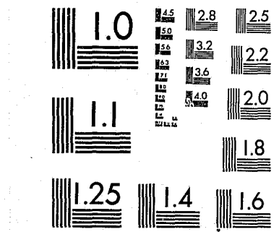

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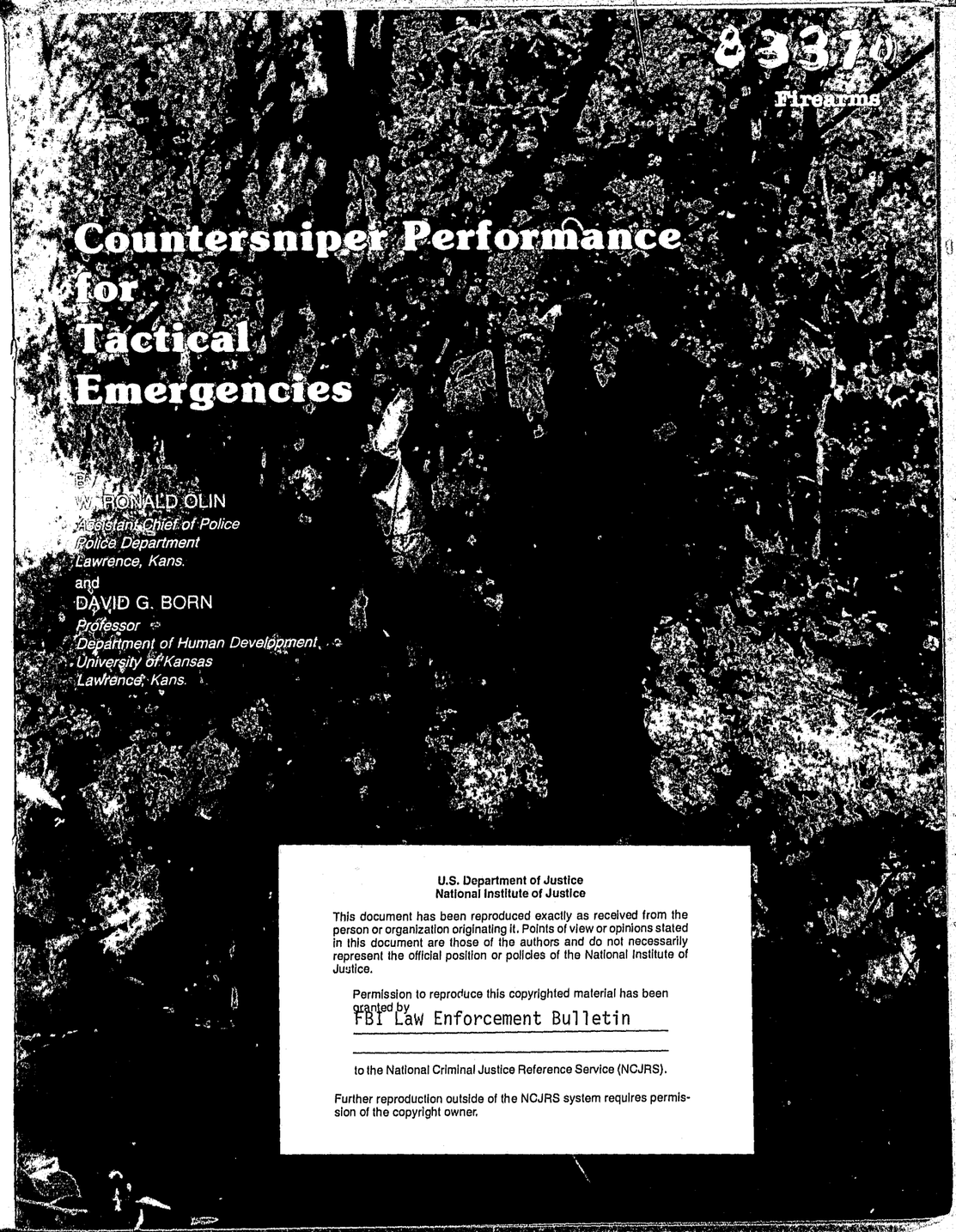

Countersniper Performance for Tactical Emergencies

By
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Training Firstline Police Supervisors

A New Approach

By
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It was 7:58 a.m., Monday morning. As the students found their name cards, they seated themselves around the U-shaped table. The talk was laconic, glances guarded and cool. At the podium, framed by the green chalkboard, the instructor readied his notes, oblivious for the moment to the wanderings, shuffling, and quizzical glances of the incoming, casually attired students. A few of the younger arrivals moved with an air of familiarity and casualness in the classroom environment, the older men moved with some obvious trepidation—slow, cautious, unsure. At exactly 8:00 a.m., the vested, somewhat formidable looking instructor called the class into session with the greeting, "Good morning, men. Welcome to the first offering of the all new firstline supervisor course."

