. The penultimate sixth level is psychic reflectivity, described as recognition by an individual of making judgements based on limited information or preconceived ideas and beliefs. The final seventh level of theoretical reflectivity is described as understanding that

established practice or culture may explain personal experience less satisfactorily than another perspective (Mezirow, 1981, pp. 12-13).

The term awareness also requires explanation, as Marton (1993, p. 236) discusses, levels of understanding can change as individuals are exposed to an increasingly wider range of experiences upon which they can refer. In the context of this research it is not unreasonable to assume that different experiences gained by students prior to and during the Foundation Training Programme would inform varying levels of awareness to reflection. At the beginning of this research project there were no predetermined ideas as to how student constables might conceptualise reflection other than it was unlikely that they would possess a detailed understanding of the philosophical theories underpinning concepts of reflection and reflective learning. What has been revealed is the breadth of understanding and engagement with reflection and the wide variety of ways in which that experience has been expressed. Examples of how and when students have reflected were not restricted to the confines of the Foundation Training Programme. Some examples drew on experiences that demonstrated a clear understanding and sense of self when it came to dealing with people in difficult and sometimes physically dangerous situations. These experiences and explanations are the “outcomes or objects of reflection” (Brookfield, 1994, p. 211; Mezirow, 1981, p. 12) and once collated into groups of common themes indicate the depth to which student constables on the Foundation Training Programme conceptualise reflection; as illustrated in Table 6-2 below.

Assessment or evaluation of performance
Learning from self and others
Developing knowledge and practice to improve
Understanding how you know yourself and learn
Improve public service
Job security
Recollection of a specific event

Table 6-2: The limited number of different ways of conceptualising reflection

Table 6-2 represents the limited number of qualitatively different ways that reflection is conceptualised by the 24 student constables having condensed the data secured from the semi-structured interviews discussed in Chapter Five. However, this does not give an accurate representation of the depth or relationship between students and how they conceive of reflection. Perhaps the most enlightening outcome from this research is reconciling the responses to the questions of “what is reflection?” and “why reflect?” to create a snapshot of how student constables conceptualise reflection. However, presentation of the data in the form of a simple empirical table does not provide an accurate picture of the depth and complexity of how reflection is conceptualised. Nor does it illustrate the interaction of non-dualistic and dualistic relationships between student constables and their conceptions. The creation of a multi-layer graphical representation, or what Dahlin (Dahlin, 2007, p. 338) described as an “outcome space”, will combine the research data and theoretical concepts distilled from it to produce an illustration of how reflection is conceptualised. This will also provide a working model from which it can be determined where intervention might be required to support students before they leave the safe learning environment of the Area Training Units.

### **Identifying the depth of reflection**

This section describes the structure of a model shown at Figure 6-1 that could be used to identify the depth of reflection. This provides a discussion on the content, structure and distribution of the themes that emerged from analysis of the research data as illustrated above in Table 6-2 above. Motivation for the structure of Figure 6-1 comes from Dahlin (2007, p. 338) who discusses the creative use of graphics for conceptualising phenomenographical research. This follows the same principles of Mezirow’s hierarchy of reflection with the different depths of reflection becoming increasingly complex moving up the horizontal axis from level one to level five. The “referential aspect” (Barnard et al., 1999, p. 221) of Figure 6-1 is the limited number of qualitatively different ways in which reflection is conceptualised as described by the 24 student constables. The seven concepts described are unique and are structured in conceptual order with incremental levels of

understanding depicted by the most basic level (1) to the most complex level (5) as discussed on Page 117.

Figure 6-1 represents the entire spectrum of how reflection is conceptualised by student constables on the Foundation Training Programme. It is also a model upon which the Metropolitan Police could use to determine how future students conceive of reflection in relation to their responsibilities as newly appointed police officers. In turn this would enable the introduction of interventions for specific individuals to increase the depth and range of their knowledge and understanding to enhance reflective learning and increase the quality of services delivered to the public. What follows is a detailed explanation of how those conceptions have been interpreted and placed within the confines of the outcome space. As the concepts of reflection become deeper and more complex so the condensed themes are located further to the right of the outcome space. In this depiction the simplest most basic conceptions are shown in the bottom left corner moving towards the deeper and more complex in the top right.

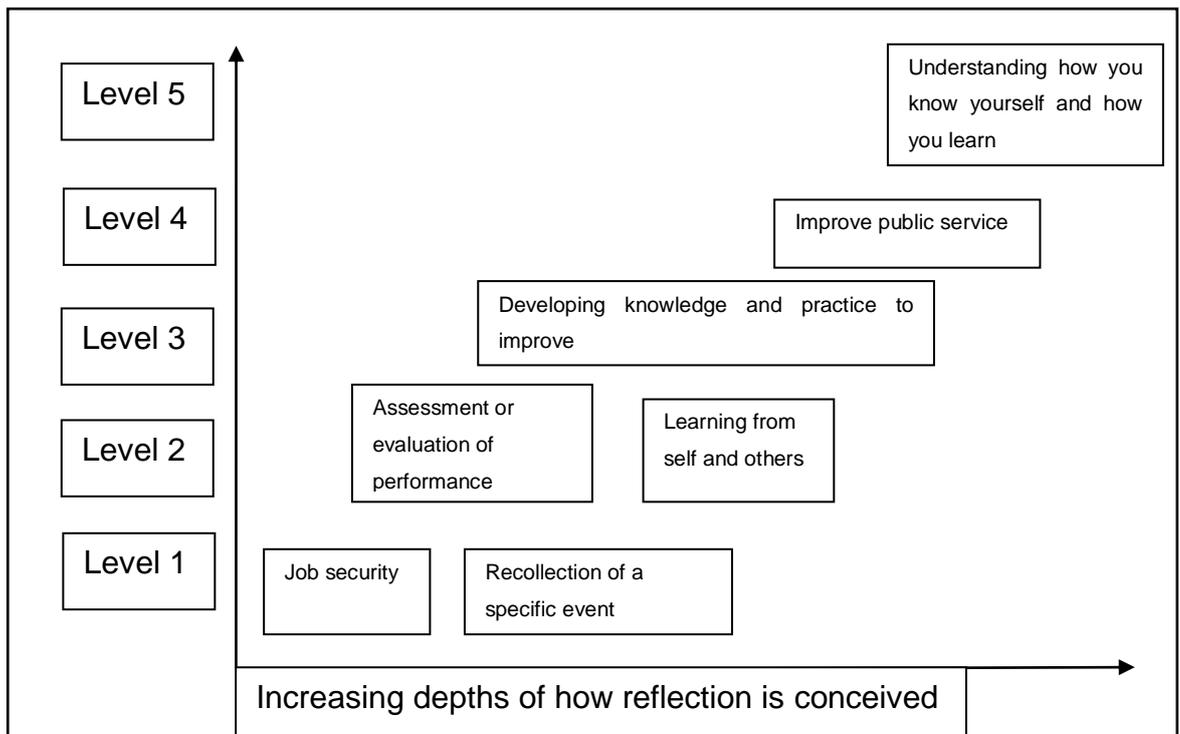


Figure 6-1: The increasing depth of reflection.

Adapted from Barnard (1999, p. 221) and (Mezirow, 1981, p. 12)

## **The depth of reflection within the condensed themes**

This section describes the depth of understanding demonstrated by the students in comparison to Mezirow's hierarchical levels of reflection as illustrated in Figure 6-1 above. Each group is discussed in the context of a dualistic or non-dualistic relationship between the student constables and how they conceive of reflection and to what extent these are indicative of simple, conscious or critical levels of reflection.

