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A Technical Assistance Report

Prepared by
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BASIC INVESTIGATION

An Evaluation

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ACQUISITIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

Basic Investigation is a one week (40-hour) course offered by the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension Training Division. The class was held at the Air Force Base at Twin Cities International Airport during January, 1977. Basic Investigation covers fundamental methods of police investigation. It is open to any Minnesota law enforcement officer, but is designed for those with little or no experience and training in criminal investigation.

This report has three major sections. First, the background of the students taking the course is reviewed. Second, student attitudes on various strategies of training delivery are examined. Finally, student evaluations of the course content are analyzed.

II. STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Thirty students attended the class under evaluation. They ranged in age from 23 to 53; the average age was 35:

A. EDUCATION

The vast majority of students (87%) had completed high school. Two students who had not earned a GED certificate. Seven of the students, or about 23%, had completed college; several others had some college. Four students had some vo-tech training.

B. WORK EXPERIENCE

Students in Basic Investigation had a wide range of experience at their present jobs--from only one month to ten years. The students averaged a little less than four years at their present jobs. In addition, almost half the students (12) had had previous law enforcement experience averaging over four years. A few students also had experience as military police or elsewhere in the criminal justice system.

C. OTHER CHARACTERISTICS

Almost half the students were veterans; all but one were male. Students represent departments ranging in size from less than four officers to over 50. Table 1 shows the distribution of students among various size departments. Sixty percent of the students in this class were police officers; the balance were either sheriff's deputies or employed by a state law enforcement agency.

Department Size	N	%
1- 4	2	7%
5- 9	2	7
10-24	16	57
25-49	3	10
50+	5	18
Missing	2	-
TOTAL:	30	100%

Almost a quarter of the students were from rural areas. 28% from urban areas, and the plurality, 44%, from the suburbs. Thus the composition of

this class is quite different from that of the Crime Scene Processing course where the majority of recruits represented sheriffs' offices and rural areas.

III. TRAINING DELIVERY

The 30 students who took this course during the evaluation period were surveyed on their opinions about how well the training was delivered. Issues covered in this section include student opinions on the appropriateness of the length of the course, the balance between practical and theoretical material in the course, the location of the training site and the adequacy of the facilities. In addition, the analysis deals with student opinions on the best form for a permanent training academy, and the efficacy of classroom versus on-the-job training. For a more complete analysis of training delivery issues, see Minnesota Peace Officer Training and Education: Final Report (Crime Control Planning Board, December 1977).

Sixty percent of the students felt that 40 hours was the appropriate length of time for the course. However, fully a third of the students felt more time should be used in order to do the training effectively. Most of these students felt that an additional week should be added to the course.

Eighty percent of the students felt that there was an appropriate mix of practical and theoretical material in the course. While none of the students wanted to see more theoretical material, about twenty percent recommend the use of more practical exercises. One student suggested that lectures be eliminated "even if (the lecturer has been) in the business for a long time."

As is the case with other BCA in-service training courses, Basic Investigation is conducted at a sight in the metro area. Table 2 shows that only about a third of the students are satisfied with this method of training delivery. A fifth of the students would like to see a permanent academy established in the metro area, and slightly more students would like to see classes held regionally. About a tenth of the students favored permanent regional academies.

TABLE 2
PERSPECTIVES ON THE LOCATION OF TRAINING:
BASIC INVESTIGATION TRAINEES

	N	%
Metro Area Classes	10	33.3%
Permanent Regional Academies	3	10.0
Metro Area Academy	6	20.0
Regional Classes as Required	7	23.3
Other	4	13.3
TOTAL:	30	99.9%

The Basic Investigation Class was held at the Air Force Base facility at International Airport. Many students were unhappy with the facilities primarily because of the lack of proper heating arrangements. Only 13% of the students rated the facilities as "good," two-thirds termed the facilities "adequate," and 20% rated the facilities as "poor."

In general, students were positive about their training experience. In response to the statement "I could learn more by spending the same amount of time on the job," 43% said they "strongly disagreed" and a like number said they "disagreed." Three students had no opinion; one "agreed" with the statement.

