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Process Evaluation of the Basic Training Program at a State Corrections Academy in the Southeast

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Process Evaluation of the Basic Training Program at a
State Corrections Academy in the Southeast

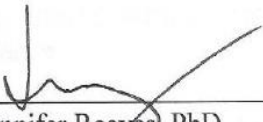
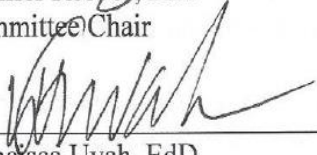
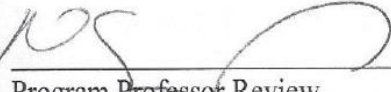
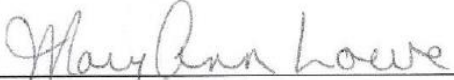
by
Wendy D. Williams

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for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University
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Approval Page

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Statement of Original Work

I declare the following:

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Abstract

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This applied dissertation was designed to provide law enforcement and corrections administrators with current information about the components of basic training that can affect the retention of newly employed trainees during basic training. Attracting qualified applicants for law-enforcement jobs is a challenging task, and the preemployment screening and hiring processes are very expensive for agencies already plagued with reduced budgets. By the time a trainee actually makes it to basic training, a great deal of time and money has already been invested by the agency, and the trainee becomes an investment. When more than 20% of trainees exit a basic training program before completion, it becomes an operational and financial concern for law-enforcement agencies.

The researcher conducted a process evaluation of a basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeastern United States in an effort to identify what factors were affecting trainee retention during the critical first couple of months of employment. Using various instruments, the researcher collected data from trainees and academy instructors with emphasis on (a) pretest and posttest trainee perceptions and attitudes of basic training; (b) effectiveness of instructors, curriculum topics, and training methods; and (c) reasons given by trainees for withdrawing from the program prior to completion.

An analysis of the data revealed significant differences in trainee perceptions before and after basic training, as well a relationship between instructor sense of efficacy and instructor delivery of content. A relationship was also observed between instructor delivery of content and trainee academic achievement. Finally, the reasons provided by trainees for departing the program before completion were identified and considered when presenting recommendations to agency administrators for possible program modification.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The topic. Law enforcement and corrections are considered to be one of the most stressful occupations today (Anshel, 2000). Most officers are initiated into these professions through a grueling and extensive period of training that generally takes place in a residential academy setting (Crawley, 2006). Law enforcement and correctional training have the ultimate goal of preparing officers to provide public service and safety while enforcing the laws in an equitable manner. The safety of the officers themselves is often at risk and, thus, must be the focus of intense training. Many aspects of the training environment can positively or negatively impact the effectiveness of retention and graduation rates. It is essential that basic training programs be properly evaluated in order to ensure that the goals and objectives of the training are met and that the training is effective.

The research problem. The basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeastern United States was experiencing a decline in trainee retention during basic training classes, as evidenced in graduation statistics and retention rates. During the 2003 through 2010 training years, a large number of trainees who began basic training subsequently exited the program prior to completion. The average retention rate during this period was 73.98%. At an agency in which staff shortages were crippling, this type of retention rate was not conducive to the department's mission, goals, and objectives. Declining retention rates had a direct impact on agency staffing, morale, and the security of correctional institutions. The shortage of correctional staff often resulted in the use of paid overtime, which created further budget shortfalls and constraints. Nalla, Lynch, and Lieber (1992) concluded that organizational strength is measured by budgets,

which, in turn, affect staffing and other operational aspects of an agency.

Background and justification. The mission of the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeastern United States was to establish, develop, and implement training programs that met the requirements of the Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (POSTC) and provide for the professional development of all agency personnel. The basic training program utilized a paramilitary training philosophy derived from the hierarchical structure of the department. According to Oliva and Compton (2010), a training environment such as this is usually structured with rows of tables and chairs, scheduled breaks, and strict rules. The residential academy program at a state corrections academy in the southeastern United States consisted of 480 hours of intense training in the following areas: (a) ethics and professionalism, (b) communication, (c) inmate management, (d) officer safety and fitness, (e) medical and mental health, (f) legal issues, (g) security and custody, (h) conflict and crisis management, and (i) correctional operations.

The clear and elevating goals of the basic training program that was evaluated were to (a) graduate highly skilled and motivated correctional officers who are goal oriented toward career advancement and longevity and who mirror the image of professionalism and (b) positively affect staffing shortages around the state in all correctional facilities, resulting in less overtime usage. The program objectives were to (a) train and develop all levels of staff to their maximum potential; (b) maintain well-trained and efficient academy staff; (c) maintain clean and orderly operations; (d) provide the best law-enforcement training in the state; (e) instill in each trainee pride, professionalism, dedication, loyalty, desire to excel, and personal commitment to excellence; (f) achieve an annual graduation rate greater than 90%; and (g) achieve

accreditation from the American Correctional Association (2011).

During the 2003 through 2010 training years, there were 28 basic training classes conducted. A total of 2,567 trainees began the basic training program; however, only 1,899 (73.98%) successfully completed the program and graduated with POSTC certification. Of the 668 trainees who exited the program before graduating, 32% failed the required physical testing, 2% failed the firearms training, and 19% failed an academic portion of the academy. Forty-seven percent of trainees who exited the program left for reasons other than academic, firearms, or physical testing requirements. According to Tinto (1993), institutional commitment to students, educational commitment by the students, and social and intellectual community experiences are all variables affecting retention during a training program.

Drummond (2009) recommended future studies on the improvement of law-enforcement recruit retention rates among college and academy-based teaching programs to partially alleviate the growing need for law-enforcement officers in the United States. Training law enforcement and correctional officers is an expensive task. When retention rates are low within an agency, excess revenue must be expended to train and certify additional officers. Drummond determined that academy training programs are one of the many elements having a direct impact on retention within law enforcement and correctional agencies.

Deficiencies in the evidence. The primary deficiency in practice for this program evaluation was that the basic training program was not a research-based program. This program was created at the state level and had many components as required by the POSTC in order to maintain certification as a law-enforcement training school. However, the program itself had not been researched or evaluated for its effectiveness, and it had

been in existence for over 28 years.

An abundance of literature exists regarding retention (Koper, Maguire, & Moore, 2001; Tinto, 1993), law-enforcement training (Chappell, 2007), and motivation strategies in law-enforcement training (Hoshell, 2009). However, the literature is incredulous at times regarding the effectiveness of the components. Vander Kooi (2006) conducted a study revealing that teaching methodology does have an impact on the problem-solving and critical-thinking skills of police recruits, and the author recommended continued research on student perceptions of teaching methodologies. The present study evaluated the inputs of the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast by assessing the effectiveness of instructors, curriculum topics, and training methods.

Audience. Two groups made up the intended audience for this program evaluation. The primary audience for the program evaluation included the agency director, commissioner of operations, academy commandant, and academy staff at the state corrections academy in the southeast. Regardless of the results, this evaluation allowed those individuals to make key decisions moving forward regarding the law-enforcement basic training program. This evaluation also provided information that other law enforcement and correctional agencies could consider to improve or modify their respective basic training programs. The secondary audience included professionals in the education and training field who were interested in retention during training programs. Those professionals could possibly use this evaluation as a model to perform their own program evaluation or at least allow them to gain more knowledge regarding the effectiveness of basic training programs.

Stakeholders were also critical to the outcome of this program evaluation. The stakeholders of the basic training academy composed a large group, including taxpaying

citizens, service recipients (i.e., offenders), agency administrators, agency employees, and other state law-enforcement training programs. The taxpaying citizens in the state expect the criminal justice system to operate economically as well as efficiently. Citizens also expect law-enforcement agencies to protect the public with well-trained and professional officers.

Incarcerated offenders also have the expectation and legally are afforded the right to a safe and humane environment as provided by the correctional officers supervising them. Agency administrators and employees are directly impacted by the effectiveness of the basic training program. In many cases, the lives of agency staff could be at risk if a correctional officer does not perform the job properly. Finally, state law-enforcement training programs around the nation are interested in the best training methodologies and retention strategies and will find the results of this program evaluation most helpful in making future decisions concerning training.

Setting of the Study

The setting for this program evaluation was a state corrections training academy in the southeastern United States that was developed and implemented in 1984. The staff population of the state agency included approximately 4,400 employees, with approximately 3,300 of those employees serving in law-enforcement officer or supervisor positions. The basic training program generally enrolled 90 to 110 trainees in each basic training class. The program consisted of 12 weeks of training in a residential-style setting in which trainees were required to remain on campus during the training week, leaving on the weekends to return home. The staff at the academy consisted of state certified law-enforcement instructors, including one director, one captain, six lieutenants, and five sergeants.

Researcher's Role

The researcher was the director of training for the state corrections agency. She was responsible for oversight of the basic training program and all agency training and professional development. The researcher's role in the basic training program included the interview and selection of all academy staff, budgetary decisions, and trainee employment decisions during basic training. The 12-week program was implemented by the academy lieutenants and sergeants and was overseen by the academy captain.

Purpose of the Study

The basic training program was designed and implemented at a state correctional agency to train and certify correctional officers as sworn POSTC officers. In this program, trainees were hired by the law-enforcement agency to become certified as correctional officers. All trainees were required to attend and successfully complete the 12-week basic training program to become certified as a correctional officer. The purpose of this process evaluation was threefold: (a) to assess the effectiveness of instructors, curriculum topics, and training methods; (b) to measure trainee perceptions and attitudes of the basic training program; and (c) to identify reasons trainees give for withdrawing from the program.

The program inputs included (a) staff time and skills, (b) existing curriculum, (c) POSTC rules and regulations, (d) agency policies and procedures, and (e) trainees. The outputs included (a) physical agility or ability testing, (b) health and safety practical testing, (c) defensive tactics practical testing, (d) firearm proficiency, (e) academic exams, (d) trainee discipline, (e) paramilitary training activities, and (f) residential life. The ultimate goal was to determine what specific aspects of the basic training program had a direct impact on trainee retention.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The process of training new law-enforcement officers is of great expense to an agency and requires a lot of time and effort. Every trainee who begins training and exits the program before graduating results in an investment loss for the agency. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature focusing on the theoretical framework for the current study, trainee retention, trainee perceptions and attitudes, training methodology, academy curriculum, instructor perspectives, human-resource practices, evaluation framework, and the research questions that guided this study.

Theoretical Framework

Organizations today have a calculated necessity to understand and manage the characteristics that influence retention. Training is an essential part of organizations and must be evaluated to improve quality and support organization retention. There are at least two well-known program-evaluation models appropriate for the evaluation of training. Kirkpatrick (1977) presented a widely used model for training evaluation that includes four levels of evaluation: reaction, learning, behavior, and results. The reaction level of Kirkpatrick's model generally answers whether participants are pleased with the training or program (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004). The learning level reveals what participants actually learn in the program, and the behavior level identifies behavior changes as a result of the lesson (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). Finally, the results level of Kirkpatrick's model indicates if the change in behavior positively affects the organization (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004).

Another proven model for evaluating training is the Stufflebeam (1971) model, which involves more of a systems approach to evaluation involving four elements:

context, input, process, and product. The context element involves determining educational needs and establishing program objectives, and the input element identifies the appropriate strategies for achieving the desired results (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). The process element involves assessing the implementation of the educational program, and the product element measures results to determine the worth of the program (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). Acknowledging the focus of the Kirkpatrick (1977) model in evaluating training, the Stufflebeam model was selected to guide this program evaluation because it provides a systematic way of looking at many different aspects of the program processes and curriculum.

Several theories and models attempt to explain retention in private and public educational and training environments. The Tinto (1993) model of retention is widely used in the educational community and conceives that individual preprogram attributes form individual goals and commitments. Tinto considered attributes such as family background, skill and ability, and prior education as characteristics that impact individual goals and commitments. These individual goals and commitments intermingle over time with institutional experiences, such as the formal and informal academic and social systems that exist in most institutions (Tinto, 1993). According to Tinto's model, the extent to which an individual assimilates into the academic and social systems at an institution will be a determining factor in whether the person departs the program or institution prematurely.