### **Level 1: Job security**

In this context reflection was conceptualised as providing a means to economic stability through job security. This non-dualistic relationship with reflection makes interconnecting links between developing knowledge and learning to improve performance that in turn was conceptualised as providing financial security for the student's family. This self-centred relationship with reflection, and the associated outcomes, was given by just one student who articulated a link between improving performance to pass successfully the course with subsequent financial stability for their family. In terms of the depth of reflection this concept was expressed simply as a means to an outcome. However, it would be inaccurate to suggest this was an entirely selfish conception as it was clear this was the first time during foundation training they had been asked to consider reflection as a concept. Given the purpose of foundation training has a very specific outcome for students it would not be unreasonable to expect them to necessarily have wider objectives other than those relevant to immediate circumstances at the forefront of their mind. Given the interviews were all conducted at an early stage in the training programme perhaps it is not unreasonable for the focus to be set on getting through the initial stages of training; seeing the Foundation Training Programme as the beginning of a longer career rather than just the completion of the course.

## **Level 1: Recollection of a specific event**

Chapter Two has discussed how reflection is an extension of thinking and how, at the most basic level, is simply an awareness of physical surroundings or recollection through everyday thoughts (Moon, 2004, p. 82). This non-dualistic relationship with reflection articulates the very beginning of the process and whilst the depth in this context is no more than skin-deep it marks an important aspect in defining how student constables conceptualise reflection. It would not be possible to describe fully the concept of reflection without having a point to define the parameters from. This resonates with Habermas' theory of reflection that knowing requires an understanding of historical development (McCarthy, 1978, p. 54). It is also worthy of note that one student also suggested that the motivation for reflection was because they were directed to it as part of the Foundation Training Programme. This is of course a valid point although, as discussed in Chapter Five, this conception was not articulated through intransigence or petulance and has been discounted from the final data set in Table 6-2. In respect of the depth of conception this is comparable to Mezirow's simplest form of reflectivity where there is a specific perception of seeing or thinking about a particular event.

## **Level 2: Assessment or evaluation of performance**

In this context the students were referring to evaluation of performance on two levels; firstly whether they could pass Key Stage Knowledge Evaluations, and secondly complete to a satisfactory standard practical assessments. This concept of reflection took a non-dualist approach; focusing on the implications for the student not completing tasks to the required standard. The focus of reflection as a means for assessment or evaluation of performance rested on conceptions of what had gone badly and what had gone well. Analysis of performance and self-evaluation were also used as descriptive phrases to articulate reflection as was looking back to identify weak points in order to understand what had happened in order to meet specified criteria. The process of evaluation was informed either through the results of pass marks expressed as percentages indicating a pass or fail and from feedback from other students and training staff. In respect of the

depth of this conception the assessment of evaluation of performance ranks with Mezirow's affective reflectivity where there is an understanding of how students feel about their actions. This was illustrated through the concept of positive and negative thoughts about feedback and performance following written or practical assessments.

## **Level 2: Learning from self and others**

Reflection in this context was predominantly seen as a way of learning from mistakes and feedback with the observation that more learning comes from mistakes than getting something right. These experiences also generated some of the most descriptive and animated explanations demonstrating that practical experience appeared to have a greater impact than simply learning legislation from the white notes. Reflection as a process of learning was split between learning as a result of securing insufficient marks in Key Stage Assessment multiple choice tests or verbal feedback from other students and training staff. The experience of reflection in this context was described as learning from mistakes and being self critical based on the outcome of written and practical evaluations. This was still indicative of a non-dualist relationship with reflection given the process was focused on the outcomes of meeting the minimum standards required to pass the assessments. This process of learning led to the notion of developing knowledge not just to meet the required standard but to apply what had been learnt to different situations.

## **Level 3: Developing knowledge and practice to improve**

In this context reflection is conceptualised as the way to improve knowledge and practice and is integral to feedback provided to students to support the learning process. Students conceived of reflection as a means by which to fill gaps in knowledge which was conceptualised as a process by which greater confidence would be gained to deal with situations more effectively. Reflection was also conceptualised as a way to gain a different perspective on a situation, again linking back to the process of learning through feedback. In this context some

students made the link between the impact of how individual communication styles and behaviour might provoke different responses from other people. This dualistic relationship with reflection also identified an explicit understanding how individual attitudes and behaviour could impact on individual and public perception of the Metropolitan Police and linked to improving public service. In respect of the depth of conception students in this group were able to distinguish how they were intrinsically linked to the learning process. This discriminate reflectivity enabled students to recognise particular strengths and weaknesses in their knowledge and understanding and adapt their response not just to improve but to understand and find alternative approaches to resolve new and existing problems. These advances were expressed in the realisation that subconsciously undesirable physical contact was being demonstrated either as insufficient, or excessive, to the needs of the scenarios being dealt with.

#### **Level 4: Improve public service**

In this context reflection was described as a process of recognising how attitude and behaviour impacted on public perception of the Metropolitan Police as an organisation with lasting impressions based on initial contact with individual officers. This dualistic relationship with reflection was indicative of students articulating how improved knowledge and understanding could lead to being more effective in real life situations including physical control and verbal communication with the public. This concept also overlapped with recognition of the need to improve the application of theoretical knowledge to practical situations. Students also made the connection between length of service providing exposure to experiencing a wider variety of situations that would in turn provide opportunities to learn and develop practical skills to apply theoretical knowledge. In turn this was identified by one student as a means to providing greater economic stability through improved job security. The depth of conception in this category enabled students to demonstrate a judgmental reflectivity: recognising how negative or positive behaviour could have a reciprocal response. This was demonstrated by some clear understanding of the consequences of antagonistic behaviour in volatile situations or misreading apparently benign signals resulting in verbal or

physical responses that were either not suitable or inappropriate to the current circumstances. Students in this group were also able to articulate how they identified the negative attitudes demonstrated by peers and colleagues in certain circumstances could be transferred to equally negative perceptions of the police by the public.

### **Level 5: Understanding how you know yourself and learn**

Reflection in this context involved a process of thinking about how feedback from oneself and others informed what students knew about themselves and their individual style of learning. Reflection here is conceived as more than simply identifying mistakes and successfully completing specific assessments and demonstrates an understanding that individual conceptions of learning are different. These insights were indicative of a deeper form of reflection suggesting an understanding of what Clarke (1996, p. 177) described as what is known and how it has been learnt. This description of an essentially dualistic relationship with reflection was described as a process of individuals understanding themselves, how they learnt during self development and applied that learning to practical scenarios. Students also described the implications of different learning methods, for example the use of spider-graphs and the practical application of skills such as hand-cuffing and first-aid. In respect of the depth of conception this represented a critical awareness of conceptual reflectivity. Students in this category articulated a clear understanding of how they understood the learning process and the different techniques that could be adapted to develop and improve. Some students in this category also demonstrated traits of psychic reflectivity whereby they recognised the risks of making judgements based on limited information when dealing with colleagues and members of the public.

### **Conclusions on the depth of reflection**

This research has shown that the variety, breadth and depth of how students conceptualise reflection covers six of the seven hierarchical levels of reflection described by Mezirow (1981, p. 12) stopping short of only the deepest level of

theoretical reflectivity. This should come as no surprise given that these are students of policing not philosophy; although critics who perceive the police as uneducated blue-collar workers could take comfort from the levels of empathy and understanding indicated from the data. Understanding how students in nursing and teaching conceive of reflection has enabled those agencies to develop intervention programmes to support and enhance reflective learning; enabling practitioners to provide higher standards for their service users. There is compelling evidence to suggest that the same principles can be applied to supporting student constables and Chapter Seven explains what the consequences are of reflection and reflective learning for officers and operational policing for the Metropolitan Police.