IV. COURSE CONTENT

The course was divided into 14 topics: Developing and Using Sources of Information, Laboratory, Crime Scene Preservation, Plaster Castings, Burglary, Fingerprinting and Latent Prints, Crime Resistance, Search and Arrest Warrants, Homicide Investigation, Narcotics, Interview Problems, Sex Crimes, and White Collar Crime. In a survey administered at the end of the course, students rated each of the topics in five areas: its importance to their job, the amount of time spent on the topic, the quality of instruction, the materials used, and the method of instruction.

Table 3 shows how students rated various topics in terms of how important each topic is to performing the job effectively (1 - not important to 5 - very important). Crime Scene Preservation, Crime Scene Searches, Burglary, and Interviews were considered to be the most important topics. Students ranked Castings, Crime Resistance, and White Collar Crime as being least important to job effectiveness.

TABLE 3
MEAN "IMPORTANCE" RATINGS^a

Topic	Mean Rating	Rank
Crime Scene Preservation	4.5	1
Crime Scene Searches	4.3	2
Burglary	4.1	3
Interviews	4.1	4
Information	4.0	5
Warrants	4.0	6
Narcotics	3.9	7
Fingerprinting	3.7	8
Laboratory	3.6	9
Homicide	3.5	10
Sex Crimes	3.5	11
Castings	3.0	12
Crime Resistance	3.0	13
White Collar Crime	2.9	14

^a1 = not important
2
3 = somewhat important
4
5 = extremely important

Student ratings on the amount of time spent on various topics is illustrated in Table 4 (1 = much less time to 5 = much more time). Most students felt the appropriate amount of time was spent on each of the topics. If anything, students would like to see more time spent on some topics, especially Burglary and Crime Scene Searches. Students would like to see less time spent on Sex Crimes and White Collar Crimes.

Topic	Mean Rating	Rank
Burglary	3.6	1
Crime Scene Searches	3.6	2
Warrants	3.5	3
Narcotics	3.5	4
Crime Scene Preservation	3.4	5
Fingerprinting	3.4	6
Information	3.2	7
Interviews	3.2	8
Castings	3.1	9
Laboratory	3.0	10
Crime Resistance	3.0	11
Homicide	3.0	12
Sex Crimes	2.9	13
White Collar Crimes	2.9	14

^a1 = much less time
2 = less time
3 = about the same
4 = more time
5 = much more time

Student ratings of the instruction are presented in Table 5 (1 = very poor to 5 = very good). Students rated instruction in all areas at least average. They were the most positive about instruction in Fingerprinting and Crime Scene Preservation.

Topic	Mean Rating	Rank
Fingerprinting	4.2	1
Crime Scene Preservation	4.0	2
Castings	3.9	3
Information	3.8	4
Laboratory	3.8	5
Crime Scene Searches	3.8	6
Warrants	3.7	7
Narcotics	3.7	8
Sex Crimes	3.6	9
Burglary	3.6	10
Homicides	3.5	11
Crime Resistance	3.2	12
Interviews	3.1	13
White Collar Crime	3.1	14

^a1 = very poor
2 = poor
3 = average
4 = above average
5 = very good

In Table 6 student ratings of the materials used for each topic are summarized. Here again, students were quite positive. Information and Narcotics were rated the highest. Interviews and White Collar Crime the lowest.

Topic	Mean Rating	Rank
Information	4.1	1
Narcotics	4.0	2
Fingerprinting	3.9	3
Homicide	3.9	4
Crime Scene Preservation	3.8	5
Crime Scene Searches	3.8	6
Burglary	3.7	7
Warrants	3.7	8
Castings	3.6	9
Sex Crimes	3.6	10
Laboratory	3.5	11
Crime Resistance	3.5	12
Interviews	3.3	13
White Collar Crime	3.3	14

^a1 = not very helpful
2
3 = somewhat helpful
4
5 = very helpful

Finally, students were asked if they felt the methods used in teaching the course were appropriate. (See Table 7; 1 = appropriate, 2 = uncertain, and 3 = not appropriate). The reader should be cautioned in drawing conclusions from the means of this kind of scale. It is clear, however, that most students indicated the methods were appropriate for most of the topics. Students were least certain about the appropriateness of methods used in teaching Crime Resistance, Burglary, and Crime Scene Searches.

