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THE STATE CORRECTION OFFICER AS KEEPER AND COUNSELOR:
AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE ROLE*

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses two essential research needs in criminal justice literature: (1) the need for an assessment of the content of the role of block officer; and (2) the need for an empirical test of the presumed irreconcilable goals of custody and treatment as these are embedded in the role of state correction officer. A Task Inventory approach was adapted and a random sample of 100 correction officers in four heterogeneous state institutions were interviewed. Results of the study reveal that custodial staff spend at least sixty-percent of their on-job time performing duties not classified as security in nature. Results of the study challenge many of the existing stereotypes of correction officers in the literature.

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Total institutions in general, and the prison in particular, generally function to keep researchers out as effectively as they keep the incarcerated in. Occasionally we gain information about these institutions. Most of what we know, however, focuses upon the client and his adjustment to either the prison community or to the environment to which he returns upon release. Little is known about the prison as a total research entity and particularly lacking is a sufficient body of information about the officer force in prisons. Several descriptive studies concentrate upon the nature of the officer role at a time when "clubs were trump" and punishment was salient to the role, a period when officers knew more clearly what was expected of them (Roucek, 1935; Lundberg, 1946).

Over time the officer role has evolved, reflecting wide trends in modern correction. The change in philosophy is characterized by Jacobs (1977: 178) as an effort to endorse "'a collaborative model' of prison" in which "the role of the guard had to be transformed from turnkey and disciplinarian to counselor and agent of rehabilitation."

Currently the research literature concentrates upon the blurred realities of the officer's task, the condition in which realities of the job conflict with what the rule book says (Cheatwood, 1974). The most recent national survey of correction officers indicated that this "lack of clarity and . . . consistency regarding what is expected . . . is a frustration that links officers from one part of the nation to the other" (May, 1976: 12). Researchers attempting to explain this phenomena of uncertainty of the officer role link its origins to the changing societal definitions of the officer role. Notable among this research is the work of Cressey (1959, 1965). Cressey argues that there is a dilemma implicit in the role of guarding itself: in custodial settings, adherence to fixed sets of rules is dysfunctional for officer survival on the blocks; in treatment settings, therapeutic functions conflict with preservation of institutional needs for orderliness (Cressey, 1959: 18). Prisons, like mental institutions, are structured in such a way as to generate this fundamental dilemma in staff roles; on the one hand staff are mandated by society to maintain custody, while on the other hand, they are expected to show humanitarian concern for the welfare of clients (Cressey, 1965). Implicit in Cressey's argument is the notion that the two roles are irreconcilable and that the widespread impotency of the officer role as presently structured originates in the futile effort to combine both functions in the one role.

Piliavin (1966) is representative of the researchers who contend that neither "empirical substantiation or theoretical reasoning" lend support to the argument advanced by Cressey. Rather, it is possible to mitigate the conflict in role expectations of officers by altering the officer role in such a way that functions of custody and treatment overlap. The operating assumption behind this role alteration is that a change in objective conditions of the job will lead to concomitant shifts in normative perspectives (Piliavin, 1966: 130).

Most research on the officer role merely annotates the perspectives of Cressey and Piliavin. Several studies document the antecedents and consequences of commitments to the mutually exclusive goals of treatment and custody, showing how conflict

inevitably results (Weber, 1957; Nagel, 1963; Piliavin, 1966; Henderson, 1970). One of the most extensive empirical studies of the linkage between orientations to either custody or treatment and structural properties of the prison was undertaken by Kassebaum, et al. (1964). They found significant differences in attitudes among staffs in prisons with differential inmate populations and varying job characteristics. Moreover, it was found that tensions between staff tend to increase the more the goals of the prison become treatment oriented (Zald, 1962). There is some theoretical support (Cheatwood, 1974) and empirical evidence (Duffee, 1974) that conflict endemic to the difficulty of reconciling custody with treatment goals explains the emergence of an officer subculture whose anomie adaptation to role conflict results in general resistance of officers to values implicit in training programs.

One behavioral consequence of officers to the condition of "precarious role situation" is a general tendency to adopt a "stick man" ideology and a custodial modus operandi in which the worst from the inmate population is expected (Guenther and Guenther, 1974).

The problematic nature of training correction officers can be viewed against this background of literature on the essential dilemma of bringing together both custodial and treatment goals in one role. Discussions of training reflect the conflict between these two emphases. Given the manifest or latent tendencies of institutional personnel to adapt training to the hard realities of prison life, the tendency is for most training programs to tailor their efforts toward building up a force of "reasonably well informed custodial specialists" (Frank, 1966: 276). Correction personnel with treatment interests contend that a persisting lack of treatment orientation in training programs militates against professionalism of correction officers and ignores the fact that line officers have the most direct and continuous contact with inmates and are in the best position to provide rehabilitation services (Downey and Signori, 1958; Frank, 1966; Glaser, 1966; Miller, 1966; Baumgold, 1971; Sheppard, 1973; Goldstein, 1975).

