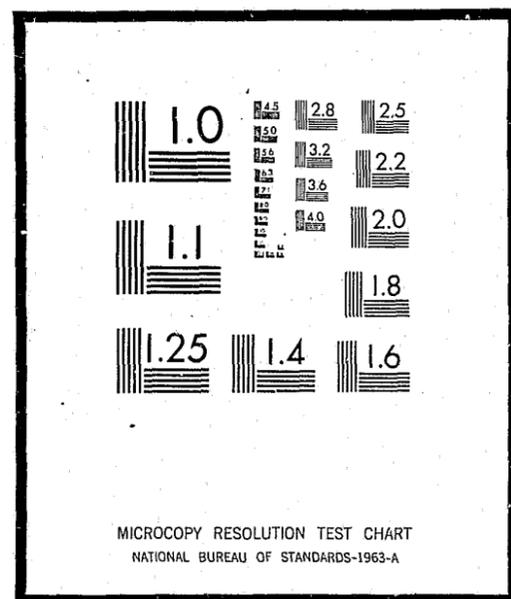


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APPLIED BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH IN POLICE PERSONNEL PROBLEMS

Law Enforcement Assistance Administration  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Sidney Epstein  
Research Psychologist

RESEARCH NEEDS

The key fact affecting the place of applied behavioral research in police work today is the rapidly changing nature of the police role itself. Because the police role is changing, all other aspects of police personnel will have to change, including selection methods and training and education practices. If this important commonplace is overlooked, there is little chance of advancing beyond a trouble shooting mode in police research and development work. The criticality of the changing police role probably holds as much for police operational methodology and police equipment development as it does for police personnel work.

Both, the role of the individual policeman and the role of the police department require investigation. Division of labor is as valid a concept among police departments as it is within police departments. The several police agencies which operate in each of cities like New York and Washington, D.C. attest to this. (Incidentally - when I say these concepts are valid, I mean that they are capable of realization and not necessarily that they correspond to good and bad ways of operating). Moreover, if this division of functions is a valid concept in some large cities, a converse concept of some degree of coordination of operation may be valid among several small cities in a region.

If role research is the place to start in the realm of police personnel, the way to start is with no answers at all and plenty of questions. Everything

should be open to question including things which may happen to be matters of law. Laws can be changed. This means that role research is not simply a matter of summing up, tidying up, and systematizing present day practices. It is also a matter of modifying, adding to, and subtracting from present day practice. I will be returning to the matter of role research later in this paper. What I would like to do first is to discuss a few of the major considerations to be kept in mind when preparing to do research in a police setting.

RESEARCH CONSIDERATIONS

The kind of research which I will be discussing is applied research. It is research which attacks real and vital practical problems and comes up with solutions. It is the case in which the scientific discipline used is incidental to the research setting and not vice versa.

The critical thing to remember about a police department as a setting for research is that its tolerance for serving in this capacity is limited. It is possible to saturate the police community with research in such a way as either to build up an inhibition or resistance to serving further in this way or to damage the usefulness or suitability of many departments for some of all kinds of behavioral research in the future. If a researcher antagonizes the police, gets underfoot too much, is indiscrete, interferes with operations, or otherwise "leaves a bad taste in their collective mouth", he will wear out his welcome very fast.

The principle corollary of this circumstance is that every piece of research done in a police setting must be made to count. The setting must be used sparingly and not wasted on trivial or poorly designed research which

will not come up with a useful product. Each piece of research must result in as many definite and useful answers as possible. Moreover, we cannot afford to repeat ourselves too often. Verification and validation are all right but inadvertent repetition because of lack of knowledge of what went before is to be avoided.

In view of the foregoing, when behavioral research is being planned on a specific police personnel problem, and I emphasize planned as distinguished from initiated, it is necessary, or at least highly desirable, to learn as much as possible of what has gone before. That's not easy. There is not yet a central clearing house for material of this nature although one may be started in the near future. The National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice is initiating a law enforcement and criminal justice reference service study. Part of the culmination of this will be a clearing house of information, including research findings in this field. Until this is accomplished, it may be that what is required is some form of cooperation among the chief institutions in this field such as the Police Foundation, the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, and the International Association of Chiefs of Police. The present state of affairs is that work is being done all over the United States under various auspices and no one is yet in a position to describe the sum total of this effort.

There is a tendency in many quarters to want to precede every attempt at instituting or implementing a new idea by some kind of "research". Given that the background has been investigated, it may or may not be that relevant problems remain. In many cases, no significant problems remain and no research is necessary or justified. It is just a matter of going ahead and putting a good idea to work. We have today

plenty of knowledge which we have not applied but in which we can have sufficient confidence to proceed with such application. I urge against this impulse to research everything to death. There is plenty to be done in areas where our knowledge is lacking.

There are data source or methodology limitations to contend with when working with the police. Unless you are very lucky in that some unusual event in a police department happens to coincide with an experimental condition you would have liked to impose, you cannot usually do controlled experiments in police departments. I don't say that you never can only that you seldom can. Disruption of police operations for purposes of research is unacceptable. The police may disrupt their own operations by going on strike but you had better never do so. Data sources will usually be limited to systematic observation of ongoing operations, role playing and simulation experiments, examination of existing records, interviews, questionnaires, and various kinds of physiological and psychological tests. Most of the studies are being done for the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice limit themselves to these data collection methodologies. If anyone can come up with anything new, I'd like to know about it.

Choosing the right police department or departments so that your findings will be generalized<sup>able</sup> is another problem. Some of the more obvious parameters are city size, racial and socio-economic mix of citizenry, ratio of number of policemen to the city population, crime rates, etc. However, the appropriate parameters are not always so obvious. The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, for instance, is doing a study for the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice to develop Physiological (Physical-Physique) Standards for police throughout

the country. It seems likely that the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputies will have to encounter all of the physical challenges that police anywhere may encounter. However, there is at least one circumstance that does not occur in Los Angeles. It doesn't get cold. If there is anything about working in very cold weather which would require special physiological characteristics, we had <sup>been</sup> know about it. For this reason, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department is considering setting up special experimental conditions to determine standards for work in cold climate. If they cannot do this, they will have to take this factor into consideration in some other way. Possibly, altitude and terrain differences may be relevant.

Police departments differ in their readiness to serve as study sites or their readiness to implement findings, or both. Usually the degree of this readiness depends upon the police chief or commissioner and usually the chief who is ready to do research is the same as the one who is ready to implement findings. Unfortunately, it is not always the case that the department that welcomes you is the one having the appropriate parameters for your particular study.

One thing I can tell you about police chiefs is not to make the mistake of thinking that they are all alike. They range from rough cut, tough types to dignified, learned, sophisticated men who speak better English and look more like college professors than some college professors I know. There are very good and successful chiefs over that whole range. There may have been a day when police, both rank and file and top management, were a homogeneous lot. If there was, this is no longer true. The variation of types of persons is great at all levels. So, by the way, is the variation in quality of police departments. If you decide to work in this field, you may find it desirable to build yourself a data bank on

the specific characteristics of specific chiefs and departments.

#### WHO IS SPONSORING RESEARCH?

At the national but non-governmental level, there are two organizations in Washington, D.C. concerned with police research. The first, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, does research but doesn't sponsor it by making funds available to other organizations. The second, the Police Foundation, is a part of the Ford Foundation and is expected to be making research funds available.

Several federal government agencies, not all of them part of the Justice Department, have sponsored or are sponsoring research in some way related to police personnel. Among these are the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Office of Education of Health Education and Welfare, the National Institute of Mental Health, and the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice.

The latter agency is part of the Department of Justice and is, in the country today, the major federal agency sponsoring behavioral research in criminal justice and law enforcement. The research it sponsors encompasses the courts, correctional and penal institutions, and the police. It also encompasses the relation of the general public to these institutions and all social and psychological problems pertaining to them. My own field of work is human resources in police work. I use this pretentious term because I like it better than personnel research and because I hope in the future to be able to expand somewhat beyond personnel research, which is what I'm actually doing.

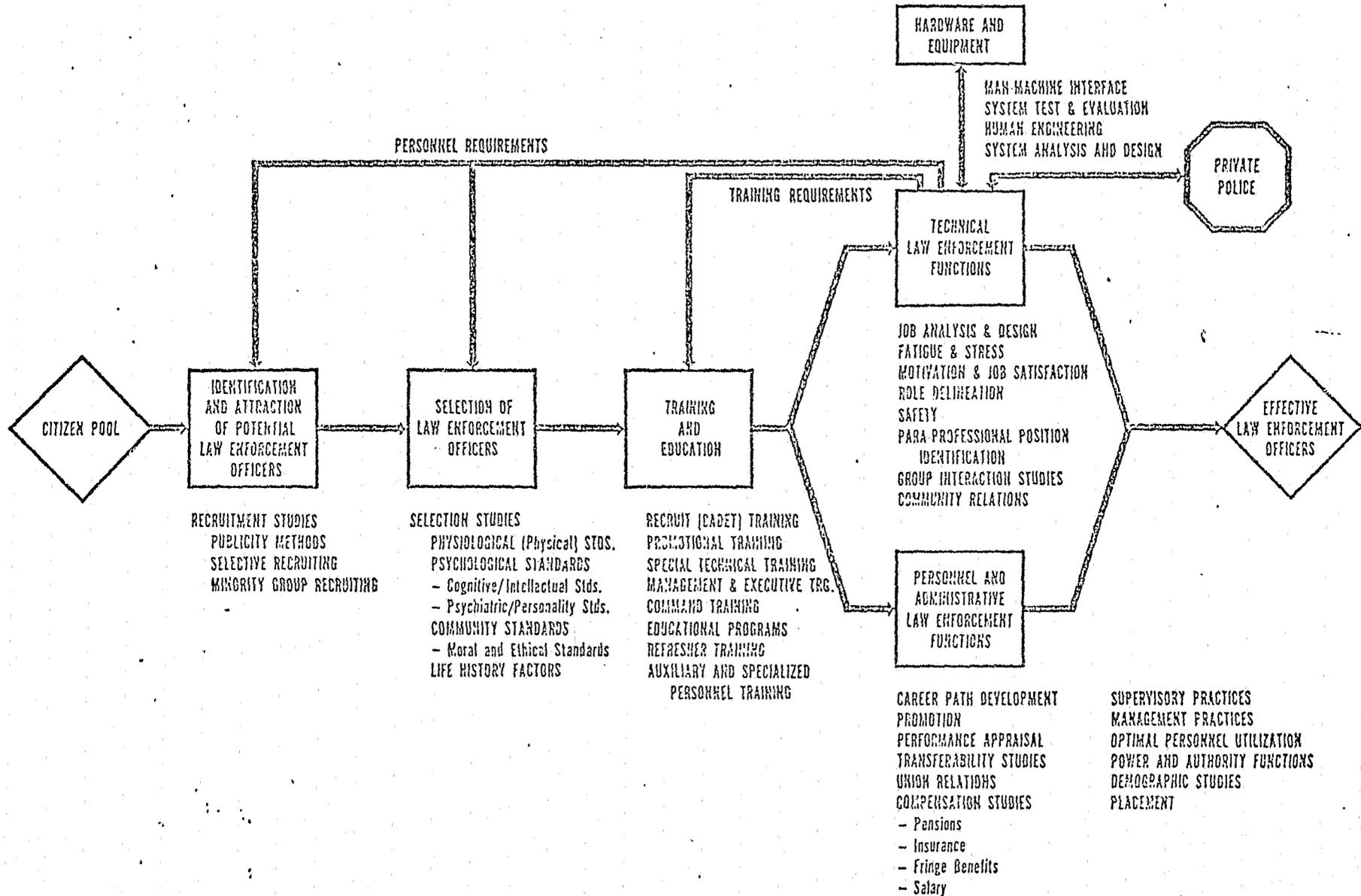
Here is a flow diagram (Figure 1) which indicates the matters which concern us. You will note that it includes about all of the conventional ground of personnel work. You will also note that there is somewhat of a sequential dependency here but that the sequence of this dependency is not the same as the chronological sequence of the diagram. This is due to the feedback loop from the box marked "Technical Law Enforcement Functions." What we do about recruitment, selection, and training and education depends largely upon studies in this functional area, particularly upon studies of the role of a police department and studies of the roles of individual policemen.

If, as I said earlier, the role of the police is changing, then two things follow from this. The first thing is that we ought to begin our program of studies by attempting to delineate what the role should be. The second is that, with the determining factor of functional role in process of change, all factors which depend upon this functional role become candidates for change. Some of this change will flow from research and some of it from application of knowledge on hand.

Given this sequential dependency, it would be a fair question to ask if we in the Institute are following it strictly in our program. The answer is, "Alas, no." For the usual reasons having to do with differences between the real and the ideal worlds and the need to attend to immediate problems, we have followed a somewhat different course. However, we hope gradually to enter upon the ideal path.

Last year was the first year of full operation of our human resources program. We initiated studies in the following areas:

# PROGRAM PACKAGE FOR HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT IN LAW ENFORCEMENT



- The career path structure of police departments. The objective is to discover how we can maximize both career opportunities for policemen and the effectiveness of police organizations.
- Feasibility of Portable Pensions for Police. The objective is to enhance the opportunity for lateral transfer of policemen between police departments without losing their accumulated pension funds.
- Police Safety Study. This is a study whose objective is minimizing the effects of the hazards to which police are subject.
- A study of police unionism. The objective is to determine the effect of the development of police unions upon the management and effectiveness of police departments.
- An anthropological study of the functioning of a large metropolitan police department. An anthropologist, after attending the police academy of a large city department, spent a year working with and observing patrolmen in many districts of the city. It is expected that the results of this impressionistic study will contribute much general insight into police operations and police personnel problems. This is one of the few non specific studies we have undertaken. It has a number of objectives, one of which is to delineate the acculturation process of a citizen becoming a policeman.
- A study of private police in the United States. What is the effect of the operations of private police upon public police, what is the relation between the two?
- A study to establish updated and widely usable physiological

- standards for police.
- Fatigue and Stress Study. A pilot study of the effects of fatigue and physical and emotional stress upon the functioning of a patrolman.
  - Test Development Study. A study to validate patrolman selection tests previously developed. This is one of our early efforts in the testing field. For various reasons, we expect that we will be doing much more on this in the future. It is to be kept in mind there are legal problems associated with this area. Police unions have successfully brought up the issues of privacy violation and unfairness of test items. For this reason, we cannot afford to be contemptuous of face validity. Moreover, wherever possible, test items should be directly related to specific items of job performance.

In 1971, we initiated a study of personnel appraisal and promotion methods and practices. This seems to be one of the major weak spots in many police departments and we hope to improve it considerably. The ultimate improvement in appraisal and promotion will provide criterion data which will, along with the results of role delineation studies which we hope to start in 1972, provide a basis for updated selection instrument development.

Notwithstanding that we expect to be doing more selection research after the appraisal and role delineation studies, we are starting one minor and one major selection study this year. The minor study is occasioned by the fact that a great deal of personal history data of police in a large city became available. This doesn't happen often and we are taking advantage of it by trying to develop a personal history index for selection.

The major study is one to develop psychiatric or personality standards for police. It is complementary to the physiological standards study mentioned earlier. Inasmuch as we are going to be using actual behaviors on the job in situations making heavy demands on personality characteristics and relatively light demands on cognitive and physical characteristics, we don't expect that this study will be invalidated by new developments in personal appraisal or functional roles.

Another study which we hope to initiate this year is one on the major motivational factors influencing policeman in the performance of their jobs. We hope to have, in the course of this coming year's work, several meetings of the researchers doing the appraisal, personality, and motivation studies. We think that there is such overlap in the three areas of work that final products will benefit through coordination.

For the coming fiscal year we hope to get back on the main track by initiating a major study to delineate the roles of policemen. Every possible source of data will be used to determine what the divisions of labor ought to be. Along with this, we will attempt to initiate many other studies. We are thinking of studies on training of non-sworn police personnel and the general problems in the area of inter-departmental transferrability. We already have excellent proposals on these. We are also thinking of going into other areas such as the troubles black policemen have with white policemen and with the black community and the problem of adequate training for command personnel.

#### DEFERRED AREAS OF RESEARCH

There are a number of areas in which we are not yet doing much or any

work, either because they are of low priority or because we have not yet determined what our exact plan of research should be. One important area in which we are deferring most work is that of training and education. We have a fairly good idea of what we wish to accomplish in the area of training command level personnel. However, we are moving much more cautiously with respect to training of rank and file personnel. Yet this happens to be the area in which we receive most proposals. Just as everyone seems to be an expert in psychology, everyone seems to be an expert in some aspect of training and education. There are four reasons why we have been resistant to most proposals so far.

The first reason is simple. Most of the proposals we get are implementation projects disguised as research proposals. The gimmick is evaluation. "We gotta test and validate this" is the ploy. Sometimes this is acceptable but more often it is not.

The second reason is a related one. This seems to be one of the areas in which workers want to "research" the same thing over and over, forever and forever. I protest that there are some things we know about learning and about teaching and that we can simply apply these. Not every occasion for instituting a training program is an occasion for research.

The third reason is the already mentioned matter of the changing role of police. Both selection and training depend upon roles, divisions of labor, and career paths in a department. We are in the process of investigating these. Selection and training efforts which follow these investigations will be the better for them.

literature search and determination of present status of an area should be part of the planning stage, we require a thorough effort of this kind at the beginning of most studies. Second, since this is applied research, we feel there should be at least one final product in addition to the final report describing the study and its results. This would be some kind of prescriptive text, such as a user's manual or a handbook, that tells someone how to do something. Police supervisors and managers don't have time to read technical reports and translate them into practical terms.

Finally, there is the matter of attempting to build self correcting or self modifying capabilities into any new instrumentality or system we recommend. Circumstances change and those things which we institute now will lose their usefulness or relevance unless they can change with changing needs and conditions. Since it is not desirable that we should be intermittently and forever repeating the same researches, it is desirable that we build in feedback loops and self modification mechanisms to allow for evolutionary change.

#### DEPARTMENTAL VARIABILITY

Among the major parameters in police research are those having to do with interdepartmental variability such as differences in size of force, type of city served, and ratio of numbers of policemen to the city population. This means that research in any area must allow for making differential recommendations in accordance with varying requirements.

An applied research program must also make allowances for the fact that not all departments will accept our recommendations in all fields or in any field. This complicates the overall program somewhat. Suppose, for instance, we develop a certain set of role recommendations for a certain category of city and a certain set of selection instruments to correspond with these roles in this type of city. Suppose further that a certain number of

cities in this category decline to adopt our role change recommendations but would like to have our recommendations on selection methods. It would then be necessary to modify our selection instruments or develop new ones to fit these cities.

#### FUTURE RESEARCH

The developing and increasing role of law enforcement in our society assures a continuing role for applied behavioral research of many kinds. The social setting in which the police work continues to change and the implications of this for police work will have to be defined and re-defined. The responsibility of the general public and its relation to the police will need clarification and amplification.

More and more, the policeman is a professional and not a glorified blue collar worker. A professional force requires a professional atmosphere with professional supervisory and management practices, and professional compensations. All of these remain to be developed, partly through research. The proliferation of sophisticated equipment and operational methodologies points to work in human engineering. This human engineering work, in addition to contributing to the design and use of new equipment and operational systems, will be an important contributor to role delineation.

The great bulk of the conventional personnel work remains to be done. First, we will be working on role development, job analysis and design, career path construction, group interaction studies, motivation studies, community relations, fatigue and stress studies, management and supervisory practices, personnel policies, fringe benefits, union relations, and the like. Thereafter, we will go on to problems of recruitment, selection, training, education, and human engineering. In each of those areas, there is probably

much to be done.

There will also be areas peripheral to the police which affect how the police operate. One of these areas is that of legal limits or definitions of permissible behaviors of police. The effects of certain court practices is a related area. Still another area is that of the operations of private police and their effects on public police. Work has started on this but there will be more to be done. Farther afield, there are developments in the technology of aiding witnesses in the identification of offenders. Probably, also, there will be areas of research which we haven't even thought of today. The field is large and it is important.

The final reason is that it is not at all clear at the moment what, if anything, we should be doing in this area. This is no confession of incompetence but an assertion that this is an area in which decisions are not easy to make and in which they must not be made lightly.

All over the United States there is a vast amount of exceedingly varied activity in the field of police training and education. Many kinds of organizations, public and private are engaged in this activity. The manner of carrying out this activity is exceedingly varied. It would be a research project in itself to survey this activity and to map it so that we know exactly what is going on everywhere, what are the successes and failures of the various activities, and what are the major problems in the field.

We have not yet developed this map and, until we do, we will not know what questions need to be asked to support what decisions. Some activity has already been started in this matter of "mapping the domain." There will be more to come.

The foregoing is not to say that we do not know the rough outlines of this domain. Obviously, the relative place of university training, police academy training, and on the job training must be determined. When to do each, how much of each, and what content in each are obvious questions. We may be able to answer these questions after surveying this domain or we may need some special studies. The tactics of training, such as computer assisted instruction, the use of films, on the job training mechanisms, simulation training, etc., may need to be investigated.

#### COMMON ELEMENTS IN ALL INSTITUTE STUDIES

There are three elements which we try to build into each study conducted under Institute auspices. First, notwithstanding my previous assertion that

literature search and determination of present status of an area should be part of the planning stage, we require a thorough effort of this kind at the beginning of most studies. Second, since this is applied research, we feel there should be at least one final product in addition to the final report describing the study and its results. This would be some kind of prescriptive text, such as a user's manual or a handbook, that tells someone how to do something. Police supervisors and managers don't have time to read technical reports and translate them into practical terms.

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