

Force Science Mission

As a society we have accepted the role of human performance in investigations conducted by the National Transportation Safety Board, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the American Medical Association. The Force Science Institute trains investigators, attorneys, and police trainers to recognize and consider the impact that human performance has on policing. Prior to any use of force, we hope that our research will lead to the development of tactics and strategies that reduce the need for force. After force is used, we hope that our research will be able to help the agency, the courts, and the community to fairly assess the judgment and conduct of those involved.

As part of our effort, we continuously seek out experts in the field of medicine, research, and education. Our weeklong certification course is taught by 5 medical doctors, 3 of which are connected to teaching hospitals. We have incorporated instruction from multiple Ph.D. instructors, including 2 who individually taught for 40 years at UCLA's Dep't of Psychology. Our training and consulting staff includes attorneys with advanced law degrees and extensive investigative and litigation experience. The combined accomplishments of our affiliated researchers and instructors includes over 400 research articles and several textbooks.

LAPD Affiliation

Force Science research, training, and consultation is available to police departments across the country and internationally. Force Science does not have a formal relationship with the LAPD. We were honored to have representatives from the LAPD present at our 2018 Force Science Conference and share their experience in de-escalation training and investigations. Force Science continues to be a leader in de-escalation training across the country and is scheduled to present a course at the LAPD in the fall of 2020.

Legislation Support

As use of force and other police-related legislation is considered, Dr. Lewinski remains available to discuss the human performance impact of any proposal. This often focuses on training, investigations, and performance. Most recently, Dr. Lewinski's expertise was sought as legislators considered the current state of training methods across police academies.

Dr. Lewinski has been extremely critical of current academy training methods and we have included an attachment describing the details of his concerns and recommendations. The Force Science Institute is currently working on the national scene to encourage more skill-based training on mental health, communication, and decision-making, with particular attention to the impact that increased cognitive load may have on performance. In other words, what we can expect from officer performance as multitasking and competing interests are introduced into the decision-making process.

Dr. Lewinski is joining the national discussion relative to Criminal Justice reform and will continue to provide his expertise as our nation's leaders consider a way forward.

NY Times Article

In 2015, the New York Times published an opinion piece that questioned Force Science's commitment to police accountability. Periodically, the article resurfaces, and prompts concerned readers to question its accuracy.

Dr. Bill Lewinski, executive director of the Force Science Institute, was able to speak with the author prior to publication, however, the final article does not benefit from a complete and accurate record of these discussions. Notably, by omitting the countless consults during which Dr. Lewinski's opinion did not favor an officer, readers were left to incorrectly conclude that Dr. Lewinski was willing to defend any officer, any time, regardless of the facts. He is not.

Early Force Science research summaries were shared through law enforcement publications, and these trade magazines (and now online media) continue to be important forums by which research findings are quickly shared with the industry. Unfortunately, readers of the opinion piece were denied the confidence of knowing that Force Science research has also been published in 27 peer-reviewed scientific publications, including Psychological Science journals, the American Psychological Association journals, and the Journal of Applied Ergonomics.

Although we were disappointed by the New York Times article, we respect their commitment to police accountability. Force Science remains committed to training officers to recognize and safely de-escalate threats before any force becomes necessary. Decades of research have gone into understanding force encounters so that officers are able to manage safer outcomes for all involved. We are privileged to train law enforcement across the nation and internationally, including the 1000's of officers we have trained through our nationally accredited de-escalation course.

The speed studies that critics incorrectly point to as an excuse to "shoot first, ask questions later," is the same research and training that prepares officers to recognize impending threats, look for more time, create space, and de-escalate from positions of safety before the threat materializes; precisely so that nobody has to shoot first or become injured. We have included a relevant article on this issue for your consideration.

It has been suggested that the DOJ was critical of Dr. Lewinski's work. It is true that a DOJ attorney *unsuccessfully* challenged Dr. Lewinski's qualifications to testify in a specific case. The judge in that case rejected the attorney's arguments. Dr. Lewinski was qualified as an expert in that case and allowed to testify. Since the case, Dr. Lewinski has testified on behalf of the DOJ and consulted on their cases. DOJ and other federal investigators and attorneys continue to attend Force Science training.

Ohio State

Although we were disappointed by Ohio State's decision to cancel our training, we respected their desire to work with the consent and trust of their student community.

As we explained at the time, the complaining Ohio State students may not have realized that the human performance concepts that Force Science teaches are not limited to law enforcement. This same research is vital to understanding and supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our communities. When civilian self-defense becomes necessary in any setting, whether it be "on the street," in response to domestic violence, or in resisting sexual assault, Force Science research and training prepares investigators to expertly assess the threats perceived by these victims and compassionately judge the reasonableness of their responses.

Other Comments or Context

The Force Science Institute continues to support the National Use-of-Force Data Collection and has released this announcement:

The Force Science Institute joins the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) in their support for the FBI's National Use-of-Force Data Collection.

Dr. Bill Lewinski, executive director and principle researcher for the Force Science Institute, had this to say:

The foundation of any profession is the unique body of information possessed and utilized by its membership. For law enforcement, that has always included the ability to recognize and respond to the threat of force.

National news outlets and social media have driven police use-of-force into the spotlight and renewed public debate over the proper role of law enforcement. Leaders are being flooded with recommendations for police reform from critics within and outside of the police profession. These well-intentioned, and often quite accomplished, individuals offer support for what they describe as the latest "best practice."

At the Force Science Institute, we have come to realize that best practices are not born overnight. And that solutions are only as valid as the problems they are designed to solve. Some of our earliest research demonstrated this point.

After identifying and measuring types and speeds of assaults, we were able to provide accurate threat standards against which law enforcement could measure current and proposed tactics. It became clear from the research that teaching officers to simply draw or shoot faster wouldn't be enough to prevent an armed assault. It was the first attempt to establish an evidence-based foundation for professional police training.

Validating problems and identifying the human factors that constrain tactical and strategic options, begins with research. Research that first tells us whether there is a problem that needs to be addressed. Research that accurately describes individual

incidents so that collective lessons can be learned. And research into human performance that tells us whether a proposed solution is possible—*or will actually accomplish its intended purpose*.

Without research, law enforcement can spend millions of dollars on training that hasn't been validated—to fix problems that may not exist.

The statistical reports derived from the National Use-of-Force Data Collection will not be useful for assessing individual instances of police use-of-force, nor is it intended for that purpose. But as a tool for understanding the threats facing law enforcement and police responses from a national perspective, it promises to be a valuable tool for researchers, scholars, law enforcement, and the community.

We recommend that law enforcement leaders commit to supporting the National Use-of-Force Data Collection so we can all start to benefit from an accurate and complete accounting of police use-of-force in America.

Resources and answers to frequently asked questions can be found on the FBI and IACP websites.