The Bean and Metzner (1985) attrition and retention model implies that practical value and major certainty contribute to a student's career goals, which forms one's commitment to an organization. As Tinto (1993) discussed, without commitment to the organization, trainees will most likely lack personal goal commitment. The Bean and

Metzner model indicates four sets of variables as the basis of an individual's withdrawal decision: academic performance, intent to leave, background, and environmental variables. Trainee persistence and goal commitment is critical in the successful endurance and completion of a law-enforcement basic training program. Bean and Metzner also asserted that institutional characteristics could have an influential impact on trainee retention. Characteristics such as the size of the institution or organization, training methodology and curriculum, and other similar characteristics may impact a trainee's perception of the organization and ultimately have an impact on academic achievement and retention.

Acknowledging the contributions of the Bean and Metzner (1985) model in explaining attrition and retention, Tinto's (1993) model was selected to guide this program evaluation because it takes into account the relationship between student and environmental variables and emphasizes social integration. This model derives from studies of full-time residential students, which is one of the institution's characteristics in the current study. Further, Tinto's model can help administrators understand how individual psychological processes can be implicit in the retention process.

Trainee Retention

Crawley (2006) explored the complex and challenging work carried out by prison officers in six public-sector male prisons in England and Wales. Recognizing their skill, ability, and frustrations, Crawley exposed the darker side of prison officer culture and attempted to provide understanding of the effect this work has on officers and their families. The author conducted interviews with cadets during their basic training experience and determined that the level of stress in the training environment is one of the causes of dropouts during training (Crawley, 2006). The author also noted that much

of the stress was imposed on cadets by training instructors (Crawley, 2006). The interviews that the author conducted with female cadets revealed that females were commonly the subjects of sexual harassment by the male training instructors (Crawley, 2006).

Manning and Bartlett (2001) suggested that basic training failures are attributable to feminist pressures because men and women are different and those differences are relevant to successful basic training management. According to the authors, women should not be required to meet the same physical standards as men because of the significant differences in average size, strength, and aerobic capacity (Manning & Bartlett, 2001).

Marion (1998) conducted an analysis of a state-accredited basic training program in Ohio to determine any correlation between subjects that experts believed should be in an academy and the subjects actually taught in the academy. The author discovered that many academies have a partially military environment, although the academy in the Ohio study did not follow those practices (Marion, 1998). According to Post (1992), recruits trained in nonstressful settings actually learn more and perform better than those in stressful settings because of the intense socialization process. As law-enforcement training and the responsibilities of officers evolve, training will become more of a focus (Post, 1992).

The results of the Ohio study indicated that the basic training program did provide the appropriate training required to prepare trainees to be law-enforcement officers (Marion, 1998). However, Marion (1998) discovered an obvious element of sexism and elitism on the part of some instructors, which is discouraging to trainees. The author recommended the addition of female and minority instructors to create a paradigm shift

away from inappropriate comments and gestures in the classroom by some instructors (Marion, 1998). The author also recommended the use of technology and virtual training for subjects such as firearms training, high-risk incident management, and others (Marion, 1998).

Koper et al. (2001) conducted a study of 999 basic training programs in law enforcement to address staffing issues in policing: determinants of police staffing levels, the processes of hiring and training officers, and retention patterns associated with individual officers and staff positions. The authors determined that it takes an average of 37 weeks to hire and train law-enforcement officers, depending on the size of the agency (Koper et al., 2001). Many agencies reported a lack of qualified applicants, causing the agency difficulty in filling vacancies (Koper et al., 2001). Among the findings, Koper et al. believed that law-enforcement staffing levels are affected by the success of the agency in training officers (Koper et al., 2001). The study also revealed that 81 of every 88 law-enforcement academy entrants complete academy training successfully (Koper et al., 2001). Therefore, 92% of hired officers made it to the field training stage. After factoring in field training following the academy, 89 of every 100 new hires (or 89%) completed all training successfully (Koper et al., 2001).

White (2008) suggested that law-enforcement administrators could better predict enhanced performance by considering an officer's performance during the basic training academy and conducted a study to identify factors that offer predictive value with regard to superior performance in the academy. According to White, basic training provides formative knowledge and experience for trainees and represents a critical first step in producing professional officers. The participants in the study were 1,556 trainees of a metropolitan police academy, regardless of whether they completed the academy. Eighty-

four percent of participants were male and 52% were White. One quarter was Hispanic, and 16% were African American. Seven percent were participants in the agency's Cadet Corps program. The mean amount of college credits for the basic training class was 80.67.

Analysis of the academy academic averages for the trainees resulted in four significant predictors: (a) Males outperformed female trainees; (b) as the age of trainees increased, their performance in the academy decreased; (c) as reading level increased, performance in the academy increased; and (d) Cadet Corp trainees outperformed those trainees who were not cadets (White, 2008). White (2008) further identified that the best predictor of being a top performer was reading level, specifically reading at the 12th grade level or higher. When examining reading level, recruits who were White or Asian or other were more likely than African Americans and Hispanics to be top performers. Of the trainees with reading levels below 12th-grade level, race was not associated with performance levels. White concluded with the suggestion that there are lessons to be learned by studying law-enforcement performance during basic training and that there are identifiable predictors of postacademy performance.

Henson, Reyns, Klahm, and Frank (2010) conducted a study to extend White's (2008) analysis of predictors of enhanced performance in the academy by examining characteristics that related to academy success and active law-enforcement service. According to Henson et al., law-enforcement agencies invest a lot of money in hiring and training officers, which is justification for the need to predict performance in the academy before making that investment. Henson et al. examined 10 years of postsecondary data for a police department's training academy to surmise there is some support for the assertion that personal characteristics or qualifications relate to success in basic training

programs. Of those characteristics, race and civil service exam scores consistently related to academy success measures (Henson et al., 2010). There is also some support for the suggestion that success in basic training may equate to success in the field as an officer (Henson et al., 2010). Finally, Henson et al. suggested the recommendation of reforming the hiring processes so that selection criteria may be related to officer success.

Retention at the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast had declined over the past 7 years. The highest percentage of failures (32%) was attributed to physical testing, and a higher percentage of trainees (47%) exited the program before graduation for reasons unknown. As Koper et al. (2001) discussed, an average of 89% of entrants into law-enforcement academies should successfully graduate and complete training. The basic training program in the current evaluation typically retained 15.02% fewer trainees than Koper et al. considered the national average. This is a significant loss in trainees, which resulted in lost revenue for the agency. The expense involved in prescreening and processing each applicant and the salaries paid to each trainee prior to their exiting the training program was agency revenue that could not be regained. The current evaluation revealed critical areas in training methodology and activities that contributed to trainee retention, such as the components of a paramilitary training philosophy and residential academy environment.

Trainee Perceptions and Attitudes

There is evidence to support that academy trainees, graduates, and first-year officers become disheartened and leave a career in law enforcement for alternative professions (Hoshell, 2009). Hoshell (2009) conducted a study of the perceptions and attitudes of trainees in relation to police motivation and retention; his primary motivation was preparing police administrators and training-academy directors and instructors for

the escalating competition of qualified personnel. In this study, mixed-methods data collection and analyses were utilized, presenting quantitative analysis results and any relationships discovered among the three groups (i.e., trainees, graduates, and first-year officers).

Qualitative data analysis involved providing indepth narratives of trainees and veteran officers' motivation levels regarding their perceptions of the role of law enforcement (Hoshell, 2009). The results of the study analysis confirmed statistical differences in perceptions and attitudes among new and graduating officers during the formal police academy training process (Hoshell, 2009). Qualitative results provided narratives supporting a number of recruits expressing substantial differences between preservice perceptions of the role of police and the reality of the position, which led to second thoughts in choosing law enforcement as a career (Hoshell, 2009).

Oliva and Compton (2010) conducted a study involving interviews with focus groups of law-enforcement officers to determine what they valued most in the classroom setting. The findings revealed that law-enforcement training programs historically reflect a regimented approach to training and education (Oliva & Compton, 2010). Much of the time, the curriculum is based upon mandated course objectives, and delivery occurs in a highly structured manner in lecture format (Oliva & Compton, 2010). In this type of training environment, creativity is usually not encouraged, and the focus is generally on standardization (Oliva & Compton, 2010).

According to Oliva and Compton (2010), many law-enforcement training environments are conducted in a militaristic format, which may not be effective when teaching an evolving curriculum consistent with adult learning. Although this type of format may be effective in teaching technical and procedural aspects of training, it does

not promote nontechnical competencies such as problem solving and leadership (Oliva & Compton, 2010). Five basic themes were consistent regarding the study participants' preferences in a classroom setting: engagement, practicality, respect, affiliation, and efficiency (Oliva & Compton, 2010). All of these themes except for respect were supported in the final data analysis. Clearly, these themes are indicative of the need for adult learning techniques in law-enforcement training.

Realizing that training evaluation is crucial in terms of actual results and behavior change, McCraine, Patterson, and Heilmann (2008) conducted a study to determine the perceptions of support airmen and their ability to transfer skills from the classroom to the battlefield. The authors defined training as “a planned learning experience designed to bring about a permanent change in an individual’s knowledge, attitudes, or skills” (McCraine et al., 2008, p. 55). The method for determining training effectiveness was measuring training transfer, which the authors defined as “the ability to apply what one has learned from training back to one’s job” (McCraine et al., 2008, p. 56).

The results of the study indicated that reported perceptions of training transfer in three groups of training types (i.e., chemical warfare training, weapons training, and antiterrorism force protection training) were significantly different (McCraine et al., 2008), with the chemical warfare training group having the highest training transfer. McCraine et al. (2008) concluded that several factors could affect this outcome, including the manner in which the training was presented. A blend of delivery strategies was utilized in the three training types with differences in classroom lecture, video components, and practical application (McCraine et al., 2008). Additionally, McCraine et al. made several recommendations based upon the results of this study: (a) to update training manuals that did not accurately define the skills and knowledge needed, (b) to

designate a single organization to provide oversight of training and guidance, and (c) to utilize an instructional system development model to standardize training programs.

Britton (1997) examined the relationship between race and gender and perceptions of the work environment among federal correctional officers. According to the author, past studies employing qualitative methods had found that race and gender do make a difference in shaping work experiences and perceptions in the correctional field (Britton, 1997). The author determined that race and gender do affect officers' perceptions of the work environment on a number of levels and that differences among officers are generally not accounted for by characteristics of the work environment and do not attenuate over time (Britton, 1997). The author also discovered that better educated officers feel more efficacious and are less satisfied with correctional work (Britton, 1997). Minority male officers reported very low levels of job stress and higher levels of dissatisfaction with their jobs (Britton, 1997). As this study demonstrated, race and gender do matter and should be considered as new employees embark upon correctional work (Britton, 1997).

According to Ide (1997), basic training is a "very high-volume, in-your-face, control-grabbing event" (p. 18) from the moment that trainees arrive. Basic training instructors are trained to grab trainees' attention by letting them know that the instructors are in charge, and if trainees do not conform quickly to the routine, more discipline problems will occur (Ide, 1997). Most trainees report having very little energy left at the end of the day in basic training (Ide, 1997). In many cases, trainees are set up to fail if they cannot perform well during basic training (Ide, 1997). Thus, it is imperative that trainees are in good physical condition before matriculating into a basic training program.

Catlin and Maupin (2004) conducted a study to determine whether trainee

personal characteristics are shaped by basic training. This study involved two cohorts of state police officers over a 2-year period (Catlin & Maupin, 2004). Findings suggested a statistically significant change in the ethical orientation of participants between the beginning of basic training and 1 year later at inservice training (Catlin & Maupin, 2004). Catlin and Maupin suggested that a possible explanation for the significant change that is occurring could be the acculturation process into the law-enforcement subculture, which results in officers changing their ethical orientations.

