



## National Association of Field Training Officers Indiana Chapter

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE INDUCTION TRAINING - The Field  
Training Concept. Ed. Peter Charles Unsinger and Harry W More.  
Publisher; Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, IL., 1990**

### BOOK REVIEW by Jack Molden

This 169-page book, edited by Unsinger and More) is a collection of six monographs, written, or co-written by a total of nine authors with professional backgrounds ranging from State Police Trooper to Ph.D. psychologist. The stated intent of the editors was to provide “a valuable resource” for “Those contemplating the creating of a Field Training Program, or evaluating their current program ...“ The book is, according to the editors, aimed at practitioners, students of government, the pre-service Criminal Justice major and lawyers. I would add, that with the extreme paucity of published materials dealing with the field training concept, this volume could be an addition to college, training academy, and police department libraries. The price of the book, listed at; \$32.75, might, however, discourage many individual buyers.

Chapter one is an interesting and important discussion of the legal and rational reasons for a field training program. More detail on legal liability and EEO provisions would have been helpful, but what is offered is worth reading. As also found in some other sections in this volume, the FTO Program applications are somewhat narrow and do not always represent the state-of-the-art as I understand it.

Chapter two purports to explain the FTO concept, program organization, personal trait characteristics and performance evaluation of recruit officers. Although the breadth of this undertaking is a bit overambitious, the content could be a valuable source for the criminal justice official were the chapter not so obfuscated by vague meanings, awkward syntax and convoluted sentence structure. For example, “All too often new people had gone out with one person thinking the other had shown the recruit when in fact no one had ever taught the person or told them to do it.” The ideas are there if they can be dug out.

A description in this chapter; of phase training conducted by the Massachusetts State Police, states that up to forty (40) working days are spent during phase one of field training, with the recruit doing nothing but observing the actions of the FTO. This technique is quite contrary to traditional training methods which would have the recruit performing as quickly as was safe and practical. That is, the FTO explains, demonstrates, and immediately provides opportunities for recruit performance under FTC supervision. We learn by doing, not watching.

Chapter three is a well-researched, scholarly, albeit esoteric account of methods to identify necessary knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) for entry-level police officers. The material is difficult reading, but is certainly critical information for the technician creating FTO program evaluation won criteria. The chapter contains an extensive bibliography for the researcher who might wish to develop further expertise in this very complex subject.

Chapter four, the longest of the six, is also one of the best written and most entertaining. It deals with the fundamentals of performance evaluation in both technical and lay language. The extensive bibliography provides excellent guidance for the researcher. The primary weakness, and one noted in other sections of the book, is an apparent unfamiliarity with law enforcement field training and the failure to relate concept to the FTO environment. Regardless, for a deeper understanding of the fundamentals concepts of evaluation, the study of this chapter by field training personnel would be well spent effort.

Chapter five, *Administration and Management of the Field Training Officer Program* covers: Profile of a Desirable FTO Candidate, FTO traits, selection and training of FTOs, staffing, records, remedial training, termination, and monitoring functions. The chapter contains a smattering of information about a number of serious management issues without really providing any very helpful answers to the reader.

There is one statement in chapter five I feel that cannot pass unchallenged. The statement is “A good FTO program will constantly run even seasoned veterans through the process in order to assure the set standards are still valid and correct any deficiencies that may creep back into the field practices. One reason the authors give for returning veteran officers through the FTO program is that it’s a good place for new FTOs to practice.” It seems to me that while the FTO program can, and does, significantly *contribute* to departmental quality assurance through standardized training, evaluation and feedback, it is the responsibility of patrol managers to evaluate and resolve deficient field practices. It is my personal opinion that the practice of arbitrarily running veteran patrol officers through a formal field training program would be a “kiss of death.” Functioning, veteran patrol officers neither need nor accept retraining on the street, especially by rookie FTOs. That is not the purpose of the FTO program.

Chapter six, *The Field Training Manual* (certainly an important component of any field training program) does briefly discuss contents of a manual, including an abbreviated example of a training checklist. But, a sizeable portion of the chapter deals with extraneous matters such as evaluation, training program critique, counseling techniques, documentation and the termination process. It would have been helpful to the reader to get more information on the subject of the field training manual.

Once again, the idea that the first phase of field training, lasting for several weeks, is only observation time, crops up in this chapter e.g., “Usually the first phase lasts for only several weeks, is primarily a sustained orientation program, and the trainee acts merely as an observer (sic). As stated earlier, several weeks of observation appears to be a waste of good training time and seems to fly in the face of traditional training wisdom.

Although there is much to be learned from this book, the novice FFO or Manager could become confused or he misled by some of the ideas expressed. It would be well for the reader contemplating the development or revision of a FTO program to read the book carefully, then balance it with other sources of information.

In spite of the book's imperfections, I congratulate the authors for their efforts to add information to a severely deficient field of published knowledge, and recommend it to serious students of the FTO concept.

*Jack B. Molden has a background of thirty-eight years in law enforcement and criminal justice training. He has trained FTOs, and written and consulted on field training matters for over twenty years.*

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