# Chapter 7

## Conclusion

This research has established that wittingly or otherwise student constables training with the Metropolitan Police demonstrate a wide breadth of conceptions towards reflection and reflective learning. The depth of these conceptions has implications for how individual officers are likely to conduct themselves during social interactions once they complete their foundation training and begin operational policing in London. The students interviewed were able to identify a variety of opportunities where practice, attitudes or behaviour required adjustments or intervention. Examples of this ranged from recognising their inappropriate use of police equipment, compliance with legislative requirements and an awareness of how their communication skills impact on others. These interventions arose from reflective learning by individuals or from recognition being prompted following observations from tutors or other students from their peer group. Whilst all the students interviewed were able to provide a response to how they conceived of reflection the process of gathering the interview data was the first time they had been asked to consider reflection as a concept.

This research has also established that the Foundation Training Programme does not actively engage students to consider how they reflect and the first part of Chapter Seven discusses the opportunities, risks and limitations of encouraging reflective learning in policing. This section draws parallels between the implications of reflective learning in policing and that of agencies providing services for education and health care. The remainder of Chapter Seven is devoted to a reflexive account of how the original purpose of this research has been fulfilled and considers how suitable a phenomenographical approach has been for collecting and analysing the data. The concluding part of this chapter considers the influence that pursuing the Professional Doctorate has had on my development as a researching professional and points the way to what further research could be undertaken by future projects.

## **The consequences of reflection in operational policing**

Analysis of the research data shows that there are advantages for the Metropolitan Police in identifying how student constables conceptualise reflection and what motivates those officers to reflect. Establishing reflection and reflective learning at the early stage of the training regime has wide reaching implications for students being able to appreciate the predicament of self and others in what might be stressful or intellectually demanding situations. Parallels can be drawn here between social interactions between the public, newly appointed police officers and other professionals delivering services to the public. Medical patients place a high degree of trust in the staff charged to care for them and pupils are no less vulnerable to the influence that teachers exert over sustained periods of time during years of education. Police officers are called upon to deal with an equally wide range of situations from the initial actions at the scenes of crime to the care and control of patients with serious physical and mental health conditions. How officers identify the nature of what they are dealing with and apply the most appropriate response is dependent largely on their ability to draw on their previous experience, or that of others.

Comparisons between how student nurses, teachers and constables conceptualise reflection are drawn from published research conducted from within health care and education environments. In Landström's phenomenographical study of intensive care patients experiencing thirst the key conclusion was that nurses did not perceive thirst to be a significant problem for patients under their care. Solutions to resolve this were articulated as nurses taking time to understand the needs of those in their care as well as practical solutions such as providing more detailed documentation when handing responsibility to another member of staff (Landström et al., 2009, p. 138). In a policing context this can be compared to the experience articulated by T21 in Chapter Five through the vignette from a role-play where the twisting of handcuffs applied to a detained suspect were causing pain and discomfort. The intervention from immediate peer group feedback had the effect of raising awareness, not just for T21, but the rest of that group as to

remaining focused and in responsible physical control of subjects who have been restrained.

Gustafsson's phenomenographical study of reflection in the professional development of nurses concluded that reflection provided added depth to the nurse's professional knowledge enabling them to develop and mature their skills and knowledge (Gustafsson & Fagerberg, 2004, p. 278). In a later piece of work Gustafsson's phenomenographical study of how reflection and reflective practice is conceived by night duty nurses discusses how reflection is an essential part of learning, understanding and encouraging improvement in professional practice (Gustafsson et al., 2009, p. 1467). Williams (2001, p. 30) expands on this with the suggestion that nurses also reflect on practical aspects of their work including higher level considerations such as "social, economic or political aspects of their work". These considerations were also articulated by some student constables interviewed for this current research with T13 expressing the importance of presenting a positive image to the public; inspiring confidence in the ability of officers. Examples of the benefits of invoking interventions through reflection and reflective learning can also be found in the teaching profession.

Bengtsson (1995, p. 31) discusses how self-reflection can assist teachers understand their individual teaching style and share that knowledge by teaching about how they teach. In a similar way Gilbert (1994, p. 518) discusses how reflection on practice can assist teachers to frame and understand previously held ideas and concepts about teaching to encourage new ways of thinking, learning and subsequently develop new or different perspectives on teaching. Loughran illustrates this point in the context of teaching where he discusses the value of identifying the subtle distinctions required to bridge the gap between knowledge and skills to deliver that knowledge, whilst avoiding unnecessary conflict between teachers and pupils (Loughran, 2002, p. 40). Again parallels can be drawn between the experiences of teachers with those revealed by the students interviewed during this research. Group and individual feedback, as described by T9, demonstrated how ineffective communication skills can lead to confrontational situations becoming potentially violent. This provided the recipient of the feedback,

and the class, the opportunity to learn from the experiences shared in that account of the incident without the officer, or a member of the public, sustaining injury.

This is not to say that the process of reflection is easy. Narratives from practitioners in the nursing and teaching professions pursuing reflective learning give an insight of how it takes time for skills to evolve with individuals struggling to grasp reflection when presented as a new concept. The process of lifting the lid on what is seen to be a taken for granted way of thinking is described as being unfamiliar, difficult and uncomfortable for the participants. However, the outcomes are described as producing a deeper and more meaningful understanding by the respondents of how they begin to empathise with the patients or students in their care. These concepts are far from unattainable in a policing context. This research has shown the 24 students interviewed for this research all, to one degree or another, demonstrated clear and well articulated accounts of how they conceptualise reflection and the benefits of reflective learning. They also demonstrated varying levels of depth and understanding of the potential consequences of not engaging with reflection; not just for themselves but their family, colleagues, members of the public, image and reputation of the police service. From the perspective of a police manager Dean (2008, p. 352) notes the value of understanding police knowledge as a means to managing the different skills and styles of individual investigators. This leads to a caveat having to be being placed on the extent to which encouraging reflection and reflective learning can be relied upon to compensate for the risks associated with inexperienced officers being placed in demanding and dangerous situations. There are some well constructed arguments as to the limitations of reflection that would apply as equally to the police as they do other professions.

### **The limitations of reflection**

It would be unrealistic to assume that all aspects of reflection are entirely positive or that there are no limitations or restrictions to undertaking reflective learning. This research has identified documented drawbacks experienced by teachers and nurses that would also be transferable to policing. These shortcomings include

observations made by Fowler (1998, p. 382) that reflection should not be adopted as a single approach based on a “pre-formed model” for clinical supervision but should be tailored to individual needs. Bengtsson (1995, p. 24), also discusses how a “steady flow of new literature on reflection within the teaching profession makes it hard for practitioners to keep up with a continuous stream of new contributions”. The negative aspects to reflection and reflective learning can be considered in four main ways. Firstly there is a risk that the meaning of reflection lacks clarity reducing the focus and hence outcomes of reflective learning. Secondly there is a risk of negative consequences whereby officers become aware that particular attitudes or behaviours are not acceptable but fail to address, or conceal intentionally, undesirable traits based on established or evolved prejudices. Thirdly there is a risk of students becoming overly reflective resulting in procrastination and indecision whilst contemplating the consequences of a particular course of action, rendering practitioners incapable of undertaking meaningful activities. Finally there are potential limitations with officers being denied the time and opportunity to undertake meaningful reflective practice owing to a lack of structure or constraints imposed from competing demands on time.