At the state corrections academy in the southeast that was evaluated, there were no current evaluation processes in place to determine pretraining and posttraining attitudes and perceptions of trainees. The only form of course evaluation that was completed was a weekly critique questionnaire that was completed by trainees and reviewed by the academy captain. This critique was very general and did not yield data to support actual attitudes and perceptions of the program. This process evaluation revealed pretraining and posttraining attitudes and perceptions of trainees, enabling the researcher to compare changes in personal characteristics during the 12-week program.

Training Methodology

Law-enforcement academy training programs experience a high percentage of withdrawals that relate to the training program itself (California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, 2006). Since the late 1980s, most law-enforcement agencies have embraced teacher-directed activities and methods, similar to those of a military model of training (Drummond, 2009). However, many academies are beginning to implement learner-centered and problem-centered activities and applications, similar to those of the higher education classroom (Drummond, 2009). Drummond (2009) conducted a study to investigate measures of retention, self-efficacy, and teaching style in

a college-based law-enforcement program versus an agency-based law-enforcement academy on the west coast. Location of the training had a significant impact for police recruits: There were higher retention rates, higher self-efficacy ratings, and higher teaching style ratings in the college-based training program (Drummond, 2009).

Violanti (2001) conducted a study to explore the use and impact of coping strategies in a setting of environmental stress using 180 police recruits (mean age 23.1 years) subjected to training stress in a U.S. police academy. Those police recruits who scored high on personal distress tended to use more coping strategies than those who exhibited lower distress scores (Violanti, 2001). The author determined that the magnitude of personal distress might be an important factor in determining the specific array of coping techniques used by the recruit (Violanti, 2001). In terms of effectiveness, the coping strategies of distancing and planned problem solving significantly reduced distress (Violanti, 2001). Escape, avoidance, and self-control coping did not appear to work in the police situation and significantly increased distress (Violanti, 2001).

According to Kitfield (1997), basic training is not as tough as it has been in the past. Name-calling tactics and drill instructors yelling in the faces of recruits is now a pastime at most training academies (Kitfield, 1997).

Gershon (2000) authored the National Institute of Justice's final report on Project Shields that was designed to address major deficiencies in the existing literature on police stress. Individuals working in the profession of law enforcement are at high risk for psychological stress (Gershon, 2000). The consequences of law-enforcement stress can impact the delivery of effective services and pose a threat to the safety of other officers, family and friends, and the general public (Gershon, 2000). Gershon recommended that law-enforcement agencies should include honest and thoughtful discussions that relate to

the reality of the job in academy training curriculum.

Gershon (2000) also recommended that departments should assign a group of high-level department leaders to examine the status of female police officers and everything of concern to female officers, including recruitment, training, and clothing requirements. The goal of the commission would be to document existing policies and determine what changes are needed to improve the working environment for female police officers (Gershon, 2000). Finally, Gershon recommended that agencies should hire trainers to provide hardiness training for recruits identified at especially high risk because of poor coping skills.

Academy training often resembles military boot camp in an attempt to prepare trainees for the basic skills of law enforcement (Chappell, 2007). Most agencies screen trainees before they enter the academy. It has become common for law-enforcement trainees to receive academy training on numerous topics and upon completion of the academy go into field training programs based on traditional philosophies of law enforcement (Chappell, 2007). Field training is critical if academy training is going to have a lasting impact on trainees and officers (Chappell, 2007). Field training takes place immediately following the academy, and it is the best place to expose trainees to problem-solving techniques, effectively connecting training to practice (Chappell, 2007).

According to Della (2004), most law-enforcement agencies utilize the instructional method of lecture in the classroom, which is the least effective method for adult learners. Instead, adult learners prefer strategies that include case-study methods, work groups, discussion panels, and practice sessions (Della, 2004). Della suggested that law-enforcement agencies should utilize learning environments that facilitate self-directed adult learning, which can improve retention rates.

Birzer (2003) examined incorporating the theory of andragogy into law-enforcement training and identified specific characteristics about learning in law-enforcement training classrooms. The author concluded that the changing nature of law enforcement would generate an expanded view of training from predominantly behavioral and militaristic classroom training to the promotion of andragogical training approaches throughout organizations.

Werth (2009) conducted a study to determine the effectiveness of problem-based learning in developing subject-specific knowledge, as well as decision-making abilities, problem-solving skills, and collaboration skills in law-enforcement recruits. According to the author, problem-oriented law-enforcement training can result in more effective law-enforcement activities involving problem solving (Werth, 2009). As the mission of law enforcement changes over the years, it becomes apparent that officer-training programs also need to be modified (Werth, 2009). With public and community service at the top of the expectation list for law-enforcement officers, an obvious disconnect has become transparent with the authoritarian and paramilitary training methods (Birzer, 2003; Marenin, 2004).

Della (2004) and Kennedy (2003) recommended that law-enforcement training philosophy should embrace training methods consistent with adult learning principles. Werth (2009) determined that problem-based learning helped students at the Idaho Academy to develop subject-specific law-enforcement knowledge as well as collaboration and problem-solving skills. Specifically, the author determined in the study that the problem-based learning program developed skills in academy students that were often only minimally addressed in traditional curricula (Werth, 2009). This study also implied that law-enforcement curriculum and instruction should be based on adult

learning principles (Werth, 2009).

Feemster (2010) argued that agencies often fail to cultivate the skills, attitudes, and practices that lend to successful officers because training does not evolve to address the behaviors that are associated with the law-enforcement culture. Feemster explored this gap in paramilitary training paradigms and concluded with the recommendation for multidimensional training that would properly prepare officers for the vocation they enter. Multidimensional training would continue to focus on mental and physical development of trainees, but it would also include training to address the spiritual and emotional needs of trainees (Feemster, 2010). Feemster acknowledged the concern by some law-enforcement agencies about the appropriateness of multidimensional training, but the author affirmed that law-enforcement training must embrace a more holistic approach to effectively prepare officers for the field.

The basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast used a paramilitary training methodology similar to those described by Feemster (2010), Oliva and Compton (2010), Drummond (2009), Chappell (2007), and Birzer (2003). This evaluation examined the perceptions and attitudes of trainees, which revealed the effectiveness of the paramilitary methodology and the effect that it had on retention and trainee academic achievement.

Academy Curriculum

Caro (2011) proposed that a void exists between basic training programs and actual law-enforcement work, which exacerbates the lack of consensus on the best way to effectively train and educate law-enforcement officers. Basic training is expensive, which is why it is imperative that trainees are fully trained in order for the law-enforcement agency to succeed (Caro, 2011). According to Caro, academy measures explained up to

10% of variance in officer performance. The findings of the study revealed that basic training does have an influence on future performances. Caro recommended continuous evaluation of basic training curriculum based upon a needs assessment of current officer knowledge and a job-task analysis of current officer roles and responsibilities.

Chappell (2008) conducted a study to compare the basic training performance of trainees instructed under a traditional academy curriculum with the performance of those instructed under a new academy curriculum based on community policing. For the past 50 years, most training that law-enforcement officers have received involves technical or mechanical skills such as shooting, defensive tactics, and the mechanics of arrest (Chappell, 2008). Twenty-first century law-enforcement training must highlight topics such as cultural diversity, communications, and problem solving (Chappell, 2008). Traditional training programs inadequately prepared officers for public-service focus (Chappell, 2008). The results of this study revealed no significant difference in performance between trainees trained under the traditional and new basic training curriculum (Chappell, 2008).

Copay and Charles (2001) conducted a study to investigate the influence of grip strength on semiautomatic handguns during basic training. According to the authors, there were 682 police officers killed from 1989 to 1998, and 72% of them were killed with a firearm and were within 10 feet of the gunman. This is why firearms proficiency is so important during basic training and is revisited annually during inservice training; it is obviously a life-saving skill. Among the explanations for poor marksmanship are a lack of valid training, which prompted the study by Copay and Charles to determine if grip-strength training might improve trainee marksmanship. Copay and Charles concluded that special grip-strength training did not significantly improve grip strength among the

participants in the control and training group before the conclusion of firearms training. However, marksmanship scores did improve significantly for both groups, which could be attributed to the firearms training and not grip-strength training (Copay & Charles, 2001). Another interesting discovery by Copay and Charles was that women's marksmanship scores are generally lower than men's scores.

Mathur, Clark, and Schoenfeld (2009) offered a professional-development model to improve the likelihood of employee success by enhancing instructor abilities to affect student outcomes. Traditionally, there are inherent challenges in the correctional setting, such as complicated systems of oversight, high staff turnover, and shortage of resources, among other things (Mathur et al., 2009). Too often employees leave their profession when they find that the training and knowledge do not actually mirror the demands of the job (Mathur et al., 2009). Mathur et al. recommended ongoing evaluation of training activities with regard to the changes that they bring about in systemic thinking, inputs and processes, and student learning outcomes. Additionally, Mathur et al. further suggested that curriculum and training materials must be relevant and designed to meet student needs so that learned concepts and skills may be applied in the workplace.

The training curriculum at the basic training program in the current study had never been evaluated and had been in existence in excess of 28 years. The majority of the curriculum was delivered using lecture format, except for those topics involving practical application exercises such as firearms, defensive tactics, and similar. Therefore, it was imperative that the curriculum be evaluated in order to uncover any issues that may be contributing to the low retention rate and trainee academic achievement.

Instructor Perspectives

Morrison (2006) conducted a study to examine vital characteristics of firearm and

deadly force training conducted during law-enforcement basic training. The study included a survey of academy instructor characteristics and qualifications. According to Morrison, preservice basic training involves the crucial knowledge, skills, and decision-making experiences that law-enforcement officers will depend upon during critical duty-related incidents. The perceived outcomes of basic training should have an impact on academy decisions and the basic training program (Morrison, 2006). Instructors from larger law-enforcement agencies were more likely to attend an instructor development course than those instructors representing small municipal departments (Morrison, 2006).

Instructor participants in the study described the skills of basic law-enforcement academy graduates as adequate; however, instructors noted several topics in which additional training would be beneficial, including tactics and judgment, combat-shooting techniques, shotgun training, and combat gun handling (Morrison, 2006). Seventy-three percent of instructors agreed that officers who fired the lowest possible score of 70 on annual requalification were not adequately skilled to carry a firearm on duty (Morrison, 2006). The findings of this study raised questions about the efficacy of basic firearms and deadly force training and qualification of trainees (Morrison, 2006). Morrison (2006) also concluded that satisfactory basic training outcomes as perceived by academy instructors are relevant.

Schafer and Castellano (2005) conducted a study to explore the characteristics of instructors in criminal justice programs and differences in their opinions of the goals and structure of law-enforcement education. The authors suggested that higher education is directly correlated to quality law-enforcement service. When considering the equivalence of educational experiences occurring during basic training, the goals of the training must be considered (Schafer & Castellano, 2005). Most law enforcement certifying authorities

view graduation from an accredited law-enforcement academy as a valued learning experience comparable to the completion of college courses (Schafer & Castellano, 2005).

The current program evaluation included an assessment of instructor delivery of content by comparing course evaluations with the number of test questions missed on exams for each corresponding course. The instructors completed a questionnaire to help the evaluator gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for them while conducting basic training activities to accurately reflect instructor efficacy. Considering the perspectives of the basic training instructors proved to be a valuable component of this program evaluation.

Human-Resource Practices

Burke and Mikkelsen (2006) conducted a study examining the career plateaus among police officers in Norway. Specifically, the authors compared police officers with 15 or more years of service who had been promoted with police officers with the same tenure who had not been promoted (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006). Data were collected from 389 police officers, using self-report questionnaires, yielding a 62% response rate (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006). The findings revealed that plateaued officers did not experience psychological or physical health consequences. The authors also revealed that plateaued officers were more cynical and indicated less favorable work outcomes, describing their jobs in less challenging ways with less information and clarity about their specific roles (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006). The researchers concluded that particular human-resource management practices might be associated with reducing the prevalence of the career plateau (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006).