Since September 4, 1979, there have been eight offerings of the "new and improved" firstline supervision course by the Police Training Institute. The course has been revised and approved by the Illinois State Training Board, and about 180 officers have been trained and returned to their departments.

What preceded this first course—the commitment, the procedures, the problems, and some solutions—should be of interest and assistance to other trainers, supervisors, and law enforcement managers.

The Police Training Institute

The Police Training Institute is a unit of the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign, legally mandated and fully committed to training Illinois law enforcement officers.

For over 25 years, the institute has trained officers from departments of varying sizes in skills ranging from basic law enforcement to executive management. The faculty and staff consist of 40 full-time personnel, teaching a range of over 20 different courses.

Mr. Molden

New Curriculum Needed

Police supervision has, for many years, been taught at the Police Training Institute. Because of the critical role played by the firstline law enforcement supervisor and the impact of that role on the operation of an agency, supervisory training occupied a high priority at the institute. The course had been offered in the traditional lecture mode, was well attended, and was generally accepted by the students, although it had been recognized for some time that major changes and updating were needed.

The preliminary search for an acceptable curriculum model for supervisory training began in 1977, but a final decision for change was not acted upon until early 1979, when the director and several interested staff members met and decided on overall program goals. The decision to design a completely new course was made at that time. Two staff members accepted responsibility for the design and preparation of the curriculum.

Having failed to identify an acceptable model for the new course, it was decided that one would have to be written. Current literature and courses of instruction were reviewed, and guidance from both staff and police practitioners was sought in developing a curriculum philosophy.

Philosophical Concepts

In an attempt to devise guidelines for curriculum development, the following philosophical concepts were adopted:

1) The traditional lecture, instructor-centered mode of instruction would be minimized and emphasis would be placed on the performance-oriented instructional method. This teaching mode would give the students an opportunity to practice what they learned while still in the instructional environment.
2) The course of instruction would be directed toward the novice firstline supervisor, who would attend the class either shortly before or shortly after promotion to a supervisory rank.
3) The course content would exclude all extraneous "nice to know" information and focus, instead, on basic supervisory skills.
4) An instructional "team" approach would provide for maximum coordination and instructional continuity.

Curriculum Development

The most difficult problem initially encountered was determining what material could and should be taught in a 2-week course that would be pertinent to supervisors from all sizes of departments operating under different leadership and management styles.

Figure 1

COURSE OUTLINE

Administrative Units (11 hours)	**Hours**
Introduction and Orientation	2
Comprehensive Practical Examination	4
Examination	2
Critique/Evaluation/Graduation	3
Instructional Units (42 hours)	
Authority and Control	2
Characteristics and Qualities of Leadership	2
Contemporary Issues in Supervision	4
Decisionmaking	2
Measuring Work Performance and Employee Efficiency	2
Morale and Discipline	2
Patrol Supervision	2
Preparing Goals and Objectives	2
Principles of Communication	4
Psychological Aspects of Supervision	4
Short Range Planning and Work Assignment	3
Supervisor's Role in Handling Complaints and Grievances	2
The Supervisor's Role in Management	3
The Supervisor's Training Function	6
The Supervisory Process	2
Practicals (26 hours)	
Complaints and Grievances Practical	2
Comprehensive Practical Exercise	2
Discipline Practical	2
Evaluation Practical	3
Patrol Practical	2
Planning and Decisionmaking Practical	3
Practical Teaching—Coach-Pupil	4
Practical Teaching—Roll Call	4
Principles of Communication Practical	4
TOTAL HOURS	79

The primary question seemed to be what factors, if any, were common to all firstline police supervisors. Once those factors were determined, it was necessary to design an effective method of teaching that common information.

The answer to this question appeared to be based on a common definition of a supervisor—"one who accomplishes work and meets goals and objectives through the efforts of other people." If that definition is correct, one common factor all supervisors deal with is people. Therefore, all extraneous material not dealing directly with the officer as a supervisor was extracted, and the content of the course was centered around improving the officer's ability to supervise—it is a people-related course. Each block of instruction is designed to help the supervisor understand his relationship to people, sometimes in relation to a particular police function.

The course ultimately totaled 79 hours of instruction presented in 2 weeks. (See fig. 1.)

