



D68 Teaching a Crime Scene Practicum Using Multiple Cohorts

Melissa A. Connor, PhD, Dan Strydom, PhD, and Jody Meerdink, PhD, Forensic Science Program, Nebraska Wesleyan University, 5000 St. Paul Avenue, Lincoln, NE 68504*

After attending this presentation, attendees will understand (1) the objectives of teaching a crime scene practical course, (2) how to integrate student participation into the course in multiple roles, and (3) how to integrate the practicum into a forensic science curriculum.

Education in forensic science is becoming increasingly sophisticated. This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by presenting an educationally sophisticated method of integrating hands-on experience with classroom learning in a graduate forensic science curriculum.

To effectively reflect reality, a crime scene practicum must be designed to allow students to put into practice lessons learned from the classroom as well as integrating material from multiple disciplines. Students will work together as a team toward investigative goals that have been defined. The crime scene practicum developed by the Forensic Science Program at Nebraska Wesleyan University meets these goals by giving roles to each cohort going through the program. Students who are working on their master's research are assigned roles as "Faux Felons". These students, working with the faculty, design and create the scenes and work with second year students throughout the exercise. Each scene must include biological evidence, impression evidence, and evidence that reflects the behavior of the perpetrator. Students in the second year of the program investigate the scene and process the evidence. They must request reference samples for the evidence, reports from appropriate specialists (autopsy reports, odontology reports, etc.), interviews, and other information (provided by their felon), to work toward identifying a suspect and gathering enough evidence for an indictment or arrest warrant. Students in the first year of the program serve as jury members on the mock Grand Jury that ends the investigation and vote whether or not to indict each team's suspect.

Forensic Science Education, Crime Scene Practicum, Cohort Teaching