According to Della (2004), training is “the most significant human resource

function undertaken by law-enforcement agencies” (p. 1). The success of any law-enforcement agency is hinged to the implementation of effective training programs, yet the majority of basic training focuses on cognitive instead of affective outcomes (Della, 2004). Most law-enforcement agencies utilize training models that are not conducive to adult learners’ needs, thus preventing trainee needs from being met and creating an atmosphere of resentment (Della, 2004). Bumphus, Gaines, and Blakely (1999) surveyed 735 law-enforcement departments across the country to gather information on citizen police academies and the impact that they have on public support.

Several revelations were made, which included that most departments anticipate little benefit from interacting with younger, less-established citizens (Bumphus et al., 1999). Ironically, many law-enforcement agencies will hire law-enforcement candidates at the age of 19. The authors also discovered that many departments with citizen police academies require extensive background checks before allowing admittance and documented that arrests, however minor, generally will preclude someone’s admittance (Bumphus et al., 1999). Many law-enforcement agencies are not as strict on actual law-enforcement candidates, allowing some with misdemeanor convictions to be enrolled in law-enforcement training.

Courtright and Mackey (2004) conducted a study to determine the attractiveness of criminal-justice occupations among a sample of majors and concluded that corrections-related occupations rated lower or much less desirable than law-enforcement occupations. Males are more likely to find corrections-related jobs undesirable and law-enforcement jobs more attractive, whereas females find corrections-related jobs more attractive (Courtright & Mackey, 2004). Students scoring high on the punitive scale found law-enforcement jobs highly attractive, indicating a significant relationship

between the two (Courtright & Mackey, 2004). Further, Courtright and Mackey suggested that there is a preference or bias among researchers to favor police career selection as more attractive than corrections-related occupations. Most law-enforcement agencies do not require a college degree for career entry, although criminal justice is often the career choice for criminal-justice majors (Courtright & Mackey, 2004).

This program evaluation was intended to fill a void in the current research literature related to the evaluation of basic law-enforcement training and aspects of the training, which directly impacts retention rates. Given the decreasing retention rates in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast, this research provided information to potentially reduce withdrawals among correctional officer trainees.

Evaluation Framework

In today's society and challenging economy, making research-based decisions about program longevity is critical for administrators. To determine the relative effectiveness of the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast, the researcher conducted a process evaluation of the program (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). The results of this process evaluation provided stakeholders with the knowledge to make judgments or decisions about the effectiveness of the basic training program (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). The results also contributed to knowledge development in the field of law enforcement and corrections basic training (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004).

Process evaluations study how the program is delivered, the nature of delivery, and the successes and problems encountered (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). In this program evaluation, the inputs of the program were evaluated to determine the effect on trainee retention and academic achievement. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected

simultaneously, but quantitative data were the main focus. There were four quantitative and two qualitative research questions. Quantitative data were collected by using questionnaires and analyzing statistical data obtained during the evaluation. Qualitative data were collected by conducting exit interviews with trainees participating in the program evaluation. Data collection was implemented concurrently with priority being placed on quantitative data.

Research Questions

The following research questions were established to guide this study:

1. How do initial trainee perceptions and attitudes of the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast compare to perceptions and attitudes at the end of the program?
2. What is the relationship between instructor delivery of content and trainee academic achievement in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast?
3. What is the relationship between instructor efficacy and trainee academic achievement in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast?
4. What is the relationship between instructor efficacy and instructor delivery of content in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast?
5. What reasons do trainees give for withdrawing from the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast before graduation?
6. What recommendations can be made to improve trainee retention, academic achievement, and instructor effectiveness at the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this process evaluation was threefold: (a) to assess the effectiveness of instructors, curriculum topics, and training methods; (b) to measure trainee perceptions and attitudes of the basic training program; and (c) to identify reasons trainees give for withdrawing. This chapter describes the participants, instruments, and procedures used to complete this program evaluation.

Participants

The target population of this process evaluation included correctional officer trainees enrolled in a basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast. For this process evaluation, a convenience sample examining only data from the trainees who participated in the Winter 2012 basic training session was utilized because the program was taking place at the researcher's basic training academy and the researcher had access to the population. The basic training class began with 106 trainees assigned; 98 were male trainees and eight were female trainees. Sixty-four trainees were African American and 42 were Caucasian. The age of trainees ranged between 19 and 52 years of age. Specifically, these trainees had been employed by the agency and approved and enrolled by the POSTC to attend the basic training program and receive instruction in pursuit of certification to be a correctional officer.

Academy instructors were a subgroup of participants who also participated in the program evaluation, including one captain, six correctional lieutenants, and five correctional sergeants. All academy instructors were male, except for one female correctional lieutenant and one female correctional sergeant. Six staff members were African American and six were Caucasian. All participants in this evaluation

participated for a 3-month period.

Instruments

The researcher utilized multiple observation and surveying instruments to execute the data-collection process for this program evaluation. The researcher utilized a formative committee of experts in the field, which included a corrections training and staff-development administrator and a correctional program specialist, as well as a summative committee of experts in the field, which included a literacy specialist and a senior director of a local university training institute. The formative and summative committees assisted in the creation and validation of the instruments utilized in this program evaluation.

Basic training entrance and exit questionnaires. The basic training entrance questionnaire (see Appendix A), developed by the formative committee and finalized by the summative committee, was utilized to measure perceptions and attitudes of the trainees at the beginning of the program. Trainees completed the entrance instrument (BTEN) on the day that they reported for basic training, using paper and pencil, and it took approximately 10 minutes to complete. The basic training exit questionnaire (see Appendix B), developed by the formative committee and finalized by the summative committee, was utilized to measure perceptions and attitudes of the trainees as they exited the program upon graduation. The exit instrument (BTEX) took approximately 17 minutes to complete, using paper and pencil. The open-ended exit interview questions (see Appendix C) were administered during an interview with 10 consenting trainees who withdrew from the program prior to graduation. Eight of the trainees who withdrew from the program prior to graduation did not consent to the exit interview. The researcher conducted the exit interviews.

The researcher conducted a pilot test of the BTEN and BTEX instruments with trainees assigned to the basic training class in the Fall 2011 session. The researcher discussed with the pilot trainees any uncertainties they had concerning the instruments; the BTEN and BTEX instruments were modified accordingly, with the assistance of the formative and summative committees.

Basic training course evaluations. The researcher, along with formative and summative committees, developed a basic training course evaluation (see Appendix D) that was completed weekly by trainees to measure instructor effectiveness in the classroom, using paper and pencil, and took between 10 and 15 minutes to complete depending on the number of courses that were instructed each week. The weekly course evaluation reflected a listing of the instructors who proctored courses during the respective week and the title of the course or courses. The ratings provided by each trainee were annotated on a recording sheet and analyzed to yield the level of instructor effectiveness and performance in the classroom.

The researcher conducted a pilot test of the course evaluation with trainees assigned to the basic training class in the Fall 2011 session. The researcher discussed with the pilot trainees any uncertainties they had concerning the instrument; the course-evaluation instrument was modified accordingly, with the assistance of the formative and summative committees.

Instructor sense-of-efficacy scale. The researcher utilized the instructor sense-of-efficacy scale (see Appendix E), a modified version of the teachers' sense-of-efficacy scale developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), to gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that created difficulties for academy instructors while conducting basic training activities. The formative and summative committees assisted in modifying

the instrument to relate to the training activities in which basic training instructors are engaged during a basic training class, and they named the instructor questionnaire the instructor sense-of-efficacy scale. Instructors used paper and pencil to complete the questionnaire, which took approximately 9 minutes to complete. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy viewed the teachers' sense-of-efficacy scale as superior to previous measures of teacher efficacy due to the following:

It has a unified and stable factor structure and assesses a broad range of capabilities that teachers consider important to good teaching, without being so specific as to render it useless for comparisons of teachers across contexts, levels, and subjects. (p. 802)

The researcher conducted a pilot test of the sense-of-efficacy instrument with instructors assigned to a basic training academy in another southeastern state in Fall 2011. The researcher discussed with the pilot instructors any uncertainties they had concerning the instrument; the sense-of-efficacy instrument was modified accordingly, with the assistance of the formative and summative committees.

Procedures

This process evaluation was implemented over a 12-week period, composing the 480-hour basic training curriculum, instructors assigned to the basic training academy, and trainees enrolled in the corrections basic training class. Once Institutional Review Board approval was gained on February 2, 2012, the program evaluation began on February 5, 2012, and concluded on April 25, 2012. Considering the researcher's position at the site, the evaluation instruments were incorporated as part of the basic training program. Administrative assistants at the site compiled the information with no participant identification and facilitated it to the researcher to ensure reliability and validity.

Design. Williams, Judge, Hill, and Hoffman (1997) used a concurrent nested design to study “trainees’, clients’, and supervisors’ perceptions of the trainees’ personal reactions and management strategies during counseling sessions” (p. 391). The participants in this study consisted of seven doctoral trainees, 30 volunteer clients, and seven supervisors. Three research questions, two qualitative and one quantitative, focused on different issues, and data collection was implemented concurrently with priority being placed on qualitative data (Williams et al., 1997).

The qualitative data were in the form of written responses to open-ended questions examining two different issues. Quantitative data, in the form of pretest and posttest change scores, were nested and collected. After analyzing the data separately, the results were used to help answer the three research questions. This process evaluation also employed a concurrent nested mixed-methods design, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell, 2003). Quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously, but quantitative data were the main focus. Qualitative data were embedded in the main evaluation and provided a supporting role (Creswell, 2003).

Over the past 25 years, mixed methods research has increasingly been recognized as a legitimate, stand-alone research design (Creswell, 2002, 2003; Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Tashakkori & Tedlie, 1998, 2003). Creswell (2003) stated the following:

Mixed-methods research is the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research. (p. 212)

In concurrent nested designs, priority is usually unequal and given to one of the two forms of quantitative or qualitative data (Creswell, 2003). The nested or embedded data are usually given less priority (Creswell, 2003). This design was appropriate for the

current study because the purpose of this process evaluation was threefold: (a) to assess the effectiveness of instructors, curriculum topics, and training methods; (b) to measure trainee perceptions and attitudes of the basic training program; and (c) to identify reasons trainees give for withdrawing. The conceptual framework was constructed by reviewing scholarly literature regarding law-enforcement training and its core principles as well as the general description of successful training programs.

Quantitative data collection and analysis. The following research questions provided quantitative data:

1. How do initial trainee perceptions and attitudes of the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast compare to perceptions and attitudes at the end of the program? The null hypothesis states that there is no difference between initial perceptions and attitudes of the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast and their perceptions and attitudes at the end of the program. The alternate hypothesis states that the initial perceptions and attitudes of the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast will be higher than their perceptions and attitudes at the end of the program.

To answer this question, all trainees reporting for basic training were recruited by an administrative assistant in a nonauthority position. The administrative assistant disseminated the BTEN instrument in an envelope to all trainees. One hundred six trainees participated by completing the survey, using paper and pencil, in a classroom setting. All trainees returned the anonymous survey, complete or blank, in a sealed envelope. It took approximately 10 minutes for all trainees to complete the questionnaire. Participant identification was not required.

The BTEX instrument was given to trainees at the conclusion of the program in a

paper-and-pencil format. The administrative assistant disseminated the BTEX instrument in an envelope to all trainees. Eighty-five trainees consented to participate by completing the survey using paper and pencil in a classroom setting. All trainees returned the anonymous survey, complete or blank, in a sealed envelope. Participant identification was not required. It took approximately 17 minutes for all trainees to complete the questionnaire. The BTEN and BTEX questionnaires were reviewed and compared using a Mann-Whitney *U* test to determine changes in trainee perceptions and attitudes during the program.

