



E68 Implementation of the National Institute of Justice's (NIJ's) Online Firearms Examiner Training Course in Marshall University's Graduate Curriculum and Its Potential to Reduce Time to Competency

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the steps taken to implement the NIJ's online Firearms Examiner Training modules into the graduate classroom. Attendees will have an example as to how these modules were implemented into the Marshall University Forensic Science Program and what methods were employed to measure competency.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by adding another tool to enable future examiners to enter the field with a more comprehensive understanding of the concepts relied upon by the field of firearms and tool marks and how such an approach can aid in the reduction of time until competency.

The presentation will discuss the creation and implementation of a two-semester graduate course which incorporates the NIJ's online Firearms Examiner Training course.¹ Background information will address considerations for adding the course to the graduate forensic science curriculum with regard to overcoming curriculum deficiencies and the program's potential effect on the future competency of the students in the field after graduation. The NIJ's Examiner Training includes a total of 15 modules, including the introduction, history, and safety sections. Subsets of students were created according to whether the student completed one semester, two semesters, or zero semesters of the Firearms course. All students, regardless of their group, completed a 200-question pre-test examination at the beginning of their first semester and a post-test examination at the end of their second semester.

For the students taking the course, quizzes were developed to assess the student's knowledge gained after each module. At the end of the semester, a final exam was taken that covered the material from that semester. It is important to note that the quizzes were not repeats of the questions in the pre-/post-test examination.

Findings revealed that the students who took the American Board of Criminalistics Forensic Science Assessment Test (FSAT) from Marshall University's Forensic Science Program ranked sixth in the country in the Firearms section in 2013 in comparison to the 15 other schools that participated in the examination (prior to the implementation of the course). In 2014, the Marshall University students who completed the FSAT ranked first in the Firearms section out of the 15 other schools that participated in the examination (after the implementation of the course). In addition, positive student growth rates from pre- to post-test examination will be discussed as well as the impact one semester, two semesters, or zero semesters had on the growth. Surveys of graduates working in the firearms field and their supervisors will be presented as well. In summation, attendees will take away the core knowledge needed to implement this modified online course into their university's curriculum.

Reference(s):

1. Conrad W., Dillion J.H., Jr., Hamby J., Hill G., Hill R., Jones J.A., Savage K., Tilstone W. *Firearms Examiner Training*. National Institute of Justice, n.d. Web. 29 July 2013.

Firearms, Online Modules, Competency