Several gaps and shortcomings in the literature suggest the need for additional research on the role of the correction officer. Many of the studies of correction officers lack empirical substantiation; thus much of the conceptualization--especially the distinctions between custody and treatment orientations--lacks precision in operational definitions. An almost universal tendency is for researchers to commit the ecological fallacy of identifying officer subcultures by labeling specific institutions as either custodial or treatment oriented and then generalizing these orientations to the officer force. Finally, and most important for this research, there is need for greater empirical documentation of the exact nature of the officer role. Too little evidence of what officers actually do on the job is available. The imagery in the literature is generally pejorative, portraying the block officer as devoting most of his time to "locking grilles, making counts, supervising work crews and delivering mail." Data on the extent to which officers perform non-security functions is extremely limited.

The purpose of this research is to clarify some of the ambiguity attached to the officer role, particularly with respect to the differential time officers spend on the job performing security and non-security tasks. The relation between this information and a vast array of research problems is obvious; the focus here, however, is limited to ascertaining several salient training implications related to knowledge of the officer role.

METHODOLOGY

In order to determine role characteristics or functions of correction officers the researchers adapted several components of a job analysis process known as the Comprehensive Occupational Data Computer Programs system, a product of the Air Force's occupational research project (Christal, 1974; Van Cleve, 1975, 1976). The core of this occupational analysis technique consists of a job inventory with two sections; the first contains a list of questions pertaining to job characteristics, job attitudes, training experience and other background variables. The second section of the job inventory contains a list of all the pertinent tasks that may be performed by a job incumbent of the block officer classification. The task list is designed to provide an exact definition of the tasks officers do, classified according to relative time spent on any given task and how the tasks were learned. The essential idea behind using the task inventory approach is that job descriptions and the time workers spend at specific tasks are specified by the employees themselves rather than originating from the top management of the prison system.

The time ordered, task inventory, survey system of occupational analysis was selected because of its proven validity in similar studies undertaken in research of the military system (Christal, 1974: 24-29). Since the prison system is a quasi-military organization (Carter, McGee and Nelson, 1975), it was felt that this approach would be particularly fruitful. Moreover, leading users of the occupational analysis approach report that it supercedes all previous approaches to job role analysis. It is characterized as overcoming the primary disadvantages of both the engineering and traditional Functional Job Analysis techniques; both require highly qualified position analysts and each lack the mathematical versatility for quantifying the vast amount of data required for a detailed role analysis (Van Cleve, 1976: 4).

A comprehensive list of task statements which summarize what officers do on the job was compiled from observations of the State of Pennsylvania prison system over a three year period by the researchers, job descriptions provided by the Bureau of Correction and interviews with line officers in state correction facilities. From these sources 78 task statements were formulated. These statements were supplemented with additional statements acquired from an inventory prepared for similar purposes by the Industrial Engineering Department of Texas A & M University. A final list of 90 task statements were included in the field instrument. Conferences were held with Divisional training staff of the Commonwealth correction system to assist in validating the inventory. In addition, the inventory was pre-tested on state correction officers at the Camp Hill facility, a state institution not included in the sample slated to receive on-site visits in the spring of 1977.

A random sample of 98 officers were interviewed in four separate state prisons, selected for their differential inmate populations.² These officers were asked to rate the list of tasks believed to represent all tasks done by correctional officers in state institutions. Space at the end of the list was provided for adding tasks performed which were not included in the job inventory. The officers were requested to indicate the time they spent on each task, using the following scale of relative time-spent values:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 - Very much below average | 6 - Slightly above average |
| 2 - Much below average | 7 - Above average |
| 3 - Below average | 8 - Much above average |
| 4 - Slightly below average | 9 - Very much above average |
| 5 - About average | |

Benefitting from the extensive work done by Christal and other users of this technique, a "relative time-spent scale" was selected because workers generally are not able to designate an exact percentage of the time they devote to each task they perform. On the other hand, they can state with confidence that they spend more time on one task than on another (Christal, 1974: 7-8). Thus, a 9-point relative time spent scale was used by which workers report the amount of work time they spend on each task relative to the amount of time they spend on other tasks. If an individual does not perform a listed task, he leaves the space blank.

Respondents were also requested to indicate how each task they do is learned--on the job, through outside training, or both--by using the following scale:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 - All on the job | 4 - Mostly outside training |
| 2 - Mostly on the job | 5 - All outside training |
| 3 - 50/50 on the job and outside training | |

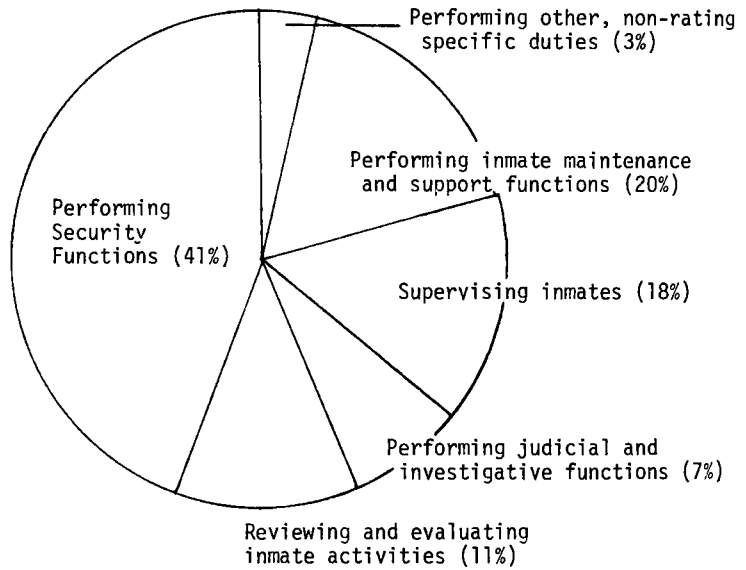
After the time-spent score and the task learning score were compiled for each officer, they were analyzed with the aid of computer techniques. The outcome of this analysis is a set of data which reveal a great deal of interesting information about how correctional officers in state institutions spend their time on the job.