2. What is the relationship between instructor delivery of content and trainee academic achievement in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast? The null hypothesis states that there is no relationship between instructor delivery of content and trainee academic achievement in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast. The alternate hypothesis states that there is a positive relationship between instructor delivery of content and trainee academic achievement in a basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast.

To answer this question, the course-evaluation instrument was given to trainees at the conclusion of 10 of the 12 weeks of basic training in a paper-and-pencil format in a classroom setting. Trainees were recruited by an administrative assistant in a nonauthority position by disseminating the course evaluation weekly, in an envelope, to all trainees. Only those trainees consenting to participate completed the survey. All trainees returned the anonymous survey, complete or blank, in a sealed envelope. Participant identification was not required. It took approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete each of the 10 questionnaires, depending on the number of courses taught within a given week of training.

The results of the course-evaluation instruments were reviewed and compared to the data in the test question data bank to determine the percentage of trainees missing each test question from each curriculum topic. The results of the course evaluations were correlated with the test-bank data using a Spearman Rho correlation to determine the relationship between instructor delivery of the content and trainee academic achievement by trainees enrolled in the program.

3. What is the relationship between instructor efficacy and trainee academic achievement in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast? The null hypothesis states that there is no relationship between instructor efficacy and trainee academic achievement in a basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast. The alternate hypothesis states that there is a relationship between the instructor efficacy and trainee academic achievement in a basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast.

To answer this question, instructors were recruited by an administrative assistant in a nonauthority position to complete the instructor sense-of-efficacy scale. The administrative assistant disseminated the instructor sense-of-efficacy scale in an envelope to all instructors. Only those consenting instructors completed the instructor sense-of-efficacy scale. All instructors returned the anonymous survey, complete or blank, in a sealed envelope. Participant identification was not required. The instructor sense-of-efficacy scale was completed by academy instructors at the conclusion of the basic training program in a paper-and-pencil format, in a classroom setting, and took approximately 9 minutes to complete. The results of the instructor sense-of-efficacy scale were correlated with trainee academic exam scores using a Spearman Rho correlation to determine the relationship between instructor efficacy and trainee academic achievement

during the program.

4. What is the relationship between instructor efficacy and instructor delivery of content in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast? The null hypothesis states that there is no relationship between instructor efficacy and instructor delivery of content in a basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast. The alternate hypothesis states that there is a relationship between instructor efficacy and instructor delivery of content in a basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast.

To answer this question, instructors were recruited by an administrative assistant in a nonauthority position to complete the instructor sense-of-efficacy scale. The administrative assistant disseminated the instructor sense-of-efficacy scale in an envelope to all instructors. Only those consenting instructors completed the instructor sense-of-efficacy scale. All instructors returned the anonymous survey, complete or blank, in a sealed envelope. Participant identification was not required. The instructor sense-of-efficacy scale was completed by academy instructors at the conclusion of the basic training program in a paper-and-pencil format, in a classroom setting, and took approximately 9 minutes to complete.

In addition, and to assist with answering this question, the course evaluation was given to trainees at the conclusion of 10 of the 12 weeks of basic training in a paper-and-pencil format in a classroom setting. Trainees were recruited by an administrative assistant in a nonauthority position by disseminating the course evaluation weekly, in an envelope, to all trainees. Only those trainees consenting to participate completed the survey. All trainees returned the anonymous survey, complete or blank, in a sealed envelope. Participant identification was not required. It took approximately 10 to 15

minutes to complete each of the 10 questionnaires, depending on the number of courses taught within a given week of training. The results of the instructor sense-of-efficacy scale were correlated with the results of the course evaluation using a Spearman Rho correlation to determine the relationship between instructor efficacy and instructor delivery of content during the program.

Qualitative data collection and analysis. The following research questions provided qualitative data:

1. What reasons do trainees give for withdrawing from the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast before graduation? To answer this question, an administrative assistant in a nonauthority position recruited this group of trainees and disseminated the consent form. The researcher conducted the exit interviews with those trainees who consented to the interview. The interviews took between 4 and 20 minutes to conduct. During the interviews, notes were taken by the researcher and the administrative assistant to ensure that the information was collected efficiently and the notes were cross checked for accuracy. The interview notes were reviewed and coded to identify common themes. The themes that emerged divulged the reasons for trainees withdrawing from the program prior to graduation.

2. What recommendations can be made to improve trainee retention, academic achievement, and instructor effectiveness at the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast? To answer this question, all qualitative data collected during the process evaluation, including the BTEX questionnaire, course evaluation, instructor sense-of-efficacy scale, and exit interviews, were analyzed and compared to program outcomes and recommendations were made to improve trainee retention, academic achievement, and instructor effectiveness in delivery of content.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This study examined how trainees and instructors perceived the effectiveness of the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast. The evaluation of trainee perceptions and attitudes, instructor delivery of content, and instructor self-efficacy provided insight into why retention has decreased over the past 7 years. The data for this study were collected from a sample of correctional officer trainees and instructors at a basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast. The surveys were administered using paper and pencil in a classroom setting between February and April 2012.

Demographic Characteristics

The survey data for this study were collected from a population of 106 correctional officer trainees and 12 academy instructors. Race and gender reported by the trainees and instructors who participated in this applied dissertation study included that 92% of the trainees were male, and 61% were African American. Most (83%) of the instructors were male, and 50% were African American.

The age claimed by the trainees who participated in the study yielded that 61% of the trainees were 25 years of age or younger and that 27% of the trainees were between 26 and 32 years of age. Six percent of the trainees were between the ages of 33 and 39 years, and the remaining trainees (6%) were 40 years of ages or older. The marital status claimed by trainees who participated in the study yielded that 62% of the trainees were single and that 31% of the trainees reported being married. Seven percent of the trainees reported being widowed.

Other characteristics claimed by the trainees who participated in the study

included that 41% of the trainees reported having children, whereas 59% reported not having children. Only 28% of the trainees reported that they had served in the military. Approximately half (51%) of the trainees reported that they did not have family members who are or have been law-enforcement officers, whereas most (76%) reported having acquaintances who are or have been law-enforcement officers.

Research Question 1: Trainee Perceptions and Attitudes

How do initial trainee perceptions and attitudes of the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast compare to perceptions and attitudes at the end of the program? The null hypothesis states that there is no difference between initial perceptions and attitudes of the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast and their perceptions and attitudes at the end of the program. The alternate hypothesis states that the initial perceptions and attitudes of the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast would be higher than their perceptions and attitudes at the end of the program.

In order to test the null hypothesis, a Mann-Whitney *U* test was conducted to compare the trainee perceptions and attitudes at the beginning of the program, measured by the BTEN questionnaire, and trainee perceptions and attitudes at the end of the program, measured by the BTEX questionnaire. The Mann-Whitney *U* test revealed a significant difference between trainee perceptions and attitudes at the beginning of the program and their perceptions and attitudes at the end of the program for 18 of the 29 items analyzed. Descriptive statistics and Mann-Whitney *U* test results for Research Question 1 are presented in Sections 1 through 7 of Appendix F. Only the results of the 18 items that produced significant differences in trainees' perceptions and attitudes will be discussed in detail.

The Mann-Whitney U test revealed that, for Item 12, the mean rank on the BTEN (109.32) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (79.39), $z = -3.87$, $p < .001$. Of the 106 trainees who completed the BTEN instrument, 18% of trainees strongly agreed and 30% agreed that a typical day in the basic training program would be exciting. Of the 85 trainees who completed the BTEX instrument, less than 1% strongly agreed and only 27% agreed that a typical day in the basic training program was exciting.

The results for Item 14 revealed that the mean rank on the BTEN (114.99) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (72.32), $z = -5.57$, $p < .001$. Forty-six percent of trainees who completed the BTEN strongly agreed and 37% agreed that basic training instructors would enforce the rules fairly, whereas only 14% of trainees completing the BTEX strongly agreed and 46% agreed that basic training instructors did enforce the rules fairly.

The results for Item 16 revealed that the mean rank on the BTEN (107.27) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (81.95), $z = -3.27$, $p < .001$. Eighteen percent of trainees who completed the BTEN strongly agreed and 36% agreed that correctional officers are admired by the public, whereas less than 1% of trainees completing the BTEX strongly agreed and only 33% agreed that correctional officers are admired by the public.

The results for Item 17 revealed that the mean rank of the BTEN (109.65) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (78.98), $z = -4.23$, $p < .001$. Fifty-six percent of trainees who completed the BTEN strongly agreed and 39% agreed that correctional officers are knowledgeable of the laws, rules, and regulations that they enforce. Twenty-six percent of trainees who completed the BTEX strongly agreed and 60% agreed that correctional officers are knowledgeable of the laws, rule, and regulations

that they enforce.

The results for Item 18 revealed that the mean rank of the BTEN (107.42) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (81.76), $z = -3.54$, $p < .001$. Sixty-two percent of trainees who completed the BTEN strongly agreed and 29% agreed that the basic training program would properly prepare them for the expected role requirements as a correctional officer. Thirty-five percent of trainees who completed the BTEX strongly agreed and 52% agreed that the basic training program properly prepared them for the expected role requirements as a correctional officer.

The Mann-Whitney U test further revealed that, for Item 21, the mean rank of the BTEN (106.56) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (82.83), $z = -3.11$, $p < .001$. Of the 106 trainees who completed the BTEN instrument, 31% of trainees strongly agreed and 44% agreed that the skills training would be challenging. Of the 85 trainees who completed the BTEX instrument, only 19% strongly agreed and 40% agreed that the skills training was challenging.

The results for Item 22 revealed that the mean rank of the BTEN (108.55) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (80.35), $z = -3.67$, $p < .001$. Twenty-seven percent of trainees who completed the BTEN strongly agreed and 42% agreed that the academic curriculum would be challenging, whereas only 11% of trainees who completed the BTEX strongly agreed and 41% agreed the academic curriculum was challenging.

The results for Item 23 revealed that the mean rank of the BTEN (107.61) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (81.52), $z = -3.49$, $p < .001$. Thirty-nine percent of trainees who completed the BTEN strongly agreed and 45% agreed that the instructors would be challenging as they lead trainees professionally. Eighteen

percent of trainees who completed the BTEX strongly agreed and 51% agreed that instructors were challenging as they led trainees professionally.

The results for Item 28 revealed that the mean rank of the BTEN (112.20) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (74.87), $z = -4.96$, $p < .001$. Fifty-one percent of trainees who completed the BTEN strongly agreed and 38% agreed that they expected instructors to follow strict protocols pertaining to rank structure with trainees. Twenty-four percent of trainees who completed the BTEX strongly agreed and 40% agreed that instructors followed strict protocols pertaining to rank structure with trainees.

The results for Item 29 revealed that the mean rank of the BTEN (116.45) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (69.06), $z = -6.47$, $p < .001$. Fifty-four percent of trainees who completed the BTEN strongly agreed and 39% agreed that, as a result of the basic training program, they expected to be proficient in all major aspects of the corrections profession. Only 9% of trainees who completed the BTEX strongly agreed and 64% agreed that, as a result of the basic training program, they were proficient in all major aspects of the corrections profession.

The Mann-Whitney U test continued to reveal that, for Item 30, the mean rank of the BTEN (113.80) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (73.80), $z = -5.47$, $p < .001$. Of the 106 trainees who completed the BTEN instrument, 54% of trainees strongly agreed and 40% agreed that, as a result of the basic training program, they expected to be knowledgeable in all major aspects of the corrections profession. Of the 85 trainees who completed the BTEX instrument, only 16% of trainees strongly agreed and 62% agreed that, as a result of the basic training program, they were knowledgeable of all major aspects of the corrections profession.

The results for Item 31 revealed that the mean rank of the BTEN (108.05) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (80.97), $z = -3.76$, $p < .001$. Sixty-one percent of trainees who completed the BTEN strongly agreed and 33% agreed that, as a result of the basic training program, they expected to be able to perform the job requirements of a correctional officer with confidence. Thirty-two percent of trainees who completed the BTEX strongly agreed and 58% agreed that, as a result of the basic training program, they were able to perform the job requirements of a correctional officer with confidence.