Reflection has been described as a mulling over of a particular event, considering what happened and whether a particular outcome or action could have been done differently (Roffey-Barentsen & Malthouse, 2009, p. 4). Loughran (1996, p. 14) takes this a step further and summarises the process as being more purposeful, aiming at reaching a conclusion to untangle a problem by gaining a better understanding of the situation to find a solution. This process of learning and understanding is a natural development of increasing knowledge and experience resulting from interpreting various interactions with the world around us (Boud & Garrick, 1999, p. 202; Kalantzis & Cope, 2004, p. 38). The process of reflection follows a natural path to determine what can be learnt from a particular experience and includes emotional responses of thoughts and feelings towards that event (M. Fox et al., 2007, p. 184). Despite this Bengtsson (1995, p. 25) argues that the liberal use of the term ‘reflection’ has diluted its true meaning. This view is also shared by Finlay (2002, p. 532) who described the process of reflection as being “fraught with ambiguity and uncertainty”. Having considered various aspects and

techniques of reflection in this thesis it has become clear that like so many other philosophical concepts reflection and reflective learning overlap, interweave and contradict. Craig (2001, p. 303) also challenges the benefits of reflection in teaching asking whether the art of reflection is a true gift or is simply a flawed attempt to divert attention away from a failing education system. In order to be reflective there has to be willingness on the part of the individual to engage with the process which “may, at times, be an uncomfortable process” (Atkins & Murphy, 1993, p. 1190).

Whilst the outcome of reflective learning may lead to learning from experience there is, as observed by Gully (2004, p. 315), no guarantee that this will bring about a change in the way an individual acts differently in the future. With this comes the concept of negative reflection; understanding that a particular way of interacting or behaving is intrinsically wrong but with no desire to change. It may even be the case that despite knowing that certain behaviours or attitudes are unacceptable that there is resistance to change through ingrained or entrenched beliefs and practices (Lewin, 1951, p. 329). A potentially damaging effect of the reflective process could result in changes towards nefarious or malicious practices. For example learning to deliberately cause distress or antagonise members from particular communities. Similarly learning organisational processes intended to root out undesirable attitude and behaviour may simply enable officers to become more adept at avoiding detection or to defend poor practice having learnt from their own experience or from others. It may also be the case that recruits are encouraged to recognise the limitations of their own knowledge and experience yet they choose not to push the boundaries of their own ability (Jung, 1971, p. 399). This resonates with some of the potential limitations identified with the use of the Johari window as a model to support learning. Having learnt the underlying principles of the model it is possible for individuals to exaggerate positive traits or obscure negative aspects of their personality to their own advantage.

There are observers who believe that there is a lack of opportunity for reflective learning amongst professionals (Nikolou-Walker & Garnett, 2004, p. 309). Even in

the context of teaching Burchell (2002, p. 219) asks the question “how do we evaluate the impact of professional development?” Reflection is not a clear cut process that can be turned on and off like water from a tap; as Barnett (1995, p. 56) observes an important aspect of the process is providing opportunities to reflect. This is a difficulty recognised by Gardner (2001, p. 28) of how to create an environment where it is possible to reflect critically on aspects of learning.

Even ardent supporters argue that whilst reflection is an essential and challenging part of learning individuals do not understand properly the concept and as such are often denied the opportunity to engage fully with the reflective process (Hillier, 2005, p. 15). At the opposite end of the spectrum come the consequences of spending too much time reflecting on an activity and not enough time acting upon potential learning. Excessive contemplation over the consequences of a particular course of action can become debilitating leading to indecision or even encouraging deliberate prevarication for personal gain (Goward, Kellet, & Wren, 2001, p. 194). Others, for whom reflective learning is not fully understood, see the process as alien and unhelpful (Fowler & Chevannes, 1998, p. 380). Clayton (2008, p. 74) and Day (1999, p. 230) also question, in the context of teaching, whether increasing pressure at work allows professionals time to engage in significant and meaningful reflection on their own practice and learning.

Like practitioners in education, police officers may have little opportunity to identify eloquently aspects of their professional practice with a view to learning from that process of reflection (Brockbank & McGill, 1998, p. 72). In an environment where the volume and pace of the work is relentless and unforgiving it appears that a key element of enabling the means to encourage reflection is missing (Chambers, 1999, p. 161). Other comments, such as those made by Coffey (2004, p. 735) note that public sector employees already suffer from stress related to high workloads and bureaucratic organisational restraint. Given that reflection is a process of “preparing for the future whilst deliberating on the past” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989, p. 10) it would be easy to conclude that even at an early stage of a career where the training input is at its most intense police officers work in an environment that stifles the opportunity to engage with the concept of reflection.

This echoes across a void in the academic literature: reflection and reflective learning is firmly established in the education and health care systems (Bleakley, 2000, p. 11) but academic references in the context of policing are rare. This is not to say that that value of reflection in policing should be dismissed. However; unless reflective learning becomes a mandatory aspect of structured continuing professional development it is likely that officers will claim that they do not have the time. This was a consideration identified by Pierson (1998, p. 168) during a study of student nurses training in Canada whereby a lack of time dedicated for reflection led to the experience being rushed; inhibiting the potential benefits to learning. There is also a risk that reflection becomes centred on technical and legislative matters rather than the broader holistic benefits of reflective learning.

Of the documentation that was reviewed during this research project there was a clear organisational focus on compliance with legislative or health and safety requirements. The structure of the Foundation Training Programme also appeared to place greater emphasis on students delivering set piece statements in a particular sequence than encouraging critical self-analysis of how they understood their role in the wider context of policing. The data from the interviews captured a snapshot of conceptions at a time of uncertainty and change in the personal and professional circumstances of the student constables. There were clearly no guarantees that joining the police as a recruit would ensure successful completion of the two year probationary period and foundation training is just the beginning of a process of assessment and scrutiny. Despite this only a small number of students articulated a link between reflection, economic stability or job security and completing the training programme. This came as a surprise given 21 of the 24 students interviewed had elected to undertake recruit training having left previously secure employment. This also identified common ground between the students for the motivation to succeed in completing the foundation programme although not one that was articulated as an imperative to reflect.

## **A common purpose to reflect**

With the high standards required to pass each assessment there is an underlying and compelling reason for students to reflect on progress, learning and developing knowledge and practice. Failing to complete each element of the course can result in the student being back-classed and having to leave their cohort of students and join a group who are completing the previous stage of the foundation training course. Not only would the student have to repeat the previous five weeks of training they would be leaving a familiar group of colleagues and would not join them in the final graduation ceremony at the conclusion of the foundation training. Despite this not one student cited being back-classed as a motivating factor either to reflect or as an incentive to improve, or assess performance. The matter of being back-classed was discussed with training staff at all three training sites. Whilst the staff agreed that the threat of being back-classed hung over all students on the Foundation Training Programmes they were adamant that none of their students were facing it as an imminent prospect.

This raises the question as to whether the students that had volunteered to take part in the research had genuinely put themselves forward or been pre-selected to participate. However, the complete absence of the subject suggested that it was not something that the group was experiencing as it could reasonably be expected to be mentioned by at least one of the 24 students interviewed. This leads to a reflexive account of how suitable the phenomenographical approach was for the purposes of this research project. This also provides an opportunity to discuss to what extent the same or an adapted approach might be suitable for further research and what influence the Professional Doctorate had on conducting the research and meeting the aims of the research project.

## **Fulfilling the purpose of the research**

This thesis has fulfilled the original purpose of the research to establish how student constables conceptualise reflection and what the implications of that

knowledge are for social interactions during operational policing. This research project established five research objectives in response to the two research questions; how do student constables conceptualise reflection and what is their motivation to reflect? The first objective was to establish how reflective learning was established in the Metropolitan Police recruit training programme. This was explained in the context of how national police recruit training was adapted in response to rising crime figures and falling public confidence in the police nationally during the 1980s.