RESULTS

Ninety task statements were included in the job inventory. Eight officers wrote in 3 additional duties they perform which were not in the original inventory, bringing the total tasks officers perform to 93. This figure is used as the basis for the analysis of the data when total task statements are analyzed. The statements in the inventory can be viewed in two ways: (1) as related tasks which can be grouped together to provide information about wider job duties; and (2) as individual tasks.

Duties. While tasks are specific work operations, duties are distinct clusters of tasks making up major activities involved in the work required of correction officers. By clustering tasks into distinctive job responsibilities, five duty

Figure -1. Average Time Expenditures of State Correctional Officers in Fulfilling Major Duties



areas for state officers were discovered: (1) performing security functions; (2) performing inmate maintenance and support functions; (3) supervising inmates; (4) reviewing and evaluating inmate activities; and (5) performing judicial and investigative functions. Figure 1 shows how selected state correction officers spend their time fulfilling these responsibilities.

The major conclusions which can be drawn from this graph showing the time allocation of the state officer's job is that security functions occupy an average of forty-one percent of his time, with inmate maintenance and support functions occupying twenty-percent of the correctional officer's time. Supervision of inmates requires eighteen-percent of the time spent on the job and reviewing and evaluating inmate activities requires eleven-percent of the total time spent on the job by Correction Officers. The remaining three-percent of the time is spent on tasks which were not anticipated by the original job inventory and include items which can be inserted in later inventories under duties contained in the present instrument.

Figure 1 provides general information about broad duty areas and suggests specific training areas essential for the correctional officer's role, but reveals little about specific tasks which make up the duties officers are required to perform. For this information it is necessary to examine more closely the information collected on the separate tasks which comprise the duties of Commonwealth officers.

Tasks. A task is one of the work operations that constitutes a logical and necessary step in the performance of a duty. Table 1 is constructed so that each of the 93 job tasks included in the Task Inventory is listed in alphabetical order under the duty of which it is a part. Three measures used to analyze the relative time spent ratings for tasks are reported in the table: (1) the percent of all officers who perform the tasks; (2) the average percent of time spent by all officers for each task; and (3) the percent of time spent by only those officers who perform each task. A fourth measure listed in Table 1 indicates whether a task is learned either "all" or "mostly all" on the job.

Column one, "Percent of all Officers Who Perform the Task," contains the percentages of all officers who performed each task and was determined by dividing the total number of officers (N=98) into the sum of those who indicated that they performed the task. A discussion of the findings for the first column will be considered after a brief description with respect to how the values in the remaining three columns were calculated.

The second column, "Average Percent of Time Spent by All Officers," is an average based upon the relative time-spent estimates provided by the officers when they rated each task using the 9 point scale. Values were calculated using the following formula:

Table 1. Tasks of State Correctional Officers by Percent Who Perform the Task, Percent of Time Spent by All Officers, Percent of Time Spent by Only Those Who Perform the Task and How the Task is Learned (N=98)

Duty/Task Statements	Percent Of All Officers Who Perform The Task	Average Percent Of Time Spent By ALL Officers	Average Percent Of Time Spent By Those Who Perform the Task	Percent Who Say Task Is Learned All Or Mostly On-The-Job
<u>Tasks</u>				
Apply restraint devices	78	1.7	2.3	67**
Approve passes into correction facility	44	1.6	3.5*	98
Check weapons in and out of facility	34	.8	2.3	82
Conduct periodic facility inspection	68	2.6	3.8*	85
Conduct periodic searches of inmates and their quarters	80	2.8	3.5*	74**
Count eating utensils at meal time	25	.8	3.0*	92
Inspect I.D. of persons entering and leaving the institution	41	1.6	3.9*	78
Inspect physical facilities	34	1.2	3.4*	73
Inspect vehicles/containers entering and leaving	46	1.7	3.7*	78
Issue correction facility keys	30	1.1	3.5*	87
Monitor facilities by remote surveillance	5	.1	2.6	80
Patrol catwalks and observe behavior	60	3.9	6.5*	81
Patrol perimeter of building or facility	50	2.2	4.3*	86
Perform surveillance on mentally disturbed or suicidal inmates	47	1.3	2.7	84
Record phone calls to inmates	19	.4	2.0	84
Report breaches of security	63	2.5	3.9*	73
Review emergency procedures for escape, riot, fire, etc.	38	1.2	3.1*	66**
Review rules of safety and security	45	1.6	3.6*	73
Search property left for inmates	48	1.4	2.8	78