The results for Item 32 revealed that the mean rank of the BTEN (102.97) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (87.31), $z = -2.19$, $p = .03$. Sixty percent of trainees who completed the BTEN strongly agreed and 34% agreed that, as a result of the basic training program, they expected to have high commitment to the job as a correctional officer. Forty-five percent of trainees who completed the BTEX strongly agreed and 46% agreed that, as a result of the basic training program, they had a high commitment to the job as a correctional officer.

The results for Item 33 revealed that the mean rank of the BTEN (107.74) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (81.36), $z = -3.64$, $p < .001$. Sixty percent of trainees who completed the BTEN strongly agreed and 34% agreed that, as a result of the basic training program, they expected to be adequately prepared for the position of correctional officer. Thirty-five percent of trainees who completed the BTEX strongly agreed and 49% agreed that, as a result of the basic training program, they were adequately prepared for the position of correctional officer.

The results for Item 34 revealed that the mean rank of the BTEN (114.26) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (73.23), $z = -5.30$, $p < .001$. Thirty-

four percent of trainees who completed the BTEN strongly agreed and 42% agreed that the physical fitness testing would be challenging, whereas only 13% of trainees who completed the BTEX strongly agreed and 33% agreed that the physical fitness testing was actually challenging.

The Mann-Whitney U test continued to reveal that, for Item 35, the mean rank of the BTEN (113.47) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (74.21), $z = -5.05$, $p < .001$. Of the 106 trainees who completed the BTEN instrument, 18% of trainees strongly agreed and 39% agreed that the cardiopulmonary resuscitation, automated external defibrillator, and first aid training would be challenging. Of the 85 trainees who completed the BTEX instrument, less than 1% of trainees strongly agreed and 26% agreed that the cardiopulmonary resuscitation, automated external defibrillator, and first aid training was challenging.

The results for Item 37 revealed that the mean rank of the BTEN (109.36) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (79.34), $z = -3.88$, $p < .001$. Forty percent of trainees who completed the BTEN strongly agreed and 32% agreed that the legal issues training component would be challenging, whereas only 18% of trainees who completed the BTEX strongly agreed and 38% agreed that the legal issues training component was actually challenging.

The results for Item 39 revealed that the mean rank of the BTEN (113.46) was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX (74.23), $z = -5.11$, $p < .001$. Thirty-two percent of trainees who completed the BTEN strongly agreed and 44% agreed that they expected basic training activities to mirror the work environment inside correctional facilities. Only 13% of trainees who completed the BTEX strongly agreed and 32% agreed that basic training activities mirrored the work environment inside correctional

facilities.

The Mann-Whitney U test revealed that, for 18 of the 29 items, the mean rank on the BTEN was significantly higher than the mean rank on the BTEX. Thus, a significant difference existed between trainee initial perceptions and attitudes of the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast and their perceptions and attitudes at the end of the program. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. There was only one item of 29 items, Item 40, in which the mean rank on the BTEN (86.15) was significantly lower, in the wrong direction, than the mean rank on the BTEX (108.28), $z = -2.84$, $p = .01$. Of the 106 trainees who completed the BTEN instrument, only 21% of trainees strongly agreed and 20% agreed that it was expected that the basic training program would be a stressful experience. Of the 85 trainees who completed the BTEX instrument, 31% of trainees strongly agreed and 36% agreed that the basic training program was a stressful experience, suggesting that the basic training program was more stressful than they anticipated.

Research Question 2: Delivery of Content and Academic Achievement

What is the relationship between instructor delivery of content and trainee academic achievement in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast? The null hypothesis states that there is no relationship between instructor delivery of content and trainee academic achievement in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast. The alternate hypothesis states that there is a positive relationship between instructor delivery of content and trainee academic achievement in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast.

In order to test the null hypothesis, a Spearman Rho correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between instructor delivery of the content, measured by the

course evaluation, and trainee academic achievement, measured by the test question data bank. A sample of 12 courses was randomly selected from 50 courses instructed during the 12-week basic training program. The Spearman Rho correlation revealed a nonsignificant correlation in the data set between instructor delivery of the content and trainee academic achievement at a state corrections academy in the southeast. A significant correlation was revealed for only one of the 12 courses in the sample. The Spearman Rho results for Research Question 2 are presented in Appendix G. The results for the institutional hygiene course revealed the only significant correlation between instructor delivery of content and trainee academic achievement, $r_s(82) = -.27, p = .01$. The overall results for Research Question 2 were statistically nonsignificant; therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Research Question 3: Instructor Efficacy and Trainee Academic Achievement

What is the relationship between instructor efficacy and trainee academic achievement in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast? The null hypothesis states that there is no relationship between instructor efficacy and trainee academic achievement in a basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast. The alternate hypothesis states that there is a relationship between instructor efficacy and trainee academic achievement in a basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast.

In order to test the null hypothesis, a Spearman Rho correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between instructor efficacy, measured by the instructor sense-of-efficacy scale, and trainee academic achievement, measured by the test question data bank. The Spearman Rho correlation revealed a nonsignificant correlation in the data set between instructor self-efficacy and trainee academic achievement at a state corrections

academy in the southeast (see Appendix H). A significant correlation was revealed for only one of the 12 instructors in the sample, $r_s(85) = .47, p = .04$. The overall results for Research Question 3 were statistically nonsignificant; therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Research Question 4: Instructor Efficacy and Delivery of Content

What is the relationship between instructor efficacy and instructor delivery of content in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast? The null hypothesis states that there is no relationship between instructor efficacy, measured by the instructor sense-of-efficacy scale, and instructor delivery of content, measured by the course evaluation. The alternate hypothesis states that there is a relationship between instructor efficacy and instructor delivery of content in a basic training program.

In order to test the null hypothesis, a Spearman Rho correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between instructor efficacy, measured by the instructor sense-of-efficacy scale, and instructor delivery of content, measured by the course evaluation. The Spearman Rho correlation revealed a nonsignificant correlation in the data set between instructor self-efficacy and instructor delivery of content at a state corrections academy in the southeast (see Appendix I). A significant correlation was revealed for only one of the 12 instructors in the sample, $r_s(23) = -.46, p = .02$. The overall results for Research Question 4 were statistically nonsignificant; therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Research Question 5: Trainee Reasons for Withdrawing

What reasons do trainees give for withdrawing from the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast before graduation? To answer this question, an administrative assistant in a nonauthority position recruited this group of trainees and

disseminated the consent form. The researcher conducted the exit interviews with those trainees who consented to the interview. During the interviews, notes were taken by the researcher and the administrative assistant to ensure that the information was collected efficiently, and the notes were cross checked for accuracy. The interview notes were reviewed and coded to identify common themes. Eighteen trainees withdrew from the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast before graduation. Ten (56%) of the 18 trainees who withdrew from the basic training program consented to participate in the exit interview.

Questions 1 through 7 of the exit interview gathered participant demographic data. Most (90%) of the trainees who were interviewed were male; 50% were White, 40% were African American, and 10% were Hispanic. Sixty percent were between 26 and 32 years of age, and 30% were 25 years of age or younger. Fifty percent of interviewing trainees were single, and 50% were married. Seventy percent reported having one to three children, whereas 30% reported having no children. Most (70%) of the interviewed trainees reported either a high school diploma or the equivalent as the highest level of education, and 60% reported having military experience. Questions 8 through 17 were open-ended questions pertaining to the basic training experience and specific reasons for early withdrawal. The themes that emerged from these questions divulged the reasons for trainees withdrawing from the program prior to graduation.

Reaching the decision. How did you come to the decision to depart the basic training program before completion? Three of the trainees reported having no choice but to withdraw due to failing a portion of the physical agility requirement, and three trainees cited personal reasons as the motivation for withdrawing early. Two of the trainees interviewed reported other career interests, whereas two trainees cited specific basic

training activities that led to their decision. Some of those activities included (a) instructors requiring trainees to perform push-ups and crunches immediately following meals, (b) the lack of motivation exhibited by other trainees, (c) lack of motivation by instructors, (d) the lack and need for academic homework, and (e) the final notes requirements.

Main reason for leaving. What is your main reason for leaving? Two of the trainees cited personal reasons as the main reason for leaving, whereas three trainees reported having no choice but to withdraw due to failing a requirement of the basic training. Four of the withdrawing trainees reported specific basic training activities or circumstances as the main reason for departing prior to graduation. Some of those activities included (a) instructors requiring trainees to perform push-ups and crunches immediately following meals, (b) the lack of motivation exhibited by other trainees, (c) lack of motivation by instructors, (d) the lack and need for academic homework, (e) the required narrative notebook notes, and (f) the length of the program, which is 12 weeks.

Other reasons for leaving. What are the other reasons for your leaving? Seven trainees reported no other reasons other than what had already been noted. Three trainees reported specific reasons to include (a) an upcoming military deployment and the need to spend time at home, (b) preference to be a police officer instead of a correctional officer, and (c) an immediate family member with illness causing concern.

Concerns. Within the basic training program you have experienced, what was it that concerned you particularly? Five interviewed trainees reported nothing concerned them particularly, whereas five trainees cited aspects of the paramilitary activities as concerning to include (a) trainees are rushed to eat meals, (b) instructors shouting orders during meal times, (c) trainees are not allowed to have personal cell phones with them,

(d) instructors punish trainees for asking questions by having them do push-ups, and (e) requiring all trainees to do push-ups due to one trainee's actions.

Preventive measures. What could have been done to prevent the situation or provide a basis for you to remain in the basic training program? Four of the trainees reported that nothing could have been done to prevent them from withdrawing. Three trainees indicated that they should have been in better physical shape before reporting to basic training. Three interviewed trainees cited specific actions that might have provided a basis for remaining in the basic training program to include (a) if the basic training was shorter than 12 weeks, (b) more of an academic environment instead of military formations, and (c) instructors using better judgment when imposing push-ups for punishment.

Processes, procedures, or systems. What can you share about the basic training processes, procedures, or systems that have contributed to your decision to depart prior to graduation? Five of the trainees reported nothing more than what had already been reported in previous questions. Three of trainees noted issues with meal times, specifically (a) being rushed to eat their meals, (b) the requirement of drinking two glasses of water per meal, (c) the requirement to eat the meal even if they did not desire to eat, and (d) the requirement to complete push-ups for punishment for minor infractions during meals. Twenty percent noted that the experience had been positive for them.

Suggestions. What specific suggestions would you have for how the program could be managed differently? Four trainees had no suggestions for how the program could be managed differently, two trainees were in favor of the basic training program activities, and four trainees cited specific suggestions, such as (a) decrease the overall amount of required training at the academy, (b) conduct some of the required academy

training at correctional institutions in which the trainees work and live to limit amount of time away from home, (c) allow more time for meals in the dining hall, (d) instructors might be less harsh when communicating with trainees, (e) do not require trainees to complete push-ups and crunches after eating, (f) eliminate the final notes requirement and assign homework assignments instead, and (g) require trainees to stay at the academy through the weekend to allow more access to instructors for assistance with training topics and activities.

Overall impressions. How do you feel about the department's basic training program? Nine of trainees reported favorable thoughts and feelings about the basic training program to include (a) staff were nice and professional, (b) it prepared trainees for the job they will face inside the prison, (c) the program was rewarding, and (d) the entire department should run like the basic training program. Only one of the trainees noted less than favorable feelings of the basic training program, which included the amount of time required to be away from home.

Useful training methods and topics. What training methods and topics did you find most useful? Two trainees reported no specific topics as being most useful, and four trainees reported all topics they had completed as useful. Four trainees reported specific topics as most useful, such as (a) sexual harassment, (b) POSTC, (c) department of corrections regulations, (d) history of the department of corrections, (e) first aid, and (d) inmate education programs. Twenty percent of trainees noted the POSTC topic as most useful.