TABLE 7
MEAN "METHODS" RATINGS^a

Topic	Mean Rating	Rank
Information	1.0	1
Crime Scene Preservation	1.0	2
Fingerprinting	1.0	3
White Collar Crime	1.0	4
Interviews	1.0	5
Laboratory	1.1	6
Warrants	1.1	7
Narcotics	1.1	8
Sex Crimes	1.1	9
Castings	1.2	10
Homicides	1.2	11
Crime Resistance	1.3	12
Burglary	1.3	13
Crime Scene Searches	1.3	14

^a1 = appropriate
2 = uncertain
3 = not appropriate

V. SUMMARY

Table 8 summarized ranks of the fourteen course topics on each of the five aspects evaluated. The purpose of the table is to assist the reader in identifying those aspects of topics which students feel need the most

or the least improvement. Since many topics had identical¹ means in some categories, the reader should be cautioned in making assumptions about distinctions in ranks. However, three general conclusions can be drawn from this table.

First, it appears that Crime Scene Preservation and Information rank consistently high in the opinions of the students. School administrators can feel reasonably sure that these topics and several others which receive high rankings² are satisfying most of the students' needs.

Second, four topics ranked consistently low--Homicide, Sex Crimes, Crime Resistance, and White Collar Crimes. Reference to Tables 3 through 7 shows that none of these topics received strongly negative ratings from students, but relative to the other topics in the course they were ranked fairly low. School administrators may wish to concentrate their efforts on improving these topics.

Third, separate aspects of the remaining topics received quite different rankings. For instance, Castings received a very high rank in terms of instruction, but medium to low ranks in other areas. Using these tables, then, administrators can identify specific aspects of topics which may warrant improvement.

¹Means were rounded to the nearest tenth.

²Crime Scene Searches, Warrants, Narcotics, and Fingerprinting also received high ratings.

TABLE 8

SUMMARY RANKINGS OF COURSE TOPICS

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Importance</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Instruction</u>	<u>Materials</u>	<u>Methods</u>
Crime Scene Preservation	1	5	2	5	2
Crime Scene Searches	2	2	6	6	14
Burglary	3	1	10	7	13
Interviews	4	8	13	13	5
Information	5	7	4	1	1
Warrants	6	3	7	8	7
Narcotics	7	4	8	2	8
Fingerprinting	8	6	1	3	3
Laboratory	9	10	5	11	6
Homicides	10	12	11	4	11
Sex Crimes	11	13	9	10	9
Castings	12	9	3	9	10
Crime Resistance	13	11	12	12	12
White Collar Crime	14	14	14	14	4

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
COMMENTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

BASIC INVESTIGATION #12

Comments

Homicide--should have gone through a total homicide case file.

Sex Crimes--case file review.

More techniques should have been practiced in the field.

Suggested Area--need more of handling juveniles and bad checks.

Suggested Area--use of lie detectors, availability, procedure, etc.

Question 4--classroom too cold.

Question 1--c) 80 hrs., combine basic and advanced.

Some instructors not adequately versed or not capable of teaching. Eliminate lecturers even if "in the business" a long time.

Homicide Investigation and handling crime scene for homicide should be combined and investigation in bad checks be placed in work week.

Pass eval. form out at beginning of week--can express views after each course is given.

Question 1--c) 80, depending upon what was added. There was some repetition in the 40 hour course.

Question 2--c) At this time of year.

Question 3--d) Perhaps there would be more out-state representation with regional schools.

Question 5--a) Joint conferences are good for airing our differences. However, training should be kept solely for those who will use it and who can exchange ideas.

Crime Resistance--neglected arrest warrants

Narcotics--instructor seemed bored with subject

Suggested Area--juvenile problems, theft, checks (ISF & forgery), gambling

Another time of year would be better for out-staters. Privilege to attend school.

Question 4--cold.

Question 4--cold.

Suggested Area--More time on interrogation and interview

Would like to see a tactical course through BCA. I would suggest the use of a facility like Camp Ripley.

Suggested Area--more time on interviews and interrogations.

Question 4--cold. Good school

Question 3--other, more programs, available to more people who want to go, had to apply in October to get in for sure.

Question 4--bad building and heat.

More practical experiences would be better--probably need another week to complete course.

Suggested Area--interrogation.

Question 3--e) Central training academy, for week long or more training with Regional. Short term as needed.

Suggested Area--information on how a post is conducted.

Course did what it was intended to do.