Course Organization

Recognizing that each instructional unit is an integral part of the whole course, proper sequencing of the instructional blocks to provide a natural flow of information became a critical concern. It was necessary for the sequence to form a building block effect toward the understanding of supervision. Since blocks of instruction had to be shared among several instructors, continuity also became a concern. How could one instructor build on the previous instruction and lead into the following subject when he was familiar with and interested in only his own subject matter? In most instructional courses where multiple instructors are used, this natural defect is considered a necessary evil. However, we believed that it was imperative that we improve on the traditional delivery mode and resolve this conflict. The instructional "team" approach seemed to be an ideal solution to our problem.

The Team Approach

Staffing the course began with finding four faculty members with expertise in supervision and management, who were willing to become generalists regarding the entire 79-hour course. They committed themselves to coordinating their material with other instructors, adopting common words, terms, definitions and theories, and becoming familiar with the total course content. They also committed themselves to unusually demanding workloads because of the small group teaching style.

Four qualified staff members were found, and the course began with their commitment to monitor the entire course. Because of this commitment by the staff, the course became a true team effort, albeit a time-consuming and tedious one.

An interesting side result of the presence of all four instructors in the classroom during the initial pilot offering was a warm rapport and camaraderie between staff and students that has not been duplicated. The students responded in a very positive manner to the opportunity to relate to instructors informally and to see them participating on a regular basis in the classroom routine.

"The team teaching approach has unquestionably been the greatest contributor to the success of the course."

The team teaching approach has unquestionably been the greatest contributor to the success of the course. Because of other teaching commitments and personal requirements, however, it has been impractical to maintain the original team of four; two additional team members have been added.

Instructional Mode

Performance orientation requires the student to become involved in the instruction in a very significant way. He is allowed to apply his newly acquired skills and knowledge to simulated situations.

For example, a 2-hour block of instruction on morale and discipline is followed by a 2-hour practical exercise where students roleplay in a disciplinary scenario and have an opportunity to both put the principles to use and to see the results. A 2-hour block of instruction in patrol supervision is followed by a 2-hour problem in which the students are broken into four groups of six and given a manpower allocation and distribution problem that is applied to a major case study problem. Another block of instruction, supervisors training function, is followed by student preparation of instructional objectives and lesson plans and the actual teaching of two blocks of instruction—one using the coach/pupil method and the other, roleplay training which is videotaped. During all stages of instruction, student performance is critiqued by a faculty member.

Performance-oriented instruction is far superior to the traditional lecture method, but application of the method requires several components:

1) To allow for adequate student participation, class size must be reduced. Our classes are restricted to 24 students, although a limit of 20 students would probably be better.
2) Performance-oriented instruction requires much more time than the lecture method. However, the additional time used for roleplaying, case studies, and problem solving makes the instruction more meaningful—learning takes place and behavior is changed.
3) Students should be seated in the classroom so they can see and communicate with one another. Although a horseshoe configuration is sometimes used, a semicircle would be preferable when space allows.
4) "Break-out" rooms for practical small group work are another necessity. These are small rooms in which a group of six students solve problems without undue disturbance from others.
5) A much higher ratio of staff-to-student is needed. We typically use four instructors in all small group sessions—about one instructor to six students. It is also important that all instructors understand the material and evaluate student performance on a standardized basis.
6) While working closely with students in small groups in a problem-solving mode is a rewarding experience for the instructor, it is also the most difficult style of teaching and requires a depth of knowledge and skill not needed in an instructor-centered, lecture method of teaching.

Testing

Although testing has been retained for the purpose of feedback and student performance evaluation, traditional paper and pencil tests have been minimized and evaluation of observable behavior through roleplaying, simulation, and case study has been maximized.

There is a total of 100 evaluation points available to the student over the 2-week class period. A possible 55 points are awarded for the performance of practical problems, while there are only a possible 45 points for written tests.

The planned learning sequence is to teach the skill or principle, have the student perform the skill or apply the principles, then critique and evaluate the student's performance. Feedback to the student in the form of a critique and a number grade is immediate.

Students record their grades, and as the course progresses, are able to determine their score or grade at any time.

Central City Case Study

During orientation, students are given a copy of the Central City Case Study. This is a profile of a medium-sized police department, with accompanying statistics and facts. The class, divided into four equal study groups, is requested to apply daily instructional principles and concepts to the solution of the case study problem. A considerable amount of time is spent by these groups in applying information, making decisions, and solving problems posed by the study. On the final day of the

"Performance-oriented instruction is far superior to the traditional lecture method. . . ."

course, each group reports their solution to the problem to the entire class. Each group's performance is evaluated by a panel of instructors and a group grade is awarded, based on the group's ability to apply theories and concepts learned in class.

The case study exercise not only forces the students to apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills but also requires the student supervisors to learn to work together creatively to solve common problems. The exercise provides a common thread throughout the course, and student solutions and presentations have been of surprisingly good quality, demonstrating considerable mastery of course material.