Least useful methods and topics. What training methods and topics did you find least useful? Eight trainees reported no topics as being least useful, whereas two trainees reported specific topics as least useful, such as (a) physical training, (b) written

communications, and (c) cultural diversity.

Additional comments. At the conclusion of the exit interview, the researcher asked the trainees if they had any additional comments they wanted to share, and only four of the trainees made additional comments. Those additional comments included (a) expressions of appreciation for assistance provided to the interviewee by specific instructors, (b) respect was noted for correctional officers in general and the job they are expected to do, (c) plans to return in better physical shape and attempt the academy at a later date, and (d) the amount of time spent in military formations and marching is wasteful and should instead be spent in the classroom learning the job of correctional officers.

Research Question 6: Recommendations for Improvement

What recommendations can be made to improve trainee retention, academic achievement, and instructor effectiveness at the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast? To answer this question, all qualitative data collected during the process evaluation, including qualitative data from the BTEX, course evaluation, instructor sense-of-efficacy scale, and exit interviews, were analyzed and compared to program outcomes. There were multiple recommendations for improvement made by program participants through the various instruments and interviews completed.

Instructor participants completing the instructor sense-of-efficacy scale were asked to make additional comments at the conclusion of the questionnaire. Those comments included the following recommendations: (a) Three instructors recommended that a stricter discipline system for trainees was needed, (b) two instructors recommended that the demeanor system utilized to document trainee infractions should be enforced more stringently to give the system more integrity, and (c) one instructor recommended

immediate sanctions to be imposed on trainees who are disruptive during classroom activities.

Trainee participants completing the BTEX and BTCE questionnaires, and those consenting to the exit interview for trainees who withdrew from the program early, were also asked to make additional comments at the conclusion of the questionnaire and interviews. There were several recommendations pertaining to skills training that surfaced. One of the overwhelming recommendations was that more defensive tactics training was needed, specifically more pressure point control tactics, self-defense and grappling tactics, and baton training. Over 15 trainees expressed a lack of confidence in the defensive tactics skills learned and indicated that more practice and evaluation of their defensive tactics skills was needed.

More than 20 trainees recommended that more hands-on and on-the-job training inside the correctional facility would be beneficial instead of 12 weeks at the academy. Specifically, nearly 10 trainees recommended that shakedowns and searches training should be instructed inside a correctional facility instead of in the classroom. Over 25 trainees commented on the physical training program, recommending a more individualized training program based upon each trainee's wellness and physical ability. Most trainees commenting on physical training indicated that the program was not challenging enough to actually better someone's physical fitness during the 12-week basic training.

Throughout the 12-week basic training program, there were many recommendations pertaining to the quality and character of trainees enrolled in the program. Over 30 trainees recommended that the agency needs to adopt a better screening process for trainees and that quality should be valued over quantity. Comments

over the lack of professionalism exhibited by some trainees and concerns expressed about having to work with trainees they believed to already be corrupt were most common. Over 12 trainees recommended that the entire department should be operated like the basic training program. Comments pertaining to the organization and discipline required at the basic training academy were compared to the lack of discipline and structure required at the correctional facilities at which they had worked prior to reporting to the academy.

There were several recommendations made with respect to the basic training instructors. Less than five trainees recommended that basic training instructors should be rotated and be allowed to work at the basic training academy only for specific periods of time. Some comments were made concerning the effectiveness of instructors who had not worked inside a correctional facility for several years. Over 25 trainees recommended that instructors should not yell and scream as much at trainees but instead should be more supportive during training. To the contrary, over 35 trainees recommended that instructors should be stricter when enforcing the rules. Most (i.e., more than 60) of trainees commented on the respect that they acquired for basic training instructors and the job they were required to do.

Finally, some trainees made specific recommendations with respect to certain practices and rules governing trainees during basic training. These suggestions included that (a) cell phones should not be prohibited for the entire 12 weeks; (b) during meal times, trainees should not be rushed to eat and required to perform physically strenuous activities such as push-ups and crunches, (c) the overall length of the academy should be shortened, and (d) the military format for the academy should be reconsidered and less harsh.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This process-based program evaluation was conducted for the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast in order to (a) assess the effectiveness of instructors, curriculum topics, and training methods; (b) measure trainee perceptions and attitudes of the basic training program; and (c) identify reasons trainees give for withdrawing from the program. This chapter will discuss the results of the study as they pertain to each research question as well as make connections to the literature. Implications of the results will also be suggested, and limitations of the study will be addressed. Finally, this chapter will conclude with recommendations for future research on the topic.

Research Question 1

How do initial trainee perceptions and attitudes of the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast compare to perceptions and attitudes at the end of the program? This research question was addressed through the completion of the BTEN and BTEX questionnaires completed by trainee participants. A significant difference was revealed in trainee perceptions and attitudes at the beginning of the program at a state corrections academy in the southeast and their perceptions and attitudes at the end of the program.

The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 12 indicated that trainees beginning the basic training program were more likely to anticipate a typical day to be exciting than those trainees completing the program. The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 14 indicated that trainees beginning the basic training program believed that basic training instructors would enforce the rules fairly, whereas those trainees completing the program

were less likely to agree that basic training instructors had enforced the rules fairly. The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 16 indicated that trainees beginning the basic training program agreed that correctional officers are admired by the public; however, by the end of the program, the percentage of trainees in agreement had decreased. The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 17 indicated that most of the trainees beginning the basic training program were in agreement that correctional officers are knowledgeable of the laws, rules, and regulations that they enforce, but fewer trainees completing the program agreed that correctional officers are knowledgeable of the laws, rules, and regulations that they enforce.

The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 18 indicated that most trainees began the basic training program in belief that the basic training program would properly prepare them for the expected role requirements as a correctional officer; however, by the end of the program, the confidence level of trainees had lessened. The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 21 indicated that trainees entered the basic training program with the expectation that the skills training would be challenging but completed the program indicating that the skills training had not been as challenging as expected. The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 22 indicated that trainees entered the basic training program with the expectation that the academic curriculum would be challenging but completed the program indicating the academic curriculum had not been as challenging as expected. The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 23 indicated that trainees entered the basic training program with the expectation that instructors would be challenging but completed the program indicating that instructors had not been as challenging as expected.

The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 28 indicated that trainees were more likely to expect instructors to follow strict protocols pertaining to rank structure with trainees at

the beginning of the program than they were at the conclusion of the program. The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 29 indicated that trainees beginning the program were more likely to agree that, as a result of the basic training program, they expected to be proficient in all major aspects of the corrections profession than those completing the program. The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 30 indicated that trainees were more likely to begin the program expecting to become knowledgeable of all major aspects of the corrections profession, but they completed the program indicating less confidence in their knowledge of major aspects of the profession. The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 31 indicated that trainees began the program expecting to be able to perform the job requirements of a correctional officer with confidence at the conclusion of the program, whereas those trainees completing the program felt less confident in their ability to perform the job requirements of a correctional officer.

The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 32 indicated that trainees beginning the program were more likely than those completing the program to expect to exit the program with a high commitment to the job of a correctional officer. The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 33 indicated that those trainees beginning the program were more likely than those completing the program to expect to be adequately prepared for the position of correctional officer. The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 34 indicated that more trainees beginning the basic training program agreed that the physical fitness testing would be challenging than those trainees actually completing the program indicated. The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 35 indicated that trainees beginning the basic training program anticipated that the cardiopulmonary resuscitation, automated external defibrillator, and first aid training would be challenging, whereas fewer trainees reported the cardiopulmonary resuscitation, automated external defibrillator, and first aid training

to be challenging at the end of the program.

The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 37 indicated that trainees beginning the basic training program agreed that the legal issues training would be challenging, whereas fewer trainees completing the program agreed that the legal issues training was actually challenging. The BTEN and BTEX results for Item 39 indicated that trainees entered the basic training program expecting the training activities to mirror the work environment inside correctional facilities, but fewer agreed that training activities mirrored the work environment as they completed the program.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between instructor delivery of content and trainee academic achievement in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast? This research question was addressed through the completion of the course evaluation by trainee participants and the results of trainee academic achievement measured by the test question data bank. A sample of 12 courses was randomly selected from 50 courses instructed during the 12-week basic training program: (a) sexual harassment in the workplace; (b) corrections as a profession; (c) overview of the criminal justice system; (d) inmate behavior; (e) hostage situations in a correctional facility; (f) use of force; (g) staff rights and responsibilities; (h) disciplinary procedures; (i) security, custody, and control; (j) institutional hygiene; (k) key and tool control; and (l) visitation procedures.

Overall, a nonsignificant relationship was found between instructor delivery of content and trainee academic achievement. However, it is worth noting that the only significant relationship between instructor delivery of content and trainee academic achievement was in the institutional hygiene course. The mean score for trainee academic

achievement in this course was 83%, whereas the median for instructor delivery of content was excellent (100%). Finally, the overall academic mean for trainees enrolled in the basic training program was 80.53%. The lowest academic score was 70%, and the highest academic score was 95.20%. There were no trainees withdrawn from the program due to failing any academic portion of the basic training program. The overall mean of course-evaluation ratings for instructor delivery of content was good (89%).

Research Question 3

What is the relationship between instructor efficacy and trainee academic achievement in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast? This research question was addressed through the completion of the instructor sense-of-efficacy scale by instructor participants and the results of trainee academic achievement measured by the test question data bank. Overall, a nonsignificant relationship was found between instructor efficacy and trainee academic achievement. However, it is worth noting that the only significant relationship between instructor efficacy and trainee academic achievement was in the course on sexual harassment in the workplace. The mean score for trainee academic achievement in this course was 86%, whereas the median for instructor efficacy was good (80%). It is also worth noting that the overall mean instructor efficacy score for all instructor participants in this study was fair (77%).

Research Question 4

What is the relationship between instructor efficacy and instructor delivery of content in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast? This research question was addressed through the completion of the instructor sense-of-efficacy scale by instructor participants and completion of the course evaluation by

trainee participants. Overall, a nonsignificant relationship was found between instructor efficacy and instructor delivery of content. However, it is worth noting that the only significant relationship between instructor efficacy and instructor delivery of content was in the course on sexual harassment in the workplace. The median score for instructor efficacy in this course was 80%, and the median for instructor delivery of content was also 80%.

Research Question 5

What reasons do trainees give for withdrawing from the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast before graduation? This research question was addressed through the completion of the exit interviews conducted with trainees withdrawing from the program prior to graduation. There were four primary reasons provided by trainees for withdrawing from the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast prior to graduation. The two most prevalent reasons provided by withdrawing trainees were personal reasons and having no choice but to withdraw due to failing the physical agility requirement. The two less prevalent reasons provided by withdrawing trainees were other career interests and specific basic training activities that led to their decision to withdraw before graduation. Those specific basic training activities included (a) instructors requiring trainees to perform push-ups and crunches immediately following meals, (b) the lack of motivation exhibited by other trainees, (c) lack of motivation by instructors, (d) the lack and need for academic homework, and (e) the final notes requirement.

There were several themes that emerged during the exit interviews that were cited as elements leading trainees to the decision to withdraw early from the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast. The responses for basic training

activities that affected the decision to withdraw came quickly and were both evaluative and critical. A theme pertaining to activities around meals and the dining hall emerged frequently and primarily involved the short length of time allowed to consume meals and the requirement to consume meals quickly along with two glasses of water. Trainees were also critical of basic training instructors requiring them to perform push-ups or crunches immediately before, during, or immediately following meals.

The second basic training theme that emerged was the paramilitary organization of the program. Trainee comments on the paramilitary components were equally either supportive or nonsupportive. Many trainees complained about the marching and group corporal punishment, whereas other trainees felt that discipline was needed given the character of some trainees enrolled in the class. The drill instructor demeanor of basic training instructors, specifically the shouting and yelling by instructors at trainees, was commonly viewed as negative by trainees. The third basic training theme was the quality and integrity of the trainees enrolled in the class. Trainee comments indicated concern over potential corruption of some trainees and their intent for seeking a job with the agency. It was also noted that some trainees viewed other trainees as having a lack of motivation, and negative behaviors were exhibited by some trainees throughout the training.