DUTY A: PERFORMING SECURITY FUNCTIONS

Shake down inmates	88	4.5	5.0*	76
Shake down visitors	27	1.1	4.0*	61**
Strip and search inmates	80	3.0	3.7*	80
Subdue violent inmates	73	2.0	2.7	69

DUTY B: PERFORMING INMATE MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

Tasks

Administer medication prescribed by a physician	35	1.3	3.6*	91
Arrange medical and dental care	32	.8	2.5	100
Assist inmates in purchasing personal items	29	.7	2.3	97
Assign inmates to short term educational programs	5	.1	.8	80
Change dressings and bandages on injured inmates	10	.2	2.1	58**
Collect and distribute mail	54	2.0	3.6*	93
Conduct head counts	77	4.2	5.4*	94
Conduct periodic inventory of inmate property	49	1.4	2.9	79
Consult with physician concerning inmates' health problems	29	.6	2.0	64**
Contact community service organizations	1	.1	.8	100
Coordinate adult basic education or GED programs	1	.1	.7	100
Coordinate community service activities	2	.1	1.2	50
Coordinate diagnostic psychological services	3	.1	.9	67
Coordinate inmate educational program activities	7	.1	1.3	57
Coordinate religious activities	9	.5	6.0*	67
Counsel family members, friends, etc. of inmates	4	.1	1.6	50
Counsel with inmates concerning personal problems	54	1.7	3.1*	59**
Distribute meals to inmates	51	1.8	3.5*	92
Instruct inmates in housekeeping matters	52	1.8	3.4*	77

Table 1. Tasks of State Correctional Officers by Percent Who Perform the Task, Percent of Time Spent by All Officers, Percent of Time Spent Only by Those Who Perform the Task and How the Task Is Learned (N=98)

Duty/Task Statements	Percent Of All Officers Who Perform The Task	Average Percent Of Time Spent By ALL Officers	Average Percent Of Time Spent By Those Who Perform The Task	Percent Who Say Task Is Learned All Or Mostly On-The-Job
DUTY B: PERFORMING INMATE MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT FUNCTIONS (Cont'd)				
<u>Tasks</u>				
Instruct inmates in use and care of tools and equipment	26	.7	2.7	88
Issue personal hygiene supplies	40	1.1	2.8	90
Operate inmate library	3	.1	.9	67
Prepare meals for inmates	5	.2	3.8*	100
Refer inmates to social service agencies	8	.2	2.4	75
Review and evaluate inmates' educational needs	9	.2	1.9	44
Review information on inmates with social service agencies	13	.4	2.8	85
DUTY C: SUPERVISING INMATES				
<u>Tasks</u>				
Assign inmates to work details	35	1.0	2.7	80
Coordinate inmates' contact with legal counsel and other visitors	18	1.0	5.5*	88
Coordinate transfer activities of inmates	37	1.1	2.8	82
Direct inmates to prepare for visitors, court, etc.	52	1.9	3.6*	92
Escort inmates	77	3.0	3.8*	79
Escort nurses, lawyers, repairmen, etc.	45	1.1	2.4	88
Send inmates to doctors, attorneys, etc.	51	2.0	3.9*	92
Supervise activities of visitors	37	1.1	2.9	76

Supervise educational activities for inmates	11	.1	1.2	73
Supervise inmate religious programs	27	.6	2.3	89
Supervise inmate bathing operations	49	1.5	3.1*	90
Supervise inmate recreation programs	46	1.8	3.9*	85
Supervise inmate work details	42	1.5	3.4*	86

DUTY D: REVIEWING AND EVALUATING INMATE ACTIVITIES

Tasks

Confer with inmates concerning problems in the correctional facility	60	2.0	3.3*	74
Consult with supervisors concerning inmates' problems	71	2.6	3.7*	79
Evaluate inmates' attitude, conduct behavior and associations	50	1.7	3.4*	80
Investigate complaints from inmates	32	.9	2.9	72
Review and evaluate inmates' vocational needs	9	.2	1.8	56
Review inmate incident reports	20	.4	2.1	85
Review inmates' records for selecting trustees	13	.2	1.8	77
Review notes or complaints from inmates	20	.4	2.1	80
Review records for parole or pardon recommendation	8	.1	1.7	100
Review records furnished by other agencies	7	.1	1.4	86
Review records of inmate work crew volunteers	6	.1	1.8	83
Review statements from inmates concerning infractions of rules/inmate rights	21	1.6	3.6*	81
Review status of inmates in behavior adjustment	21	.5	2.3	81
Review parolee status with parole officer	7	.1	1.6	57
Review probationer status with probation officer	4	.1	1.4	25
Write inmate performance evaluations	39	1.1	2.9	76

Table 1. Tasks of State Correctional Officers by Percent Who Perform the Task, Percent of Time Spent by All Officers, Percent of Time Spent Only by Those Who Perform the Task and How the Task is Learned (N=98)

