



# Evaluating the School Liaison Police Program - An example of action research in policing

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# Overview

- About the SLP program
- About the evaluation
- Building an action research relationship with NSW Police
- An model for evaluation research in policing



# The School Liaison Police (SLP) Program

- Launched January 2007 under State Plan commitment to address rights, respect and responsibility
- 40 officers ring-fenced to cover High Schools across NSW
- Deliberately autonomous and evolutionary role



# SLP Program Aims

1. Reduce youth crime through intervention and diversionary strategies, educational programs and local relationships
2. Reduce number of high school aged children as victims or offenders
3. Reduce the incidence of violence in high schools
4. Strengthen relationships between police and high school children
5. Improve identification and targeting of at risk youth.



# The Evaluation Brief

- Needed ‘a useful’ evaluation
- Focus on identifying issues and assisting in ways to address these
- Supported by (then) program sponsor  
Assistant Commissioner



# About the research

- Action research design
- Three stages
  - Stage 1: Tracking the initial implementation
  - Stage 2: ‘Picturing’ SLPs in schools
  - Stage 3: Long term outcomes and final report
- Stage three in progress



# Building the action research relationship

- Assisted by the long standing relationship between CSU and NSW Police Force
- Visibility (training, conference days, steering meetings)
- The focus group watershed and “getting the gossip first”
- Demonstrated support from the hierarchy



# Challenges to the relationship

- Change of (police) personnel at all levels
- The impact of other (political) agendas
- Positivist guilt - how close is too close?



# A Model for Policing Research

- Research *with* rather than *on* police
- Reframing academia as a resource to help assist with policing dilemmas
- Deferment of academic brownie points in favour of gaining trust
- Reposition the academic inside the organisation



Figure 1 – The traditional external-academic involvement in policing

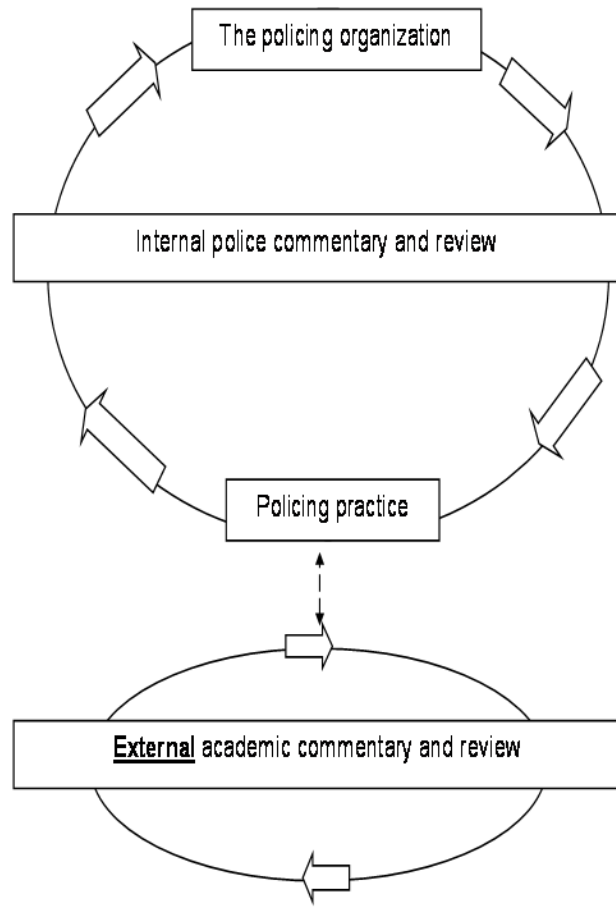
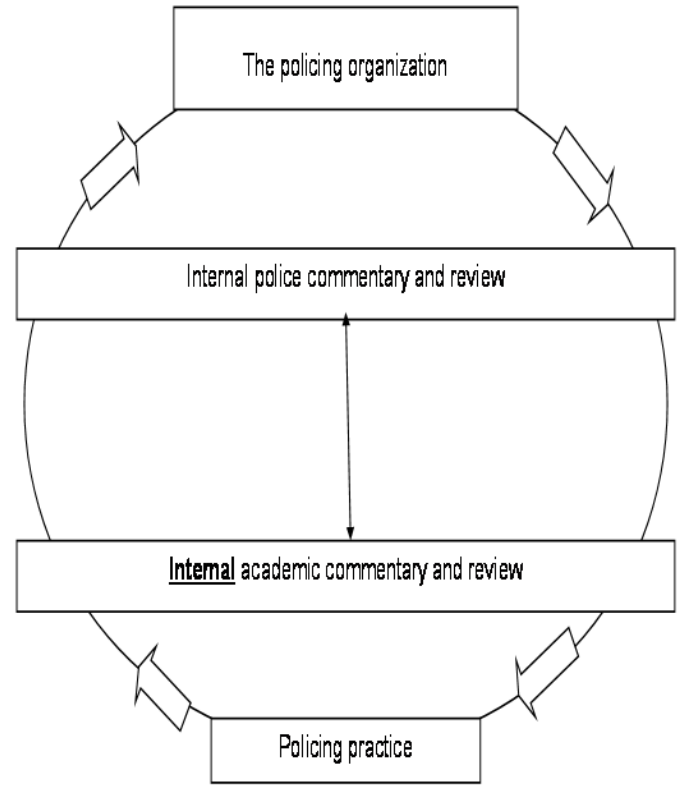


Figure 2 – The internal academic engagement in policing





# Questions?

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