Course Textbook

The decision whether to use a course textbook was difficult. One difficulty associated with using a textbook in the presentation of a short course is the obligation to adopt the general organization, definitions, and concepts of the text. This obligation often creates conflicts, particularly when different instructors teach the course. Each instructor, an authority in his own right, has usually developed unique methods of teaching a subject and finds it unduly confining to tailor his material to correspond with a textbook. Conversely, and equally important, it is virtually impossible to find a text that closely corresponds with the material one wishes to offer.

A textbook used in conjunction with a short course, if properly selected and used, provides organization as well as a background reading source, a coordinating effect between the instructors, and common definitions, examples, and concepts.

Research soon disclosed a wide variety of textbooks on police supervision, none of which completely met our needs. We ultimately selected our text because of its general, traditional approach to the subject. A copy of the text was provided to each student, and they were expected to read the entire book during the 2-week course. Because our course curriculum was still under development when the text was selected, we were able to coordinate the curriculum with the textbook, thereby minimizing conflicts.

An ideal solution to the textbook dilemma would be a monograph produced through the coordinated efforts of the teaching staff. Using a monograph would overcome the deficiencies of a textbook and at the same time would retain the benefits of using a text.

The Students—A Profile

Some basic statistical data were collected and analyzed for five classes. A total of 111 students were in these classes, with an average class size of 22.

The method used for data collection makes the data particularly susceptible to error, and the data are not intended to represent an accurate statistical treatment. The figures do, however, shed light on the contemporary police supervisor and perhaps indicate some trends.

The average years of police experience reported by the students in the sample (N–111) was 10.4, ranging from 3 to 30 years. The typical student was an experienced police officer, but a relatively new supervisor. There were several cases of older, well-experienced firstline supervisors with 20 to 30 years on the street receiving their first exposure to formal supervisory training. The older, and generally less educated, officers experienced a greater degree of difficulty in the academic areas (reading, speaking, test taking, etc.) but performed quite admirably in practical application, leadership in a group, and decisiveness. The younger, less experienced officers also derived considerable benefit from sharing the experience of the older officers as they worked in problem-solving groups.

The course, while being designed for firstline supervisors, drew officers from a variety of police ranks. The typical class contained 1 officer above the rank of lieutenant (deputy chief, inspector, etc.), 2 lieutenants, 13 sergeants, 2 corporals, and 4 patrol officers. The patrol officers were usually upward bound and had been selected for promotion or were functioning as acting sergeants. Students come from all sizes and types of departments from all over the State, representing county, city, and university police departments.

With the influx of women into law enforcement, one would expect an increase in female students in supervisory courses. This, however, has not been our experience. Thus far, only one female officer, a patrol officer from a university department, has been enrolled in the new course.

One of our most significant findings was the level of formal education found in our sample. Seventy-three percent of the students sampled had some post high school education, 57 percent reported 2 or more years of college, 10 percent had a bachelor's degree or better, 3 percent had a master's degree or better, and one student had a law degree. These figures reflect a movement toward a better educated permanent cadre of police officers—the captains and chiefs of tomorrow.

An overwhelming majority of the supervisory students were alert, cooperative, and highly motivated. They report an increased level of confidence in their ability to perform supervisory functions following training. Students with previous supervisory experience frequently report that although they had generally been doing the "right" thing on the street, they did not understand why. Training confirmed their "gut-level" instincts and increased their confidence and ability to progress professionally.

In spite of an average tenure of 10 years, most of the officers had not become so cynical or demoralized that they were unwilling to try new ideas and innovative approaches. A common student response to modern management and supervisory theory, however, is, "I agree with the concept and I think it will work, but not in our department." Although it is by no means universal, many of the students believe their departments are stagnating and their superior officers are uninspired and unwilling to consider or try new and different management approaches. A large majority of the supervisors in our classes reflect the belief that in their departments, they are neither treated nor do they feel like they are a part of management. They believe that policy is made at higher levels and filtered down to them for implementation. A question frequently voiced by supervisory students is, "Why don't you get the captains, chiefs, and sheriffs down here to teach them this material?"

Perhaps, as more trained supervisors move to higher management positions within the less progressive departments, these types of perceptions will be modified.

Conclusion

Students in our firstline supervision courses are not being presented new or different information. The information is basic, and for the most part, is traditional supervisory theory and concept. What is different is the method of delivery. Rather than the traditional lecture method of instruction, the information is being presented in a performance mode. The improvement of student response and learning in the performance-oriented course, as compared to the old method, is radical.

Although improvements in the course and its delivery will continue, the primary goal of supervisory training is, we hope, being realized. That goal is better and more efficient supervisory practices at the street level, resulting in better law enforcement. **FBI**

END