Duty/Task Statements	Percent Of All Officers Who Perform The Task	Average Percent of Time Spent By ALL Officers	Average Percent Of Time Spent By ONLY Those Who Perform the Task	Percent Who Say Task Is Learned All Or Mostly On-the-Job
<u>DUTY E: PERFORMING JUDICIAL AND INVESTIGATIVE FUNCTIONS</u>				
<u>Tasks</u>				
Assess disciplinary measures against inmates	39	1.0	2.4	89
Attend disciplinary hearings for inmates	45	.9	1.9	91
Collect evidence for disciplinary hearings	60	1.7	2.8	75
Coordinate inmate disciplinary hearings	9	.2	1.9	67
Investigate inmate criminal activity	30	.8	2.6	60**
Investigate incidents reported in facility	17	.4	2.5	88
Interview witnesses to incidents in facility	19	.5	2.6	58**
Prepare paperwork on inmates committing offenses in facility	28	.7	2.3	65**
Review legal rights with inmates	11	.2	1.7	73
Review progress of inmates' trials or appeals	3	.1	1.5	100
Testify in court	28	.7	2.3	64**
<u>DUTY F: OTHER DUTIES NOT LISTED ON INVENTORY</u>				
	8	2.6	Not Calculated	100
		100.0		

* Tasks involving 3% or more of the performing officer's time.

** Tasks performed by at least 30% of all officers which require outside training.

$$P_i = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{98} T_{ij}}{N}$$

Where: P_i = The proportion of time spent on the i th task by all members
 t_{ij} = Relative time-spent value for the i th task and j th member

$$S_j = \sum_{i=1}^{93} t_{ij} = \text{Sum of the relative time-spent values for } j\text{th member}$$

$$T_{ij} = \frac{t_{ij}}{S_j}$$

N = Number of members in the sample

Simply stated, this average is calculated by taking each officer's data, adding the relative time-spent scores (1-9) he gave for all tasks he does, and then dividing that sum into each separate time-spent estimate for each task. These converted time estimates for each task are then summed for all officers and divided by the sample size, in this case 98, to yield a figure which yields the average amount of time all officers devote to any given task in the job inventory. The values in column two, when added, equal one hundred-percent and account for all the time officers in state institutions allocate to the tasks they perform.

Column three shows the "Average Percent of Time Spent by Only Those Who Perform the Task." Each value listed is also an average measure and is calculated just as the second column is, except that when all the officers scores on a certain task are added the total is divided only by the number of officers who perform that task, not the total number of officers (98) as is the case for column two. The specific formula used to calculate column three values is:

$$P_i^* = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{98} T_{ij}}{n}$$

Where: P_i^* = Average percent of time spent on each task by members performing it
 n = Total number of members performing any given task

The resulting value for each task is an average of relative time-spent scores which have been converted into percentages and can be interpreted as the average percent of time spent on a specific task by only the officers who perform that task. Column three scores will not sum to one hundred-percent because the calculations for each task are based only on the number of members performing each task, rather than all sample members.

Percent of all Officers who Perform the Task. Column one clearly indicates that some tasks are performed more often than others. Thirty-four of the 90 tasks listed in Table 1 were performed by forty-percent or more of the officer group and six of those tasks were performed by seventy-five-percent or more of the officers. Fifteen of the tasks performed by forty-percent or more of the officers are in the general duty area designated as security functions (Duty A); 7 are located under inmate maintenance and support (Duty B); 7 are related to supervisory tasks (Duty C); and 3 are located under reviewing and evaluating inmate activities (Duty D). Only two tasks performed by forty-percent or more of the officer force are found under judicial and investigative functions (Duty E).

The six most frequently performed tasks which seventy-five percent or more of the officers do on the job include shaking down inmates (88 percent), conducting periodic searches of inmates and their quarters (80 percent), stripping and searching inmates (80 percent), applying restraint devices (78 percent), conducting head counts (77 percent) and escorting inmates (77 percent). These tasks fall primarily under security duty; the exceptions being conducting head counts, an inmate maintenance task, and escorting inmates, a supervisory task.³

The fact that some tasks are performed more often than others has implications for training. For example, tasks which make up security duty are performed by officers proportionately more than other tasks and would naturally require similar proportions of training time. Column two suggests additional salient training needs of state correction officers.

Average Percent of Time Spent by all Officers. In examining the information in this column of Table 1, attention is shifted to the average percent of time all officers devote to tasks. Looking closer at the highest values in the column, the five tasks which require the most time of most officers are discovered: shaking down inmates (4.5 percent), conducting head counts (4.2 percent), patrolling catwalks to observe behavior (3.9 percent), escorting inmates (3.0 percent) and stripping and searching inmates (3.0 percent). This essentially complements the findings from column one and suggests that security tasks are salient features of the state correctional officer role, even though they occupy only approximately forty-percent of the total time of these officers.

Column two is particularly meaningful because it reveals in a precise way the average time officers spend on all the tasks which comprise their job. If pieces of time were parceled out to all the tasks that all the officers in the sample perform in state correctional institutions, column two would represent the average percent time distribution for each task.