The background for this research came from the significant change in the way that police training was delivered in the mid 1980s. This regime change was implemented following critical reports that showed the Metropolitan Police to have become disconnected from local communities following heavy-handed tactics to quell disorder generated partly due to political unrest at the time. Some aspects of this isolation were attributed to a lack of empathy towards minority ethnic communities, in part due to the regimented way in which legislation and regulations were drilled 'by rote' into new recruits. These standards were degenerated further by an ingrained cultural resistance from experienced officers to share tradecraft with novice constables of how to apply technical legislative knowledge in practical operational situations. Part of the response from the Metropolitan Police was to develop a more holistic approach to training that placed strong emphasis on students being exposed to a more vocational approach to training. This was developed further through the introduction of IPLDP and piloting of National Occupational Standards in 2006.

The second objective was to identify a suitable methodology to determine the extent of existing knowledge on reflection in policing, the content and structure of the current recruit training programme. This was central to meeting the aim of this thesis and discussed in detail the phenomenographical approach taken to gathering and analysing data obtained through semi-structured interviews with 24 student constables. This aspect of the research also established that there is currently little in the way of published literature on reflection and reflective learning within police training or in policing generally. The third objective was to identify

what opportunities for reflective learning were provided for recruits attending the police training college at Hendon. That objective was met through a review of the current recruit training programme encompassing interviews with training staff supported by an analysis of the content and structure of lessons delivered during the course. The outcome of this aspect of the research project informed the construction of interview questions put to the student constables.

The fourth objective was to develop a hierarchical model from the data to illustrate the varying depths of those conceptions and discuss how they impacted on operational policing. The results of the interview data were subjected to a critical phenomenographical analysis in Chapter Five that illuminated the findings with key quotes from the semi-structured interviews. The findings were discussed and analysed in Chapter Six and were supported by a critical analysis of the data triangulated against responses from the training staff and demographic data of the 24 student constables interviewed during the research. The analysis of the research data concluded that whilst the self-reflection sheet appears to have fallen out of use the concept of reflection is firmly embedded in the Foundation Training Programme. This thesis determined there to be seven qualitatively different ways in which 24 student constables conceptualised reflection with five increasingly complex levels of understanding resulting in the development of the hierarchical model illustrated in Figure 6-1.

The final objective was to discuss the benefits, limitations and implications of understanding how student constables conceptualise reflection and what the consequences of that knowledge might be on operational policing. This aspect of the research drew upon existing published research conducted with practitioners delivering services in education and health care. This current research also identified responses from some students that suggested potential limitations of becoming overly reflective although the majority of students considered the benefits of reflective learning to outweigh the disadvantages. One of the questions raised by this aspect of the research is why some students provided a wider range of contributions as to how they conceptualised reflection than others. Does age necessarily equate to having a broader base of life experience upon which to draw

or does it provide a broader range of vocabulary from which limited life experiences could be articulated in response to the questions asked? Whilst this outcome was inconclusive, and further debate remains beyond the remit of this paper, it does raise the question of how suitable phenomenography has been to fulfil the purpose of this research project.

### **Phenomenography: the correct approach?**

Chapter Two of this thesis gave careful consideration as to the most suitable approach to gathering and analysing data for this research project concluding that a phenomenographical approach was the most suitable for the intended purpose. The choice of a phenomenographical approach to gathering and analysing interview data was to establish the limited number of qualitatively different ways a phenomenon can be seen and understood (Marton, 1992, p. 253). In the case of this research how student constables in the early stages of their foundation training with the Metropolitan Police Service conceptualise reflection. This approach also enabled a hierarchical analysis of the range of responses as contributed by the students. This established that students did not always articulate one particular concept of reflection and this was subject to a further discussion in Chapter Five. During the creation of the emerging themes recorded on Table 5-1 and Table 5-2 there was an almost subconscious process by the researcher of grouping similar themes as they emerged, for example clustering themes of performance and improvement. This gave some initial cause for concern as to whether the interpretation of the data was being influenced by personal preconceptions of what reflection should be. However, having reviewed the data several times it was the words and phrases being used by the students, rather than my own, that generated the data discussed in Chapter Five and latterly Chapter Six.

Reflective learning has ancient roots and Socrates may have been one of the first to use this process as he tried to discover the “nature of goodness by asking questions of others” (Daudelin, 1996, p. 37). This seemed to be particularly relevant to the preferred approach of data collection and analysis illustrating a key

drawback in the difficulty in studying something Marsick (1990, p. 4) observed is “essentially a cognitive process”. Phenomenography has been credited with recognition that when used properly it can influence teaching and learning to improve the quality of learning outcomes (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000, p. 295). This confirmed the place of phenomenography as having a viable and significant place in the professional literature associated with higher education (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999, p. 92). However, phenomenography is not without its critics and some considerable caution is expressed about the reliability and objectiveness for gathering data with this approach (Alsop & Tompsett, 2006, p. 244). One of the reasons for this has been cited as a lack of clarity in the methodology leaving practitioners with no precise description of how to structure the data collection and subsequent analysis (Entwistle, 1997, p. 128). In particular caution is expressed about the structure and format of semi-structured interviews to gather the data in that they should seek to reflect a subject’s perception and not become a diagnostic discourse (Marton & Booth, 1997, p. 130).

Alsop and Tompsett (2006, p. 244) also criticise the fact that the stage for analysis of the data is a distinct and separate part of the process. The concern being that this isolates the data denying a grounded theory approach of refining and developing the questions as the research evolves. However, this approach did ensure that the same questions would be put to each respondent thus providing consistency (Brammer, 2006, p. 967) with gathering the data. Here again Alsop and Tompsett (2006, p. 257) express concern that this snap shot from an individual does not assess whether the responses given are typical of that person. There is also a substantial risk of subjectivity with the analysis and interpretation of the data in that the different ways of experiencing an event is dependent on individual experience (Ashworth & Lucas, 1998, p. 417; Marton & Booth, 1997, p. 125).

These concerns were reflected in Chapter Two that also discussed the ethical considerations about personal influence on the research process, as well as collaboration and discussion between interviewees. As such some of the potential weaknesses for this research methodology have already been discussed with

further considerations given to data sampling and interview planning in that chapter. It became apparent that phenomenography could be applied to almost any situation where the research sought to identify conceptions and understanding of a specific event or phenomena. This is demonstrated in the published research that had used phenomenography for such diverse subjects as understanding the heritage of spoken Spanish (Felix, 2009) and how students understand the application of computer software in the communications industry (Alsop & Tompsett, 2006, p. 257).

Dahlgren and Fallsberg (1991, p. 152) use a metaphor to describe phenomenography of asking someone to sort an ordinary pack of playing cards in to an order of their choice. The observation is that an individual might sort them in to four different groups based on suit or 13 groups based on hierarchical sequence. They go on to make the point that phenomenographical researchers seek to determine why particular choices are made but without knowing in advance the extent to which various categories might exist. This research has determined that 24 student constables on the Metropolitan Police Foundation Training Programme conceptualise reflection in seven descriptively unique ways based on a wide range of experiences and examples. Furthermore this research has determined specific underlying motivating factors that those students saw as an imperative to reflect. These were again based on a wide range of experiences illustrated by specific examples provided by the students. However, this research represents a snap-shot only of how these particular 24 students conceptualise reflection and as such cannot be cited as representative of all student constables across the Metropolitan Police. In the same vein the data has been gathered and represented in a manner that is indicative of one researcher; notwithstanding the constraints and safeguards implemented on the collection and interpretation of the data.

