**The Chicago Quality Interaction Training Program:
A Randomized Control Trial of Police Innovation**

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Purpose

The National Police Research Platform is funded by the National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, to advance knowledge and practice in American policing though the systematic collection of data from officers and police organizations. The Platform also seeks to demonstrate that innovation can be introduced and scientifically evaluated within this measurement framework. As a first test of this concept, the Chicago Police Department in collaboration with the University of Illinois at Chicago developed a recruit training program aimed at improving the quality of interpersonal encounters between officers and residents. The curriculum was designed to be community-focused, evidence-based, flexible, and delivered with teaching methods appropriate for adult learners. This report describes the preliminary findings of the demonstration project.

Methods

Training

Citizens' dissatisfaction with police encounters can lead to a host of negative consequences, including less compliance and more conflict with the police, less willingness to report crime, less law-abiding behavior, and less overall trust and confidence in the legitimacy of the public police (see Bennett et al., 2009). The most basic question is: What contributes to dissatisfaction with police encounters and what can be done to improve the situation? Research indicates that factors such as the officer's demeanor, fairness, impartiality, concern, helpfulness, conflict resolution strategies, and professional competence all play a role in determining residents' level of satisfaction with police encounters (e.g. Cheurprakobkit & Bartsch, 2001; Tyler, 1990; Skogan, 2006; Wortley et al., 1997).

Further, research on victimization suggests that negative and unsupportive reactions, particularly by first responders, can have a devastating impact on victims by inhibiting their psychological recovery and reducing the likelihood of reporting victimization in the future (Ahrens, 2006; Starzynski et al., 2005; Ullman, 1999).

The Quality Interaction Training Program, referred to as QIP training, was based on the premise that police-citizen encounters can be improved by strengthening the interpersonal skills and emotion regulation techniques of new officers.[1] Strengthening officers' social competencies should increase the quality of police services in the field, enhance officer safety, reduce the need for disciplinary action, and prevent lawsuits. Curriculum development followed a modified ADDIE (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement and Evaluate with rapid development; Piskurich, 2000; Stokes and Richey, 2000) model of instructional design and incorporated proven adult education strategies such as modeling, repetitive practice, individualized feedback (Moses, 1978) and a mixture of delivery mechanisms to accommodate different learning styles (i.e., verbal, visual, logical, intrapersonal, interpersonal, music, kinesthetic, and existentialistic; Garnder, 1999).

The QIP training program incorporated five key elements into new and existing Chicago Police Department training modules: (1) knowledge about procedural justice and how to positively respond to victims; (2) interpersonal communication skills; (3) decision-making skills; (4) emotional regulation techniques; and (5) stress management. The curriculum was delivered though a variety

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[1] We should emphasize that training and education of community residents may also be beneficial given that police officers frequently encounter citizens who display a negative demeanor, but the focus of this particular initiative is on improving police performance.

of mechanisms including lectures, scenarios, case studies and role-playing. Two unique elements of the training were the utilization of written scripts and individualize feedback of video tapped role-playing scenarios.

Evaluation

The training was evaluated using a randomized control trial design. Recruits were matched on demographic characteristics (i.e., sex, race, age, and military service) and randomly assigned to either receive QIP training or not receive QIP training. Because the Platform includes a battery of tests prior to entering the training academy, the background and baseline data can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of training, as well as be used to determine whether training is more effective with certain types of recruits.[2]

The project collected repeated measures of each recruit's perceptions and social interactions. The evaluation included tests of knowledge, attitudes and perceptions, as well as behavioral indicators of performance in different situations that required the use of reasoning, judgment and decision-making skills. Measures also tapped into interpersonal skills, including listening skills, empathy, nonjudgmental and respectful verbal statements, and nonverbal behaviors. Methods of data collection included self-administered surveys, observations of role-playing scenarios and peer evaluations.