Average Percent of Time Spent by only Those Who Perform the Task. Column three presents a more accurate picture of time allocation because it gives average percent values only for those officers performing the task. Analyzing this column in the same fashion as the two previous ones, the tasks requiring the largest average percent time allotments for those who perform them are evident: patrol perimeter of buildings or facility (6.5 percent), coordinate religious activities (6.0 percent), coordinate inmates' contact with legal counsel and other visitors (5.5 percent), conduct head counts (5.4 percent) and shake down inmates (5.0 percent).

When this analysis is extended further the tasks under each of the duties which require, for those performing them, the largest average percent time expenditure are clarified. Using an arbitrary division point of 3.0 average percent time it is possible to separate tasks requiring larger pieces of time from those tasks requiring smaller amounts of the officer's time. Thirty-five tasks in column three require three-percent or more of the time of officers who perform them and these are indicated by an asterisk. Sixteen of these tasks are security related; 8 are found under the maintenance and support duty; 7 involve supervisory tasks and 4 are found under the judicial and investigative responsibilities. This pattern again complements previous findings, indicating that security tasks are high time expenditure chores for state officers who perform them.

When relating these average percent time values in column three to objectives for training, it is essential to keep in mind that they are based upon the number of persons actually performing the tasks. For the most useful information columns one and three should be reviewed together. Thus for the high average percent time expenditure of 6.0 for "coordinating religious activities" one should examine the corresponding value in column one which shows that only nine-percent of the sample performed this task. This does not imply that because only nine percent of the officer force performed this task that it is not important. Rather, the point is that even though considerable time was spent performing this task by those who perform it, it might be well be given lower training priority than other tasks which more officers perform even though those tasks have lower average percent time expenditures.

How Tasks are Learned. It was observed earlier that all the officers completing job inventories were requested to rate each task they performed according to "how the task is learned" by using the following choices: all on-the-job, mostly on-the-job and outside training, mostly outside training, and all outside training.⁴ The first two categories of the scale were combined and the percentage distribution of officers who indicated they learned tasks either "all on-the-job" or "mostly on-the-job" are shown in column four of Table 1.

Careful study reveals that three-quarters of the officer group rated 59 of the tasks (65 percent) as learned primarily on the job. Looking at the ratings for each duty area, it is found that Duty C, supervising inmates, has the largest proportion of tasks rated as learned on the job by seventy-five-percent or more of the officers; Duty A, security functions, has the second highest proportion of on-the-job ratings;

Duty D, reviewing and evaluating inmate activities, ranks third; Duty B, performing inmate maintenance and support, is fourth; and Duty E, performing judicial and investigative functions has the lowest proportion of tasks rated as primarily learned on the job by seventy-five-percent or more of the officers. By reversing this ranking, an accurate picture is provided of the duty areas which require, according to the officers, proportionately more outside training experience.

The lowest values in column four should be read as indicating tasks which are rated as having been learned partially through outside training. The tasks which are performed by at least ten-percent of the officer group and which are rated by thirty-percent of those officers as requiring at least fifty-percent of the training from outside sources are marked with two "**." In rank order these tasks are indicated in Table 2.

Tasks in column four which less than ten-percent of the officers perform are not marked, even if the tasks are rated as having been learned through outside training experiences. Such tasks as reviewing the parolee and probationary status of inmates, counseling families of inmates and reviewing and evaluating educational needs may require special training seminars for more specialized officer subgroups performing these tasks.

It is important that almost none of the tasks in column four are rated as requiring exclusive on-the-job training. Even though the learning of many tasks is viewed by officers as taking place on the job, there is recognition that supplementary outside training is needed as well. This suggests the need both for a continuing on-the-job training program and an on-going Basic and Advanced training program to meet diversified training needs as revealed in Table 1.

Finally, one caution should be exercised in interpreting findings of the rating scale on how the task is learned. Officers were requested to indicate the kind of training which "best describes how a task is learned." The ratings supplied by officers may not reflect their feelings and opinions about how a task should be learned. If this dimension were explored further, it is possible that more officers would realize the need for outside training than is indicated in the ratings included in column four of Table 1.

Although this discussion has treated the state correction officer role as though it were undifferentiated, actually, there are several job grades among state officers in the Pennsylvania system, ranging from cadet through C.O. VII. The data for each of these grade levels has not been analyzed because the sample size does not permit meaningful comparisons on these refined breakdowns. With this caution in mind, the attempt was made to discover if officers who were recently employed perform certain tasks more or less frequently than experienced officers. To do this the sample was divided into two groups, those with less than three years of experience and officers with three or more years of experience in correction. For any given task in which the groups of new and experienced officers differ by ten-percent or more in the frequency with which they perform a task, results are recorded in Table 3.

Table 2. Tasks Performed by at Least Ten Percent of the Officer Group Which are Rated by Thirty Percent or More of the Officers as Requiring Training from Outside Sources.