In terms of trustworthiness it is accepted that whilst the processes used in this research project are repeatable conceptions and interpretation of the data would be unique and not necessarily capable of replication by another researcher (Sandbergh, 1997, p. 205). However, in the same way that there are a limited

number of ways to experience a phenomena it follows that are also a “limited number of relevant ways to discuss them” (Säljö, 1997, p. 178). In a similar vein Sjoström and Dahlgren (2002, p. 342) argue that whilst the discoveries themselves do not have to be capable of replication subsequent use of the categories must be of some use for future research. It would also be reasonable to assume that explanations given at one stage of a recruit’s training would alter as their “conceptions of circumstances change” (Tesch, 1990, p. 65).

The merits of a phenomenographical approach for further research in this area are persuasive and offer the opportunity to explore a deeper understanding of how police officers construct and understand the world around them. As discussed by Holgersson (2008, p. 365) police knowledge tends to be tacit and implicit making it difficult to identify, classify and share. However, this paper has shown that there are theories that can describe how individuals learn and, as discussed by Kitchenham (2008, p. 104), why they learn in a particular way.

## **Pursuing the Professional Doctorate**

Pursuing the Professional Doctorate in Criminal Justice has been a four year journey of personal discovery and shared experiences living up to my early expectations that it would be, as described by Lee (2009a, p. 51), “an exciting challenge”. The motivation to pursue this degree came not from any great expectations of enhanced career development but from a personal ambition to achieve an academic qualification of the highest standard whilst remaining firmly grounded as a professional practitioner. Lee (2009b, p. 641) also discusses an exponential growth in Professional Doctorates within professions that include nursing and education. This underpins my observation in Chapter One that there is little in the way of research being conducted in to the acquisition of professional knowledge within policing. If anything this was a highly motivating factor to explore what appeared to be a relatively remote area of knowledge and understanding with a certain degree of trepidation as to how the outcome of the research might unfold.

The nature and structure of the supervised research required of the Professional Doctorate encouraged me to consider wider aspects of my professional development and not just professional practice or academic achievement. During the last four years it has been necessary to reflect critically upon what I was learning with the University of Portsmouth with a clear focus on the relevance of the research for the Metropolitan Police. The notion that the research process should be personally, professionally and academically relevant appeared at first to be ambitious almost to the point of being unattainable. However, the supervised structure of the course, that covered a range of subjects from critical thinking to advanced techniques for research and publishing, kept the demands of the qualification in a meaningful and achievable perspective.

This is a core aspect of the skills required of a Professional Doctorate, described by Doncaster (2000, p. 392) as a part of a student's professional and continuing development rather than a smaller focus on an "academic research career". This has allowed me to maintain what Yam (2005, p. 564) describes as a clear link between theory and practice: developing knowledge that is relevant to professional practice and academic achievement. With this came the need to maintain a sense of reflexivity relevant to my role as researcher and being aware of how my own beliefs, prejudices and assumptions influence my understanding of the world around me (Gay & Kirkland, 2003, p. 182). However this is a limited interpretation of a complex process and in equal measure there had to be an awareness to the risk of this extending to a constant state of self-monitoring, indecision and anxiety (Edwards, 1998, p. 379).

Having an understanding and awareness of personal prejudice and pre-conceived ideas about what reflection and reflective learning means enabled me to gain a clearer understanding of how to listen and identify how student constables conceptualise reflection. In turn this helped to establish a process of bracketing out descriptions and interpretations that were formed from my personal experience that might otherwise have clouded what was being articulated by the research subjects. It became apparent that this process was also one that the Metropolitan Police had been trying to introduce during the 1980s; training recruits to be open

mindful and responsive to understanding new ideas, cultures and concepts. The intention being to introduce a balanced and well adjusted approach to policing providing opportunities for individuals, and the organisation, to consider how best to respond to community concerns. Undertaking the Professional Doctorate has provided the opportunity to identify individual perspectives of understanding and how to go about filling those gaps in knowledge; criteria that Habermas (1971, p. 4) determined to be critical for individuals being able to understand themselves. This style of learning has also revealed the high standards of research and writing required for success in the competitive market that is the knowledge industry. The learning environment provided by the University of Portsmouth is relatively safe to develop such skills that only experience and knowledge can bring (Godlee & Jefferson, 2006, p. 268; Kitchin & Fuller, 2005, p. 4). Whether this has been sufficient to avoid the disappointment experienced by would-be authors whose work does not achieve publication (Delamont & Atkinson, 2004, p. 101) remains to be seen; although it has provided a solid foundation upon which to continue learning.

## **Concluding comments**

Police officers hold considerable power over the general population and with this have a responsibility to account for how they discharge their obligations to the public. The police not only act as the gate keepers to the criminal justice system they have the opportunity and means by which to incarcerate or safeguard individuals and support or alienate entire communities. It would seem entirely logical that the police, be they named a "Service" or "Force", would see the value in affording recruits and experienced officers the opportunity to understand how they perceive their role within the wider fabric of society. This thesis has shown that these are aspects of policing that some student constables completing their foundation training are acutely aware of. Thus the opportunity already exists to determine how best to nurture and develop the foundations of reflection and reflective learning so police officers reflect systematically on their own conceptions of knowledge (Cotton & Griffiths, 2007, p. 558). The challenge will be instilling a sense of value in critical self reflection and establishing a process whereby it

becomes not routine but ingrained in the psyche of officers. The Metropolitan Police might be receptive to supporting research in to this area of training and development but may, as Hoyrup (2004, p. 450) observes of large organisations, take a far more cautious approach to implementing change.

The development of the model at Figure 6-1, that shows the increasing depth and complexity of reflection as conceived by student constables, provides an evidence based representation of how those officers link professional knowledge to professional practice. Having a clear illustration of what had previously been an intangible concept will enable practitioners, and tutors, to envisage how their own conceptions influence the way they think and learn. Whilst developing a working set of guidelines and instructions could stifle the spontaneity of reflective learning the simplicity of the model could assist individuals to identify for themselves the depth and complexity of how they conceptualise reflection. On a more practical level the model also provides opportunities for the MPS to assess the suitability of potential applicants to the service as an indicator, in conjunction with other screening processes, to assess the suitability of applicants. In this context the model provides an evidence based frame of reference to assess to what extent applicants conceive of the impact of their interpersonal skills on public confidence over personal financial gain or job security.

Whilst there is some published research into reflective learning within limited aspects of police training there is little in respect of how officers conceptualise reflection. Yet there are high expectations from the public about the standard of service that is provided; indicated by the strenuous screening process that potential applicants for the police have to endure based on mental, psychological and physical traits (Ho, 2001, p. 320). Policing, like nursing, requires complex social interactions and successful outcomes require effective interpersonal and communication skills. An ability to demonstrate empathy towards the other person can result in greater professionalism during encounters, particularly where interactions may result in physical coercion. However, like nurses, police officers are often engaged with routines that are repetitive and mundane, placing greater focus on the task rather than the people involved (Freshwater, 2002, p. 6; Tripp,

1993, p. 17). Standards of policing and the calibre of applicants attracted to law enforcement has been the focus of repeated criticism in the media and by organisations scrutinising police performance. High profile enquiries investigating linked series sex offences, missing persons and homicides have seen allegations of ineptitude and incompetence levelled against junior and senior ranking officers, (Evans, 2011; Longstaff, 2010; O'Neill, 2005). Whilst these could be interpreted as simply eye-catching headlines they still have the potential to corrode public confidence if the political and economic motives of the media are not considered. Ensuring that officers have a structure within which to reflect on experience at all stages of their careers would show a meaningful commitment by police forces to improving professional standards.