KEY FINDINGS

Attitudes

As of December 2010 approximately 130 recruits have participated in the QIP training demonstration project. In the first phase of the evaluation, Platform researchers examined the impact of QIP training on attitudes grounded in the procedural justice framework (Tyler, 1990) and the literature on negative social reactions to victims (Ullman, 2000). The results suggest that QIP training had a positive impact, but only on certain types of attitudes (indicated by an asterisk in Table 1). QIP training positively impacted attitudes around officer defensiveness, the relationship between respect and community confidence in the police, and the role of officer demeanor in

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[2]   The Platform is following the life course of new police officers and the recruits who participated in this training experiment will continue to be followed within the longitudinal study.
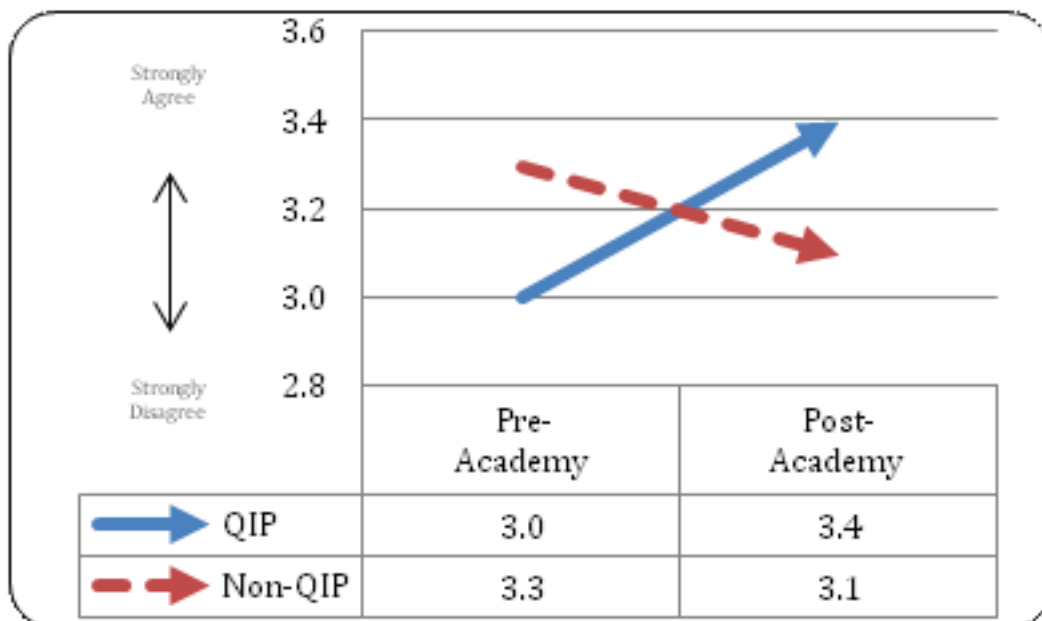
gathering intelligence. Figure 1 shows how QIP training positively impacted recruits' attitudes about officer defensiveness. Recruits who received QIP training displayed a positive trajectory (i.e., they reported stronger agreement with the statement at the end of the training than they did when they first entered the academy), where as recruits who did not receive QIP training displayed a negative trajectory (i.e., they were less likely to agree at the end compared to the beginning).

Table 1. Attitude Measures

- Many situations between the police and the public could be prevented if only police officers would remain calm and not get defensive*.
- Being concerned about customer service should not be a part of a police officer's job.
- Treating angry citizens with respect increases the community's confidence in the police department*.
- Officers who are nice to criminal offenders are less likely to get hurt.
- Being nice to criminal offenders can damage an agency's reputation for toughness.
- Officers who are nice to criminal offenders are less likely to get into trouble.
- Officers who are nice to criminal offenders are less likely to get intelligence from them*.

    *QIP training had a positive impact

Figure 1. Many situations between the police and the public could be prevented if only police officers would remain calm and not get defensive.

	Pre-Academy	Post-Academy
QIP	3.0	3.4
Non-QIP	3.3	3.1

Figures 2 and 3 show results for attitudes on intelligence gathering and community confidence. The findings suggest that participating in QIP training increased the recruits' belief that being nice to someone was the path to getting intelligence from them. Regarding community confidence, the results suggest that QIP training buffered the negative trajectory. That is, all recruits reported lower levels of agreement with the statement over time; however, the drop was greater for non-QIP recruits than QIP trained recruits.