Suggested Area--More on criminal code of Minnesota.

Homicide Investigation--less use of slides, more problems.

APPENDIX B

BASIC INVESTIGATION QUESTIONNAIRE

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING SURVEY

BASIC INVESTIGATION

The Governor's Commission on Crime Prevention and Control, in conjunction with the Minnesota Peace Officer Training Board and the Police Training Section of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, is beginning an evaluation of law enforcement training. We hope this evaluation will result in recommendations to improve the methods, content and effectiveness of training programs. Your cooperation in completing the attached questionnaire and your frank opinions will be of great value.

PERSONAL DATA

Year of birth: _____

Years of education completed (please circle):

High School 8 9 10 11 12

(if no high school diploma, GED? yes no)

Vo-Tech School 1 2 3 4

College 1 2 3 4

Graduate School 1 2 3 4

Degree Obtained:

Associate degree _____

Bachelor's degree _____

Master's degree _____

Other _____

Veteran: yes no

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Sex: male female

Law enforcement related experience (check any that apply):

Current position only No. of months _____
 Law Enforcement Officer (prior to current position) No. of months _____
 Criminal Justice Related Area (probation officer, etc.) No. of months _____
 Military Police No. of months _____
 Police Reserve No. of months _____
 Other (describe: _____) No. of months _____

Size of department for which you are working:

No. of full-time officers: 1-4 _____
5-9 _____
10-24 _____
25-49 _____
50+ _____

Type of department (check one from A and one from B):

A. Urban _____
Suburban _____
Rural _____
B. Sheriff's Office _____
Police Department _____

1. Was the length of this training course appropriate?

- a) The current length of 40 hours is best.
 b) Fewer hours would be better. (How many? _____)
 c) More hours would be better. (How many? _____)

2. Was the orientation of the training appropriate?

- a) The training should have had a more practical orientation.
 b) The training should have had a more theoretical orientation.
 c) The mix of practical and theoretical was appropriate for this course.

3. How would you prefer to have the training programs offered?

- a) Schools offered in the metropolitan area (current system).
 b) Permanent training academies set up in each region of the state.
 c) A central training academy in the metropolitan area.
 d) Regional schools, set up as needed.
 e) Other _____

4. What do you think of your training facilities?

- a) Good
 b) Adequate
 c) Poor

5. If some form of permanent training academy were established, would you prefer a coordinated criminal justice training program (i.e., including personnel of courts, prisons, etc.) or a program limited to police training?

- a) Police only
- b) Coordinated criminal justice training
- c) Uncertain

6. How do you feel about the following statement regarding the crime scene processing training course: "I could learn more by spending the same amount of time on the job."

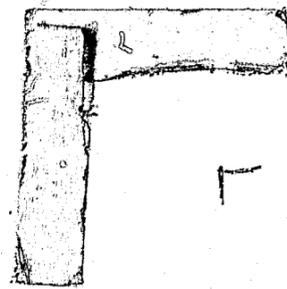
- a) Strongly disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) No opinion
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly agree

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	IMPORTANCE					TIME					INSTRUCTION					MATERIALS						METHODS					
	How important to your effectiveness in your job is training in each of the following areas?					How much time do you feel should have been spent on each of the areas?					How would you rate the quality of instruction you received?					How helpful to you were the handout materials you received?						Do you think the method of instruction was appropriate to the subject matter?			If "No," what would be a better method?		
	Not Important	Some-what Important	Ex-tremely Important			Much Less	Less	About the Same	More	Much More	Very Poor	Poor	Avg.	Above Avg.	Very Good	Not Help-ful	Some-what Help-ful	Very Help-ful	N/A	Yes	Un-cer-tain	No	ENTER NO. OR DESCRIPTION				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3				
Developing and Using Sources of Information	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3			
Laboratory	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3			
Crime Scene Preservation	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3			
Crime Scene Searches	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3			
Plaster Castings	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3			
Burglary	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3			
Fingerprinting and Latent Prints	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3			
Crime Resistance	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3			
Search and Arrest Warrants	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3			
Homicide Investigation	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3			
Narcotics	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3			
Interview Problems	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3			
Sex Crimes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3			
White Collar Crime	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3			

Were there any areas not covered which you feel should have been? _____

Comments: _____



END