Effective communication, quality of policing and community relations are essential areas of law enforcement (Leishman, Loveday, & Savage, 1996b, p. 4; Waters, 1996, p. 208) and were cited by the Scarman report as critical elements missing from UK policing (Scarman, 1981). The sentiments of Scarman are still echoed today with Rix (2009, p. 2) noting the importance of “responding to public initiated contact in a polite and respectful manner”. As such critical reflection on the immediate or perceived impact of actions by police towards others should encourage officers to consider how their words or actions are interpreted, particularly in situations of conflict or violence. In the context of the Metropolitan Police Foundation Training Programme it appears that student constables may well have been learning from experience and expanding their professional knowledge but have not recognised it as a process of reflection or reflective learning.

During the relatively short time during which this thesis has been developed the landscape of recruit training in the Metropolitan Police has begun to change. These changes have seen the closure of two training centres and a move towards recruiting officers from the ranks of unpaid volunteer Special Constables or those who have completed a minimum two years service as PCSOs. Despite these requirements it is too early to assess the impact of this strategy on reflective learning for the Metropolitan Police. What has become apparent is the need to

provide opportunities to maintain consistent professional development during and after the initial probationary period has been completed which reinforces the findings of independent inspections of probationer training (HMIC, 2002, p. 53).

The responses from training staff and students who were interviewed during this research suggested that opportunities for structured reflection beyond the Foundation Training Programme are limited. This came from the training staff who acknowledged inconsistencies with training of coach patrol tutors and two students who anticipated the PAC assessments once released to their Boroughs to be no more than tick-box exercises. These are the same concerns identified by Newton (2004, p. 155) for student nurses to maintain meaningful critical reflection when they have to “grapple with a rapidly changing professional environment and may not have the time, skills or structure to reflect”. This represents a natural opportunity to extend the research further to determine whether the habit of reflection established during foundation training continues as a student officer’s career progresses and to establish how reflection is conceived by officers in specialist roles.

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# Appendix One

## Summary of the range of responses by age and gender

Range of Responses	Age	Gender
4	26	M
4	26	M
4	37	M
5	22	M
5	22	M
5	22	M
5	26	F
6	22	M
6	23	M
6	24	M
6	31	F
6	35	F
7	21	M
7	24	M
7	35	M
8	21	F
8	25	M
8	25	M
8	26	M
8	30	M
9	32	M
9	36	F
9	36	M
11	49	F

# Appendix Two

## Specimen self-reflection sheet

<b>SELF REFLECTION</b>		<b>SELF REFLECTION NO:</b>
Student's Name:		
Patrol Tutor Name:		
<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	
<b>1. Describe what happened in this activity?</b>		
<b>2. What went well?</b> (i.e. The area(s) in which I was strong/was/were):		
<b>3. What have I learnt from this activity?</b>		
<b>4. What area(s) could I improve on next time?</b>		
<b>5. This is the action(s) I will take to improve this / these area(s):</b>		

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# Appendix Three

## Covering letter, research information and consent forms

PRIVATE and CONFIDENTIAL	 <b>University of Portsmouth</b> Institute of Criminal Justice Studies University of Portsmouth Ravelin House Ravelin Park Museum Road Portsmouth PO1 2QQ T: +44 (0)23 9284 3933 F: +44 (0)23 9284 3939
<i>Date 2010</i>	
Dear <i>Name</i> ,	
<b><u>Re: Reflective practice in policing</u></b>	
Thank you for considering being interviewed as part of the research project I am conducting as a student at the University of Portsmouth. This forms part of the requirement for the award of my professional doctorate.	
I enclose a copy of the University of Portsmouth ethics information sheet that includes the conditions and principles that will govern the manner in which I will conduct my research.	
Whilst the research has been approved by the University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee and MPS Strategic Research Unit there is no organisational requirement for you to assist me by agreeing to be interviewed. I am undertaking this research in my capacity as a research student with the University of Portsmouth, not as a police officer, and as such there will be no consequences if you choose to withdraw your consent to be interviewed. Your choice will have no impact, either positive or negative, on any working relationship that we might have.	
If any of the information provided, or the manner in which I conduct the research, gives you cause for concern please contact my research supervisor, Dr Phil Clements, at the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies, University of Portsmouth.	
Thank you again for giving consideration to participating in my research and I look forward speaking with you in due course.	
Kind regards,	
James Wingrave.	
Covering letter v1.4	

Research Information Sheet

Institute of Criminal Justice Studies  
University of Portsmouth  
Ravelin House  
Ravelin Park  
Museum Road  
Portsmouth  
PO1 2QQ

Date: *Date 2010*

Ref: 08/09:30.112801/ref

**Title of Project: Reflective practice in policing**

You are invited to take part in a research study by being interviewed to share your experience of reflective practice in policing. Before you decide whether or not to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish.

Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information and take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

**Purpose of the research**

There is an increasing emphasis on the professionalism of service delivery amongst public sector services. Whilst reflection on practice is well established in education and social services there is little academic research on this process within the police. My research seeks to establish how police officers conceive of reflection as part of professional practice and their continuing professional development. I am conducting this research project as a student with the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies at the University of Portsmouth and this forms part of the requirement for the award of my professional doctorate.

**Why have I been approached?**

You have been approached because you are currently involved with the probationer constable foundation course, either as part of the course delivery team or as a student. In total I anticipate that at least thirty officers will be interviewed encompassing students, trainers, managers and support staff.

**Do I have to take part?**

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. As outlined in the covering letter your choice will have no impact, either positive or negative, on any working relationship that we might have.

**What will happen to me if I take part?**

I will require approximately thirty minutes of your time to be interviewed using a digital audio recorder. During the interview it will not be necessary to identify yourself, where you work,

Information v1.4

the names of any individual or location of anything we discuss. If any such information is inadvertently disclosed I will ensure it is redacted from any future transcript in accordance with the attached conditions and principles. Audio recording is not a mandatory aspect of the research and will be used only to refresh my memory of the interview.

**What do I have to do?**

All I will expect is that you to meet me at a mutually convenient time and place, sign the consent form (enclosed) and participate in a short interview. I am interested in your views and opinions and ask only that you answer honestly and as best you can.

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and as detailed in the covering letter your choice will have no impact, either positive or negative, on any working relationship that we might have. You can withdraw from the research process without having to offer any explanation or reason for your decision.

It might be that for personal or professional reasons you do not feel comfortable sharing your experiences in which case you are free to stop participating at any time. The Metropolitan Police offers an Occupational Health Service to which you can self-refer in complete confidence should anything we discuss give you cause for concern or trigger an unhappy memory.

Participating in this research might have an impact on your free time; refreshment break or time off. Regrettably if this is the case I am unable to offer any form of compensation for this inconvenience.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

You are able to provide a unique insight of your personal experience of how reflection forms part of the initial and continuing professional development of police officers. I hope it will provide a greater understanding of how police officers conceive of reflection to learn from experience and apply that learning to provide services to the public.

**What if there is a problem?**

Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with before or during the interview will be addressed. If you have a complaint you should in the first instance contact my research supervisor, Dr Phil Clements whose contact details are shown below and on the covering letter.

**Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

Yes, absolutely and this is covered in more detail in the conditions and principles included in this information sheet.

My methods and procedures for handling data are compliant with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 with all references that could identify any living person redacted as described above. The redacted reports and any transcripts or résumés will be held at a secure location and on a password-protected computer. Any transcripts or résumé will be cross-referenced to an anonymous coded grid to provide an audit trail if required for monitoring or quality assurance purposes.