Duty/Task Statements	Percent Who Perform Task	Percent Rating Task As Learned Outside
Changing dressing on injuries	10	42
Interviewing witnesses to incidents	19	42
Counseling with inmates	54	41
Investigate inmate criminal activity	30	40
Shake down visitors	27	39
Consult with physician concerning inmate health problems	29	36
Testify in court	28	36
Prepare paperwork on offenses	28	35
Review emergency escape, fire, etc. procedure	38	34
Apply restraint devices	78	33
Conduct periodic searches of inmates and their quarters	80	26

Table 3. A Comparison of New and Experienced Officers on Tasks in Which Performance Rates Differ by 10 Percent or More

Task	Experience in Corrections	
	Under 3 Years N=23	3 or More Years N=75
<u>DUTY A: PERFORMING SECURITY FUNCTIONS</u>		
Approve passes into correction facility	35	47
Inspect I.D. of persons entering and leaving facility	22	47
Issue correction facility keys	17	34
Review emergency procedures for escape, riot, fire, etc.	30	41
Review rules of safety and security	30	50
Subdue violent inmates	61	76
<u>DUTY B: INMATE MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT</u>		
Administer medication prescribed by a physician	48	32
Arrange medical and dental care	44	29
Assist inmates in purchasing personal items	39	26
Collect and distribute inmate mail	70	50
Consult with physician concerning health problems	43	25
Counsel with inmates concerning personal problems	65	51
Instruct inmates in use and care of tools and equipment	13	30
Issue personal hygiene supplies	65	33
<u>DUTY C: SUPERVISING INMATES</u>		
Direct inmates to prepare for visitors, court, etc.	61	50
Supervise inmate bathing operations	61	46
Supervise inmate work details	26	47
<u>DUTY D: REVIEWING AND EVALUATING INMATE ACTIVITIES</u>		
Confer with inmates concerning problems in the facility	74	55
Review and evaluate inmates' vocational needs	0	12
Review inmates' records for selecting trustees	4	16
Review status of inmates in behavior adjustment units	13	24
Write inmate performance evaluations	13	47
<u>DUTY E: JUDICIAL AND INVESTIGATIVE FUNCTIONS</u>		
Coordinate inmate disciplinary hearings	0	12
Prepare paperwork on inmates committing offenses	43	24

A comparison of the percentages provided for each task reveals performance differences for experienced and inexperienced officers. All six tasks listed under security duty were performed more frequently by experienced officers than inexperienced officers. Just the opposite pattern occurs for Duty B, inmate maintenance and support; here the more inexperienced officers very clearly perform the majority of these tasks. Two of the 3 tasks listed under Duty C, supervising inmates are performed most often by inexperienced officers, while for Duty D, reviewing and evaluating inmate activities, 4 of the 5 tasks listed are performed more frequently by experienced officers. Generally, then, it can be concluded that on tasks in which the two groups differ by ten-percent or more, the more experienced officers tend to perform more of the security and reviewing and evaluating tasks while less experienced officers are more often found performing tasks related to inmate maintenance, support and supervision.

In determining the training needs of these two groups, it is helpful to know that the more experienced officers perform tasks which involve evaluative and administrative expertise more often than younger officers; less experienced officers have more direct day-to-day contacts with inmates and are most likely to find themselves in situations where basic communication and counseling skills are requisite tools for performing job responsibilities.

DISCUSSION

The research reported here addressed several significant questions pertaining to the correctional officer role. First, the study was designed to ascertain whether the hypothesized impotent role of the block officers in state prisons is reflected in the activities performed on the job. In this respect, the study sought to test the arguments of Cressey (1965) and Guenther and Guenther (1974). Second, this research performs an important function by suggesting an innovative technique--the Task Inventory--for discovering exactly what officers do on the job, particularly with respect to the amount of time they devote to security and non-security activities. This is an area and an approach to which researchers have given limited attention. Third, the question of how role activities relate in a practical way to the training of correction officers was also considered. Findings for each of these research objectives can be discussed summarily as follows:

1. One generalization derived from this investigation is that the state correction officer's job encompasses multiple responsibilities with a plethora of skills and related attitudes. It was discovered that approximately forty-percent of the officer group time is devoted to security duty, particularly to those security tasks requiring observation and search skills. Equally important to note, however, is that officers indicate that they spend approximately sixty-percent of their time performing duties not classified as security in nature. One point, then, is implicit in this data: life on the blocks for the state correctional officer entails a variety of relationships with inmates which appears to go beyond mail-sorting and locking doors. The daily contact between officer and inmate may well involve a great deal more than simply surveillance and control, as reported by Guenther and Guenther (1974). These contacts could conceivably include elements of counseling.

On the other hand, the data do not support a definite counselor role by block officers. We do not, and perhaps cannot, know how much the "maintenance and support" activities contribute in any sense to "rehabilitation." Further, some reservations must be expressed with respect to the potential counselor role when it is recognized that the data reveal that more experienced officers are less apt to engage in activities most closely associated with counseling than are novices.

Thus, the data on this point are inconclusive. That is, they neither prove nor disprove the hypothesized irreconcilable dichotomy between custody and treatment and their impotency generating effect when embodied in a single role. Neither do the data support nor contradict the argument that tensions related to the combination of these in a single role lead officers to opt for exclusively custodial "guarding" roles. Again, although it is found that the block officer performs a significant number of tasks which appear to be only marginally related to security functions, these findings can, at best, be construed as supportive of the arguments of Piliavin (1966) for the "potential" efficacy of the rehabilitation role of correction officers. Thus, the question is not whether the officer role is monistic--whether it consists of either security or treatment responsibilities; the point is that both may be present along with still other empirically visible functions. Yet, the data compiled here are not sufficient to conclude that treatment functions are consistently visible in the role. The data presented here raise two other questions of equal importance, even if the potential for developing an officer role as counselor is real: (1) whether any of these functions (and others that officers perform) are perceived by the officer force; and, (2) the extent to which officers have appropriate levels of expertise for performing effectively any task they do on the job.

2. Preoccupation of correction research with theories arguing for mutual exclusivity of the security and treatment goals has tended to fragment research aimed toward discovering what officers actually do on the job. The present research demonstrates the importance of the Task Inventory approach as a technique for ascertaining role characteristics of officers. It has the added advantage of verified reliability as a measuring tool. Christal (1974: 6) found that workers gave essentially the same information when asked to complete an inventory on two separate occasions, and that "split-half reliabilities for information such as the percent of workers performing various tasks run from .95 to .99. Supervisors agree with the information provided by their subordinates." Ninety tasks were included in the inventory and one or more officers performed every task. These tasks were clustered under several specific duties, revealing the following time expenditures of state officers in fulfilling their duties: security functions (41-percent); inmate maintenance and support (20-percent); supervision of inmates (18-percent); reviewing and evaluating inmate activities (11-percent); and performing judicial and investigative functions (7-percent). This refined division of labor suggests that the postulated dilemma of reconciling security with rehabilitation may be overdrawn and that the officer role may not be as problematic as it presently is argued in the literature or at least problematic from a different perspective.

The Task Inventory approach was well-suited for analyzing the paramilitary corrections setting, but in adapting it to the role of correction officer, however,

it is acknowledged that only one or two of its many uses for occupational analysis have been demonstrated. More research is needed on the utility of the Task Inventory for predicting job satisfaction, racial discrimination on the job, job difficulty and other occupational information the Task Inventory was designed to provide.

3. Much of what researchers have to communicate to practitioners about training the officer force is informed by the argument for divisional separation and specialization along security and treatment lines, given their presumed antithetical goals. Training programs, where they exist, reflect this division and consequently remain in a precarious state; lacking sufficient knowledge of the officer role, they spend considerable amounts of energy seeking answers to the question: "Training for what?"

Using the Task Inventory, several important insights emerge with respect to training. First, the data suggests that the custodial role can include a variety of functions, some of which have parallels with the counselor role. This implies that there is not an inevitable conflict of interests between these two roles and raises the possibility of training officers in the counselor role. Indeed, it is recognized here that such a process might require considerable restructuring of prisons. Second, it was found that not all selected state officers perform the same tasks. Newer officers tend to be more involved on a personal level with inmates. More experienced officers tend to assume administrative and managerial tasks. This suggests the need for advanced training for officers who begin to assume these administrative responsibilities. Third, the duties which state officers are required to perform are rated mostly as learned on the job, but a few tasks which are performed frequently by the employees require training through outside sources. This suggests two needs: (a) the need for trainers to look critically at in-house institutional training programs to determine if they are meeting on-the-job training needs; and, (b) the need for specialized seminars tailored for officers who are frequently involved in tasks for which in-house training is inadequate or non-existent. Finally, there may be "critical" tasks officers are performing for which special training seminars might be established and offered occasionally. Without attempting to be exhaustive of all the possible topics that could be included in such seminars, it is suggested that consideration be given to the following: changing dressings and bandages on injured inmates, working with emotionally disturbed or suicidal inmates, reviewing infractions of facility rules and writing inmate performance evaluation reports. These are only a few examples of the many tasks around which special training seminars might be built.

CONCLUSION

This investigation underscores the importance of documenting what officers do and how they learned to do it. The findings challenge the stereotype that they are nothing but keepers. Further, it raises the possibility that the role distinction between block officers and counseling staff may be too rigid. The data reveal a potential for some overlap between counseling and security staff in prisons. Indeed, it is possible that such a rigid distinction may represent a permanent hindrance in the professionalization process of the correction officer because of the ambiguity it

creates for the block officer role. At a minimum the research supports the importance of prison administrators and training staffs reviewing, in detail, the duties and tasks officers perform in light of existing training programs.

NOTES

1. See "A Job Inventory for Personnel Employed in County Detention Facilities," an inventory prepared for the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education by the Occupational Research Program, Industrial Engineering Department of Texas A & M University. Any task statements in this inventory which related to the job of state correction officers, or which overlapped with the 78 task statements developed by the authors, were included in the task inventory instrument used in this evaluation.
2. On-site interviews were conducted at state correctional institutions in Graterford, Huntingdon, Muncy and Rockview.
3. The authors are cognizant of the fact that there is some arbitrary choice involved in assigning tasks to various duty categories. Conducting head counts can possibly be considered a security function, however, given the criteria used by rank and file officers for clustering the tasks and the judgments of officers consulted for validating the instrument, the head count task was included under inmate maintenance and support.
4. Frequency distributions for each of the five rating categories on how tasks are learned have been calculated and are available upon request.

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