Figure 2. Officers who are nice to criminal offenders are less likely to get intelligence from them.
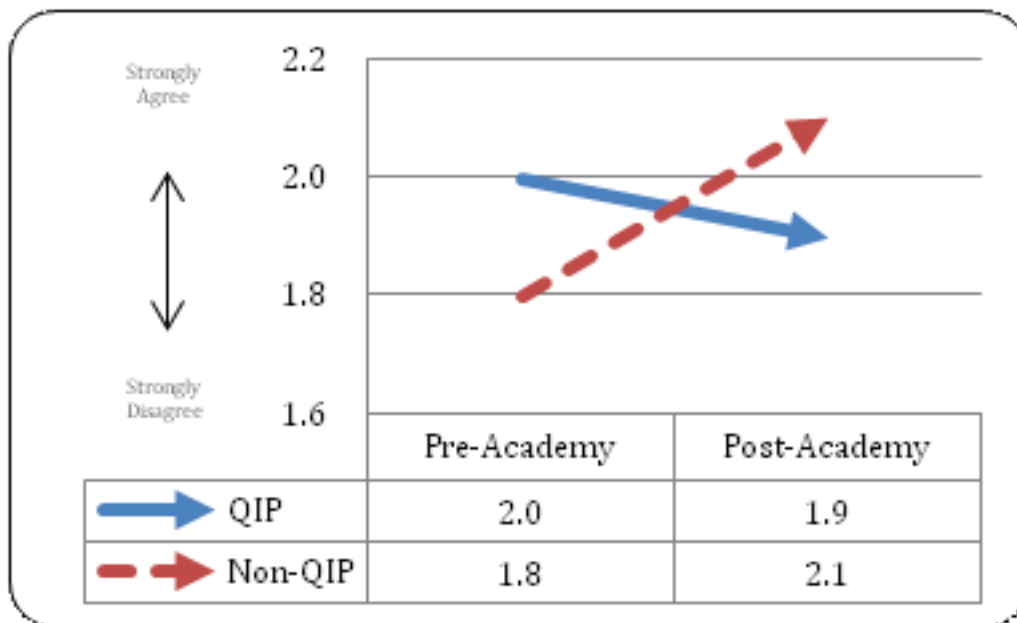
	Pre-Academy	Post-Academy
QIP	2.0	1.9
Non-QIP	1.8	2.1

Figure 3. Treating angry citizens with respect increases the community's confidence in the police department.

	Pre-Academy	Post-Academy
QIP	3.3	3.1
Non-QIP	3.5	2.9
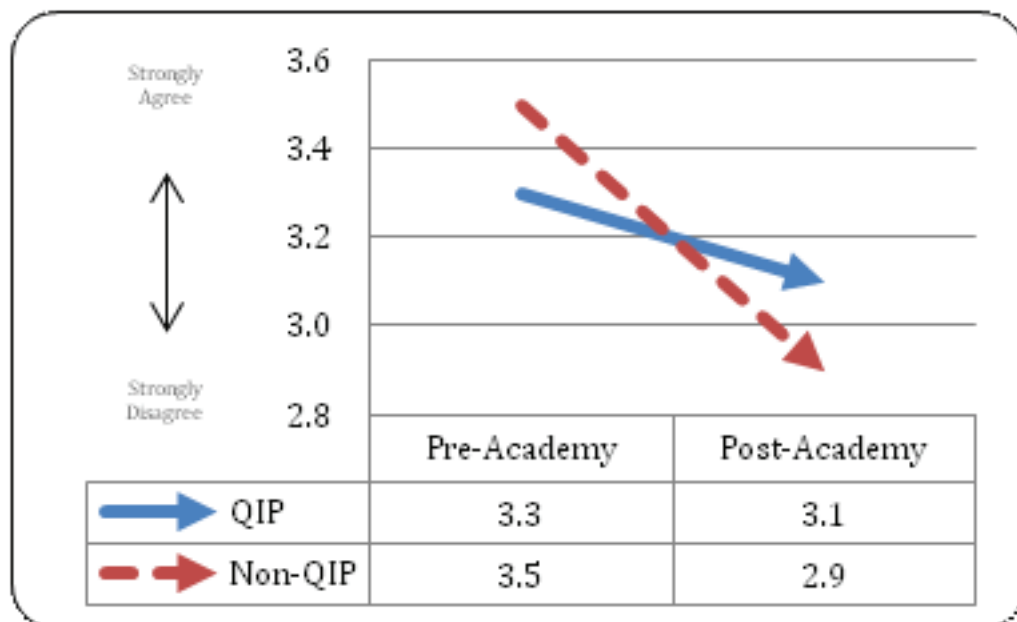
QIP training did not have an impact on all of the attitudes measured. The QIP training did not impact recruits' attitudes about the customer service model of policing, or the role of officer demeanor in getting injured, getting in trouble, or damaging an agencies reputation for toughness.

Conflict resolution

One of the greatest challenges facing the police today is how to maintain order in society without jeopardizing the public's trust and confidence. At the individual level, the challenge is how to maintain control and achieve results without resorting to tactics that could undermine one's authority as a police officer and possibly escalate conflict. Because of this, part of the QIP training focused on helping recruits develop good conflict resolution skills.

Using a conflict resolution scenario (see Table 2), Platform researchers evaluated the impact of QIP training on conflict resolution techniques. The results are presented in Figures 4 through 6. The findings suggest that the QIP training increased the use of the diffusion strategy and decreased the use of physical force and their reliance on arrest to resolve conflict. The training did not have an impact on the utilization of joint problem solving.

Table 2. Conflict Resolution Scenario

As an officer, imagine that you are sent on a call to investigate a group of youths "hanging out" in the park. You arrive on the scene and ask the youths to go home. At first, they refuse and start goofing around and calling you names.

Listed below are some methods that might be applied to dealing with the above situation. On a 10-point scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 10 (very), please rate how appropriate each of the methods would be for dealing with the situation.

- Attempt to diffuse the situation by telling the kids that they do not have to go home, just leave the park.
- Talk with the kids about the problem, exchange opinions, and give consideration to their point of view.
- Use physical force to get the youths to leave and go home.
- Arrest all of the youths.

Figure 4. Attempt to diffuse the situation by telling the kids that they do not have to go home, just leave the park.
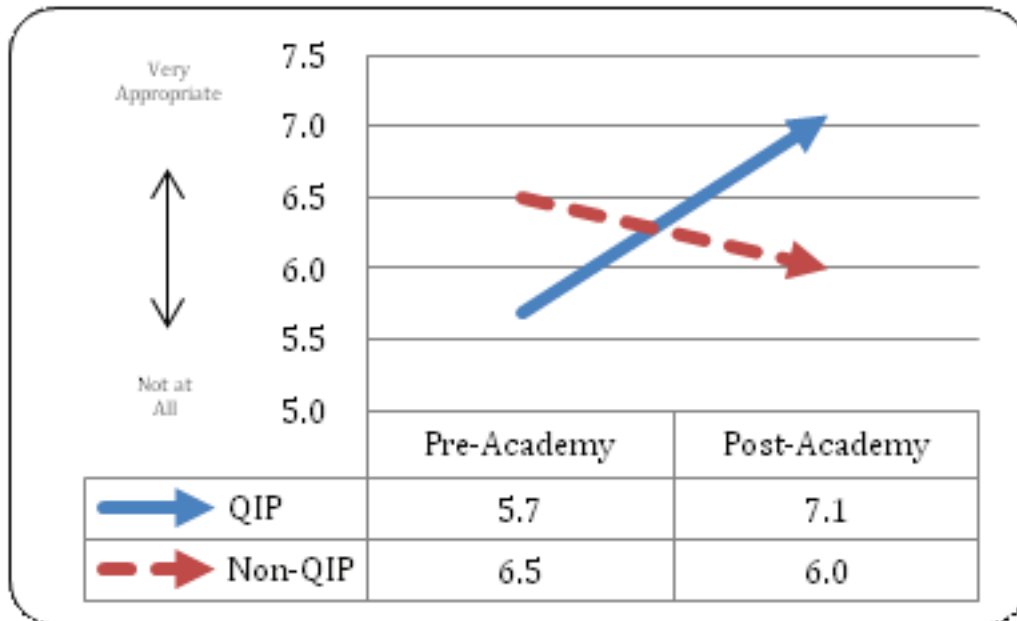

	Pre-Academy	Post-Academy
QIP	5.7	7.1
Non-QIP	6.5	6.0

Figure 5: Use physical force to get the youths to leave and go home.

	Pre-Academy	Post-Academy
QIP	1.0	1.4
Non-QIP	0.8	2.3

Figure 6. Arrest all of the youths.

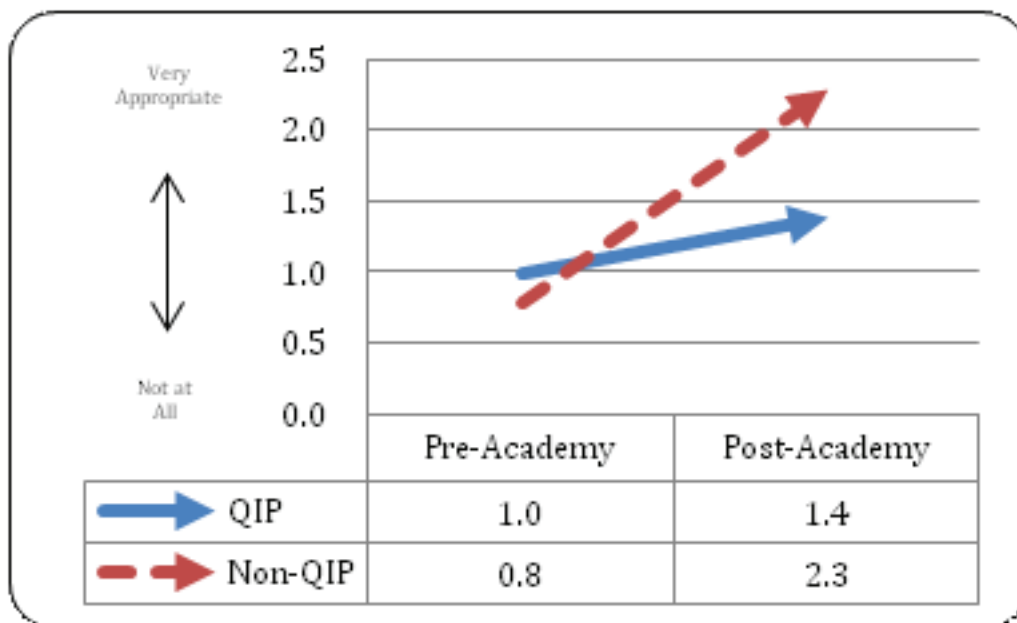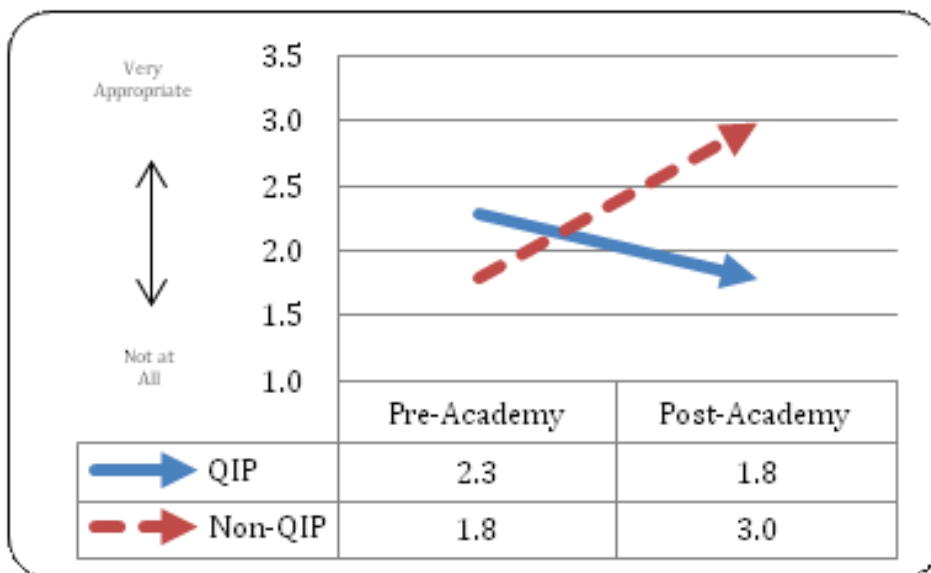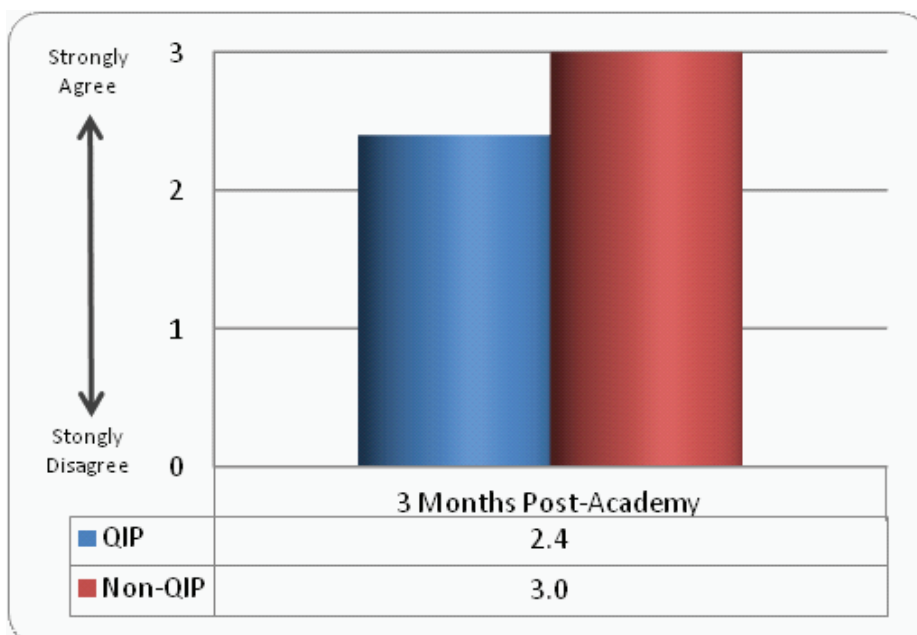|	Pre-Academy	Post-Academy
QIP	2.3	1.8
Non-QIP	1.8	3.0

(Chart y-axis ranges from 1.0 "Not at All" to 3.5 "Very Appropriate")

Five months in the field

Because the Platform has an ongoing measurement structure, researchers are able to evaluate the impact of QIP training beyond the academy. After five months in the field the recruits were invited to fill out a survey on stress. Included in the survey was an item designed to measure empathy; one of the mechanisms targeted in the training and believed to improve victim's satisfaction with police services. QIP trained recruits reported greater levels of empathy after leaving the academy than non-QIP trained recruits (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.

	3 Months Post-Academy
QIP	2.4
Non-QIP	3.0

(Chart y-axis ranges from 0 "Stongly Disagree" to 3 "Strongly Agree")

Implications

The QIP demonstration project highlights the usefulness of the National Police Research Platform as a structure for introducing and evaluating innovation in policing. Because the Platform surveys officers at regular intervals and includes a pool of standardized validated measures, it can be easily adapted to develop and test a wide range of policing initiatives. Further, through its build-in feedback mechanisms, the Platform can help police administrators make better decisions regarding innovation by providing timely and rigorous information.

The results of the evaluation suggest that QIP training can improve new recruits' interpersonal attitudes and skills. Recruits who received QIP training displayed more positive procedural-justice attitudes, greater conflict-resolutions skills, and more empathy than did non-QIP trained recruits. It is important to note that these results are preliminary and only represent the first phase of the QIP training evaluation. More time and analysis is needed to fully understand the effects of QIP training on officer development and their interactions with the public.

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