The data and any transcripts or résumés will be retained for a minimum period of seven years. Any application to use this data for future research will be subject to a separate application to the MPS Strategic Research Unit and University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee.

Data will be used to form part of the requirement to complete my professional doctorate and as such will be shared with fellow research students, internal and external academic assessors, the MPS Strategic Research Unit and auditors from the University of Portsmouth.

Once the requirement to retain has been fulfilled the original data and any transcripts or résumés will be destroyed using a cross-shredder or similarly destructive method of disposal.

**What will happen to the results of the research study?**

The results of the research will be shared with fellow research students, internal and external academic assessors, the MPS Strategic Research Unit and auditors from the University of Portsmouth. Whilst the University of Portsmouth retains the intellectual rights to the research I reserve the right to submit my findings to be considered for publication in professional or peer-reviewed academic journals.

Your details will be kept confidential and anonymous unless you give specific written consent for them to be disclosed.

**Who is organising and funding the research?**

I am conducting and organising the research in my capacity as research student with the University of Portsmouth with part-funding for tuition fees being provided by the Metropolitan Police Bursary Scheme. All other costs and the remainder of the tuition fees are funded privately.

**Contact Details**

James Wingrave  
Institute of Criminal Justice Studies  
University of Portsmouth  
M: 0777 777 777  
Email: james.wingrave@myport.ac.uk

If you would like further information about this research project, other research conducted by the University of Portsmouth or have specific concerns about the manner in which I have conducted any aspect of the research please contact Dr Phil Clements as detailed below.

Dr Clements is also in a position to liaise with the faculty Ethics Committee, head of the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies and complaints officer at the University of Portsmouth.

Dr Phil Clements  
Institute of Criminal Justice Studies  
University of Portsmouth  
Ravelin House  
Ravelin Park  
Museum Road  
Portsmouth  
PO1 2QQ

T: +44 (0)23 9284 3933  
F: +44 (0)23 9284 3939  
Email: phil.clements@port.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in this research project.

**Conditions and principles for the use of data from the Metropolitan Police Service for inclusion in the research project being undertaken by the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies, University of Portsmouth.**

**Conditions**

1. The participant has had an interview with the researcher in which opportunity has been given to understand the objectives, risks and inconveniences of the research and the conditions under which it is to be conducted.
2. The participant has been provided with a contact point where further information about the research may be obtained.
3. The participant has been informed that the researcher is working in the capacity of a student from the University of Portsmouth and not a member of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS).
4. The participant has given informed consent to providing data or taking part in the research. Reassurance has been given that the default position assumes participants will opt out and as such have been invited to opt in to participating.
5. The participant may withdraw from the research at any time by revoking the informed consent. However, once data has been secured revoking consent will not prevent that data being included in the research project.
6. The participant may decide to withdrawal from the research process without explanation or with fear of repercussion. The participant has received information, according to his or her capacity of understanding, about the research and its risks and benefits.
7. The researcher must consider the explicit wish of the participant of forming an opinion and assessing the information provided. This applies both to the wish where the participant refuses to take part, or to withdraw, from the research at any time.
8. No incentives or financial inducements are given either to the participant except the provision that no costs or loss will be incurred during the research process.
9. The research relates directly to an area of business that the participant has personal knowledge.
10. Direct feedback for the participant is to be provided, if requested, after the research is completed.
11. The research is necessary to obtain new or validate existing data obtained (a) from the participant who is able to give informed consent, or (b) by other research methods.
12. The corresponding ethical guidelines from the University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee and MPS Strategic Research Unit (SRU) will be observed.
13. All data obtained during the research will be redacted of any information that might lead to the participant or any living individual being identified.

14. The researcher will acknowledge the MPS as a source of information and / or funding in any final report.
15. The researcher will submit any report or further analysis of the data to the MPS Strategic Research Unit for comment prior to dissemination beyond fulfillment of the assessment process for awarding the professional doctorate (eg: presentation at a conference / seminar or publication).
16. The researcher will adhere to the code of ethics outlined by the relevant society (British Psychology Society, British Criminology Society, British Sociology Society, Economic and Social Research Council, Social Research Association).
17. The researcher will maintain a list of all persons who handle the data / information provided.
18. The researcher will consult with the MPS regarding any media interest in this research project.
19. The consent forms will not be copied and the original document will be forwarded under secure cover and retained at the University of Portsmouth. As such the researcher will not be able to refer back to participant details shown on the consent form. These records will be retained to ensure security and anonymity of the participant and will not be used by the University for quality assurance, monitoring or marketing purposes.

#### **Principles**

1. Informed consent by the participant will be based on the written assurances provided by the researcher based on guidance given by University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee and the MPS Strategic Research Unit (SRU)
2. The research has been designed to minimise discomfort, fear and any other foreseeable risk in relation to the participant or any living individual who might be recognised from data obtained during the research
3. The interests of the participant or any living individual who might be recognised from data obtained during the research will always prevail over those of science and society.
4. The research will not be harmful to the participant, third parties, the researcher, MPS or the University of Portsmouth in respect of physical, psychological, mental, emotional, reputational, social, material, economic or situational harm.
5. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participant or third parties is assured. However, should information be identified that would result in serious harm to any individual the researcher has an obligation to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that the principles under point 4 above takes precedence. This might include referral to the University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee or MPS Directorate of Professional Standards.

14. The researcher will acknowledge the MPS as a source of information and / or funding in any final report.
15. The researcher will submit any report or further analysis of the data to the MPS Strategic Research Unit for comment prior to dissemination beyond fulfillment of the assessment process for awarding the professional doctorate (eg: presentation at a conference / seminar or publication).
16. The researcher will adhere to the code of ethics outlined by the relevant society (British Psychology Society, British Criminology Society, British Sociology Society, Economic and Social Research Council, Social Research Association).
17. The researcher will maintain a list of all persons who handle the data / information provided.
18. The researcher will consult with the MPS regarding any media interest in this research project.
19. The consent forms will not be copied and the original document will be forwarded under secure cover and retained at the University of Portsmouth. As such the researcher will not be able to refer back to participant details shown on the consent form. These records will be retained to ensure security and anonymity of the participant and will not be used by the University for quality assurance, monitoring or marketing purposes.

#### **Principles**

1. Informed consent by the participant will be based on the written assurances provided by the researcher based on guidance given by University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee and the MPS Strategic Research Unit (SRU)
2. The research has been designed to minimise discomfort, fear and any other foreseeable risk in relation to the participant or any living individual who might be recognised from data obtained during the research
3. The interests of the participant or any living individual who might be recognised from data obtained during the research will always prevail over those of science and society.
4. The research will not be harmful to the participant, third parties, the researcher, MPS or the University of Portsmouth in respect of physical, psychological, mental, emotional, reputational, social, material, economic or situational harm.
5. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participant or third parties is assured. However, should information be identified that would result in serious harm to any individual the researcher has an obligation to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that the principles under point 4 above takes precedence. This might include referral to the University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee or MPS Directorate of Professional Standards.

**CONSENT FORM**

Ref: 08/09:30.112801/

**Title of Project: Reflective practice in policing**

Name of Researcher: James Wingrave

**Please initial each box**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated *date 2010* (version 1.4) for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason

3. I agree to audio recording of interviews

4. I consent to participating in this research study and declare that I do so voluntarily and of my own free will. I understand that I relinquish any copyright or intellectual rights to the data, subsequent analysis or final publication subject to the conditions and principles discussed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Person taking consent  
(if different from researcher)\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature