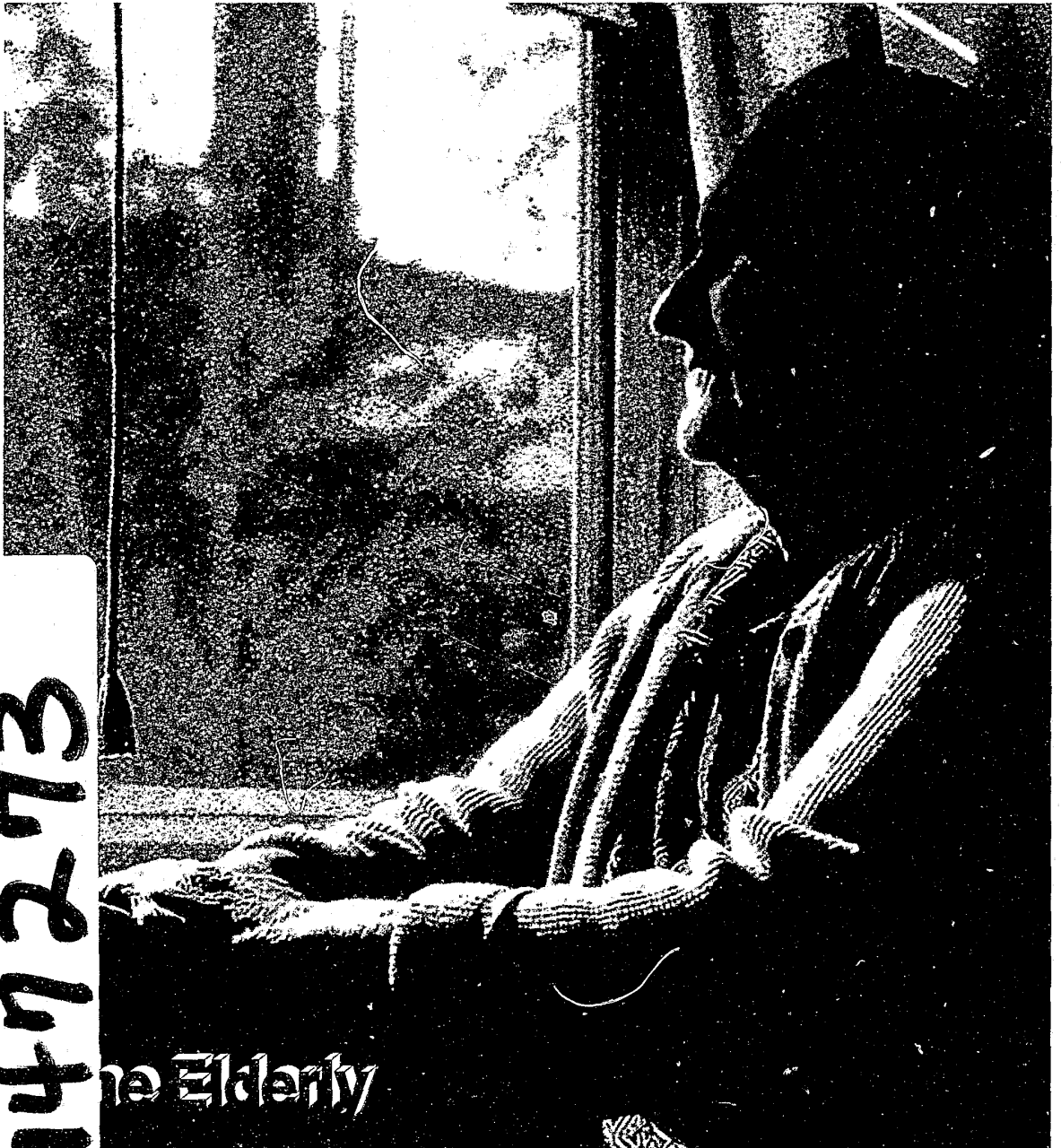




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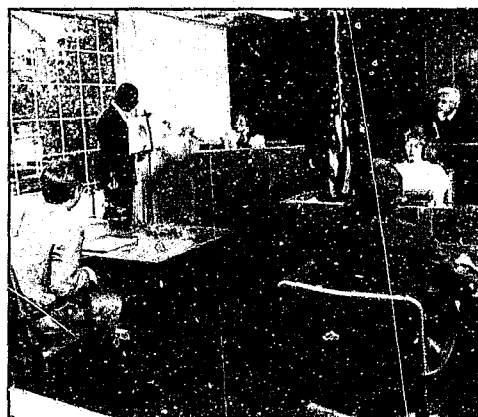
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Project 48

A Holistic Approach to Training

By
RONALD A. BATTELLE
and DAVID T. PUDLOWSKI



Effective training is a primary component of maintaining proficiency in today's law enforcement agencies. Yet, given its importance to law enforcement's overall mission, most agencies approach training in a piecemeal way that serves only to undercut its value.

Not only might this approach deny personnel the opportunity to receive needed training, but it may also open agencies to damaging litigation based on the Supreme Court's 1989 decision in *City of Canton v. Harris*.¹ In this case, the Court held that a municipality can, under some circumstances, be held

liable for constitutional violations resulting from a failure to train its employees adequately.

In light of this ruling, how can agencies protect themselves, their personnel, and their communities? One answer is to integrate the various potential sources of instruction to achieve maximum training potential.

Training for experienced law enforcement officers has traditionally been presented as inservice instruction, either conducted within an agency or through programs marketed by training academies, individuals, or private companies. In many cases, however, the inherent

problems with each of these formats limit their effectiveness.

Intraagency training provides a structure that enhances planning, scheduling, record-keeping, and budgeting. Yet, agencies generally offer this type of training in a "one-size-fits-all" format that restricts specialized instruction. Marketed programs provide a menu of courses that offers specialization but lacks the framework necessary to manage the training function adequately.

To maximize the best aspects of each format, the St. Louis County and Municipal Police Academy (CMPA) sought a different approach. In developing Project 48,

administrators directed the inservice training concept toward a new dimension that offers a breadth of training, while maintaining a structure that ensures the client agencies' needs continue to be met.

Project 48 requires commissioned personnel from participating departments to attend a minimum of 48 hours of training from a selected core curriculum during a 3-year period. This program now sets a minimum number of hours for inservice training, even though the Missouri Department of Public Safety is not authorized by statute to require a minimum number of hours for training officers after graduation from the academy.

Project 48 planners determined that an average of 16 hours a year (excluding firearms qualification) could be achieved, and was fiscally affordable, by most departments. Additionally, Project 48 provides an incentive to departments and personnel to participate in the program by issuing certificates to recognize those officers who successfully complete the training. Agency certificates are also issued to those departments that achieve 80-percent individual certification.

BACKGROUND

The CMPA services 1,900 commissioned county and municipal officers in St. Louis County, Missouri, as well as a number of Federal, State, and other local law enforcement agencies. The 65 police departments within the county and the other agencies that regularly send personnel to the CMPA require a great degree of flexibility to accommodate their varying

sizes, budgets, training policies, and needs. Agencies range in size from a department with 517 commissioned officers to one with a single patrol officer. The agencies perform varied duties, from servicing a large metropolitan area to patrolling areas as diverse as rural farmland, college campuses, parks, and the St. Louis International Airport.

In addition to providing basic training for police recruits, the academy sponsors or hosts more than 100 specialized training programs for experienced police officers each year. Administrators generally identify the topics for these programs based on past needs assessments, but the curriculum also includes some programs that address contemporary issues.

Previously, cost, attendance, and interest or number of requests influenced schedules of particular programs. Although the academy always offered a broad spectrum of training, no mechanism existed before the introduction of Project 48 to ensure that those attending the programs received the specific training they needed.

PROJECT 48

The CMPA Board of Managers and the Special Programs Subcommittee recognized the need to establish a structured approach to inservice training that remained as comprehensive as possible, yet flexible enough to accommodate the training needs of the academy's client departments. Ideally, the structure would include a menu of specialized training programs within a prescribed curriculum.



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The process would require officers to attend programs from each core area to guarantee that the training specifically addressed each aspect of their assignments. Unlike traditional police academy curricula, this holistic approach mirrors the course design used by colleges and universities and the curriculum

Project 48

Core Curriculum	Police Officers	Detectives	Supervisors
Legal Studies	8 Hours	8 Hours	8 Hours
Interpersonal Perspectives	8 Hours	8 Hours	16 Hours
Technical Studies	16 Hours	16 Hours	24 Hours
Skill Development	16 Hours	16 Hours	* * *

employed at the FBI National Academy.

CMPA staff met with area chiefs and training coordinators to outline this new approach. The structured format of the project and the establishment of clearly identified training goals proved very attractive to department chiefs. Scheduling flexibility and an opportunity for improved long-range planning impressed training coordinators. With the support of the chiefs and training coordinators, CMPA administrators began to formulate the specific features of Project 48.

Developing the Program

The first question staff members asked themselves was, "Who will be trained?" Although this question appeared rather fundamental, asking it periodically kept planners focused on their overall goal.

Because the academy's primary target group includes commissioned law enforcement personnel of all ranks, planners decided to group personnel by job description. It soon became apparent that the majority of the target group would

fall into three classifications: Patrol officers, detectives, and supervisors. (Additional groups such as chief/executive officer or noncommissioned personnel could be added, but they were considered outside the scope of the original project.)

Once planners identified the job classifications, they established the core training for each group, based on a series of task analyses, semiannual meetings with agency training coordinators, and job responsibilities. The areas of legal studies, behavioral sciences, technical studies, and skill development were identified as general topics that would apply to all three job classifications. Accordingly, planners developed the following core training categories:

Legal studies include updates on Federal, State, and local criminal law or legal issues

Interpersonal perspectives focus on skills, cultural diversity training, ethics, conflict management, victim sensitivity, and stress management

Technical studies include specialized studies or activities that directly relate to the selected job description

Skill development features programs that involve training activities that enhance physical and mental skill proficiency, such as defensive tactics, firearms, and driver training.

Without explicit data available to determine hourly allocation, planners relied on the academy's training history and discussions with other experienced trainers. The project required that the 48 hours of training be apportioned for the core curriculum for each job classification. To record the training efficiently, planners decided that the programs should be at least 8 hours in length. This also coincided with the standard length of a training day.

Next, planners identified training programs, or curricula, for each training core. Programs and seminars that had been offered by the CMPA during the last 3 years, as well as a select number of programs marketed elsewhere, were assigned to the most appropriate core. As part of Project 48, these training programs comprise a specific, yet flexible, menu of training within a structured format.

For client departments, this flexibility provides a valuable new element to training. Consider two officers, each in need of 16 hours of skills development. Officer A recently has been involved in a number of minor traffic accidents; Officer B has had several subjects resist arrest in recent weeks. Officer A should attend a driver training program, while Officer B would benefit from a defensive tactics program.

Under the flexibility of Project 48, officers can attend training that not only fulfills their hourly requirements for a particular core but also helps them to improve their skills in a specific area.

The training menu provides an immediate reference for potential users, as well as for the in-house Project 48 coordinator. Individual chiefs or training coordinators can review the menu to highlight areas of emphasis or determine areas where specialized training is available. In addition, the Project 48 coordinator can readily identify areas that were omitted or duplicated.

This structured approach also allows academy staff to project more accurately the number of training seminars that should be offered yearly for each core area. Staff members survey participating departments to determine the number of police officers, detectives, and supervisors in need of training. These figures are then computed to determine the number of various programs that must be scheduled. For example, if 1,200 officers require training in legal studies and the number to be trained during each program is 40, then 30 programs must be offered (10 per year). By using this formula, staff members determined that the academy offered an insufficient number of programs for line police officers. Instructors quickly identified deficient areas and added additional training programs.

Because a number of training programs are in the same core for different job classifications, instructors can combine two or more groups into one class—legal studies for police officers and detectives,

for example. For the most part, the content of the programs in this core category applies to members of both groups. By including members from more than one job description, the training becomes more efficient, and the potential for information exchange between groups makes the training more effective.

**“
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”**

Implementation

In addition to relevant training programs, the successful implementation of Project 48 depends on two additional key components—effective program announcements and systematic recording procedures. Program announcements must provide a detailed synopsis describing the training program and instructor credentials.

Project 48 announcements also specify the job classification(s) and core curriculum for each program (i.e., Detective: Technical Studies). These details help chiefs and training coordinators to select training programs that meet specific needs and simplify recordkeeping.

The courses that individual officers take is left to the discretion of

each participating agency. While agency commanders may mandate certain training, the academy imposes no such requirements.

The CMPA retains automated records of all training provided. However, because agencies often obtain training from other sources, such as other academies or the FBI, the primary responsibility for recordkeeping rests with individual departments. Still, such programs may also be credited toward Project 48's hourly requirements.

When individuals become eligible for certification (by *their* departments' records), copies of their training records and related certificates are forwarded to the CMPA. After review and verification by the academy director, certificates are awarded to appropriate personnel.

CONCLUSION

Inservice training is an indispensable component of modern law enforcement. By knowing what training personnel require and by establishing a mechanism to focus training opportunities toward goals, agencies not only improve overall performance but also ensure effective use of training funds.

Project 48 planners accomplish these objectives by classifying personnel by job description, developing a comprehensive core curriculum, and allocating a prescribed number of training hours for each core area. In so doing, they provide a mechanism to attain each department's training goals. ♦

Endnote

City of Canton v. Harris, 109 S.Ct. 1197 (1989).