The fourth basic training theme that emerged was the policy that trainees were not allowed to have personal cell phones with them. Trainees reported the lack of access to their cell phones as a problem and source of concern that family could not get in touch with them as needed and vice versa. The fifth basic training theme that emerged involved the academic program at the basic training academy. There were specific comments in reference to the ineffectiveness of the final notes requirement and the belief that

academic homework would be more productive. The sixth and final basic training theme that emerged during the exit interviews was concerning the overall length of the basic training program. It was noted by some trainees that 12 weeks was too long to be away from home.

Research Question 6

What recommendations can be made to improve trainee retention, academic achievement, and instructor effectiveness at the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast? This research question was addressed through the review of all qualitative data collected during the process evaluation, including qualitative data from the BTEX, course evaluation, instructor sense-of-efficacy scale, and exit interviews. Several themes emerged in the data in the form of recommendations for improving the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast. Instructor participants recommended that the trainee discipline system should be utilized consistently with sanctions for disruptive behavior imposed immediately. Based upon this recommendation, it appears the informal discipline system for trainees, the demeanor system, has lost integrity and is not respected by trainees as a true accountability factor. Trainee participants made several recommendations grouped in the categories of (a) training curriculum, (b) human resources, (c) academy instructors, and (d) training methodology.

Training curriculum. Some specific curriculum topics were identified by trainees in some of the recommendations. An overwhelming recommendation was made for more defensive tactics training, specifically more training in pressure point control tactics and self-defense and grappling tactics. Many trainees expressed concern and a lack of confidence in their defensive tactics skills upon departing the academy. Presently,

the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast spends 30 hours on training in pressure point control tactics, 20 hours on baton training in pressure point control tactics, and 18 hours on training in self-defense and grappling tactics. That is a total of 68 hours (14%) of the overall basic training program hours that are dedicated to defensive tactics training.

There was also a recommendation for more hands-on training and on-the-job training inside the correctional facility as opposed to spending the entire 12 weeks at the academy. It is worth noting that all trainees are required to complete 96 hours of on-the-job training at a correctional facility once they graduate the basic training program.

Another recommendation made by trainee participants was that the physical training program should be more challenging and individualized. Presently, 36 hours (8%) of the overall basic training program hours are dedicated to physical training. However, due to the number of trainees in each basic training class, it is not possible to provide individualized physical fitness training. General physical fitness exercises and activities are conducted so that all trainees, regardless of their individual fitness level, can participate based upon their individual abilities.

Human resources. Throughout the basic training program, there were many comments concerning the integrity and character of some of the trainees. A recommendation was made for a more thorough background check and screening of trainee applicants so that a better quality candidate could be selected and employed. More specifically, trainee participants recommended the agency should value quality over quantity. There was also a recommendation that the entire agency should operate like the basic training program, in that behavior expectations and discipline of employees at the correctional facilities should mirror that of the basic training program.

Academy instructors. A recommendation was made by trainee participants to rotate academy instructors back inside a correctional facility more frequently so that instructors may remain credible in the classroom when instructing on facility operations. Another recommendation was made to lessen or eliminate instructors yelling and screaming at trainees and instead to be more supportive during basic training. It is worth noting that basic training instructors do routinely work inside correctional facilities to stay abreast of facility operations.

Training methodology. There were specific recommendations made with respect to some of the basic training activities and methodology. Specifically, a recommendation was made to allow trainees the option of having their cell phones available after hours. Another recommendation was made to allow more time for meals and to eliminate any physically strenuous activity such as push-ups or crunches immediately before, during, or immediately after a meal. There was also a recommendation to shorten the overall length of the basic training program because 12 weeks is viewed to be too long to be away from home. Finally, the recommendation was made to eliminate or lessen the paramilitary involvement in basic training operations.

Discussion of Conclusions

A total of 106 trainees began the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast. However, only 85 trainees (80.19%) successfully completed the program and graduated with POSTC certification. Of the 21 trainees who withdrew from the program before graduating, 29% failed the required physical testing, no trainees failed the firearms training, and less than 14% withdrew due to academic portions of the academy. Sixty-two percent of trainees who exited the program left for reasons other than academic, firearms, or physical testing requirements. Six of the 21 trainees who withdrew

from the program before graduating returned in a later class and successfully completed the program.

This study revealed a significant difference in trainee perceptions and attitudes at the beginning of the basic training program and trainee perceptions and attitudes at the end of the program. Generally, trainee perceptions and attitudes at the beginning of the basic training program were higher than their perceptions and attitudes at the end of the program. Overall, trainee participants began the basic training program anticipating that the program would be challenging. All the questions on the BTEN questionnaire except for four revealed the mean ranks of trainee responses to be higher at the beginning of the program. Of the four questions that were not higher at the beginning of the program, only one of those four questions was significantly higher at the end of the program. That particular question indicated that the majority of trainees completing the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast viewed the experience as stressful. Thus, based on the data, the opportunity exists to better clarify expectations for trainees before they begin the basic training program, which could preclude early withdrawals before program completion.

This study did not reveal an overall significant relationship between instructor delivery of content and trainee academic achievement in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast. The evaluation ratings by trainees for instructor delivery of content were good. Additionally, overall trainee academic achievement in the program was good. Thus, based on the evaluation of instructor delivery of content and trainee academic achievement, the researcher feels that delivery of content by instructors did not adversely affect trainee academic achievement.

This study further revealed that a significant relationship between instructor

efficacy and trainee academic achievement did not exist. Although the median instructor efficacy score was average, overall trainee academic achievement in the program was good. Based upon the data, the researcher feels that instructor efficacy did not adversely affect trainee academic achievement. It would be interesting to know what aspects of the instructor duties and responsibilities, if any, are affected by instructor self efficacy (refer to the Recommendations for Future Studies section for an elaboration).

This study also revealed that a significant relationship between instructor efficacy and instructor delivery of content did not exist. Again, instructor efficacy scores were average while instructor delivery of content scores was good. Based upon the data, the researcher feels that instructor efficacy did not adversely affect the instructor's ability to deliver program curricula in the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast. It would be interesting to know whether instructor efficacy has a direct effect on instructor confidence in performing the job of a basic training instructor (refer to the Recommendations for Future Studies section for an elaboration).

The qualitative data collected during this study revealed specific themes with respect to program characteristics and reasons trainees give for withdrawing before graduation. Other than the trainees who had to withdraw due to failing a training requirement ($n = 3$) and trainees who made a decision to seek out other career interests ($n = 2$), most trainees ($n = 5$) cited specific reasons that led to their decision to withdraw early from the program. Unfortunately, two trainees cited the actions and behaviors of basic training instructors as part of the reason that led to their decision to withdraw early. Additionally, the paramilitary methodology was also evident in some of the instructor actions cited by trainees. Those same trainees referenced specific academic requirements as having an effect on their decision as well, specifically the final-notes requirement and

the absence of homework assignments.

Trainees are required to compile a basic training notebook during the 12-week program with separate sections for each course proctored. For each course proctored, trainees are required to complete a minimum of one page of final notes for each hour of course instruction. For example, sexual harassment in the workplace is a 4-hour course, so trainees would be required to write a minimum of four pages of final notes in narrative format to place in their notebooks. This same requirement applies for each basic training course contingent upon the total course hours. Based upon the qualitative data collected during the exit interviews, the researcher feels that the final-note requirement and paramilitary methodology do have an adverse effect on retention during the basic training program.

Finally, several recommendations were made by program participants for modification to the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast. Based upon those recommendations and the qualitative data collected throughout this study, the researcher feels that specific recommendations are warranted and should be brought forward to the agency executive leadership. The first recommendation would be to fully assess the 480-hour basic training curriculum and the specific courses taught, as well as the amount of time spent on each course. The training delivery strategies should be reviewed and consideration given to instruction and evaluation methods.

The second recommendation would be to thoroughly evaluate the agency recruitment, interview, and selection processes for correctional officer trainees (refer to the Recommendations for Future Studies section for an elaboration). Specifically, preemployment job-screening strategies should be reviewed and consideration given to the quality of candidates who are recruited. The third recommendation would involve

replacing elements of the paramilitary methodology with adult-learning principles and learning techniques conducive to an educational environment. The fourth and final recommendation that the researcher would make to the agency's executive leadership involves a review of basic training activities that have adverse effects on trainee motivation. Specifically, the prohibition of cell phone usage for 12 weeks should be reconsidered, and the imposition of trainees being required to perform push-ups, as well as other similar types of exercise, during and immediately around meal times should be discontinued.

Relationship of Findings to the Literature

The findings indicate several things that are supported by the literature. First, the significant difference in trainee perceptions and attitudes before and after basic training is a critical aspect of the evaluation. Those initial trainee perceptions and attitudes can have a direct impact on basic training retention. This outcome mirrors the findings of Hoshell (2009), who suggested that perceptions and attitudes among new and graduating officers during the formal police academy training process differ and could lead to trainees having second thoughts in choosing law enforcement as a career. Koper et al. (2001) also implied that law-enforcement staffing levels are affected by the success of the agency in training officers. Fewer trainees graduating from the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast equates to fewer officers working inside the correctional facilities to provide security, custody, and control.

When examining the findings of instructor delivery of content and efficacy, as related to trainee academic achievement, this study appears to support much of the existing literature. Morrison (2006) asserted that satisfactory basic training outcomes, as perceived by academy instructors, are relevant. According to Mathur et al. (2009),

instructor ability to affect student outcomes is likely to improve the probability of employee success. Given the outcome of overall trainee academic achievement for the current study, instructor delivery of content and instructor efficacy did not adversely affect trainee academic achievement.

When reviewing the findings of instructor efficacy and instructor delivery of content, this study appears to support most of the existing literature. Drummond (2009) determined that instructor self-efficacy and teaching style does have a significant impact on police recruit success. According to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), teacher efficacy is an important indicator of teacher capabilities as they relate to good teaching. McCraine et al. (2008) also viewed training evaluation of classroom delivery as critical in terms of learning and performance results. However, determining what training delivery methods and strategies are most productive in ensuring the transfer of learning to actual work performance is unclear. Either way, this study supports the literature around the effect of instructor efficacy on delivery of content.

Regarding the reasons that trainees provided for withdrawing from the basic training program before graduation, the literature has established a correlation between some of the provided reasons and overall basic training program success. Among the reasons provided by trainees for withdrawing early, the paramilitary methodology at the basic training academy at a state corrections academy in the southeast and instructor actions and behaviors were predominant. According to Post (1992), recruits trained in nonstressful settings actually learn more and perform better than those in stressful settings because of the intense socialization process.

Law-enforcement academy training programs experience a high percentage of withdrawals that relate to the training program itself (California Commission on Peace

Officer Standards and Training, 2006). Trainees withdrawing early commented on the level of stress created by instructors yelling and screaming at them. According to Oliva and Compton (2010), law-enforcement training environments that are conducted in a militaristic format may not be effective when teaching adult learners. Oliva and Compton further identified student preferences with respect to the classroom setting: engagement, practicality, respect, affiliation, and efficiency.

Finally, the literature on training methodology indicates that adult learners prefer learning strategies that are engaging and involve case-study methods, work groups, and other practical application methods (Birzer, 2003; Della, 2004; Drummond, 2009). Name-calling tactics and drill instructors yelling in the faces of trainees should be a pastime at most training academies, and andragogy or even heutagogy should be promoted instead (Birzer, 2003; Kitfield, 1997; Werth, 2009). Thus, the reasons provided by withdrawing trainees do support the literature regarding ineffective practices in basic training.

Numerous recommendations have been made based upon the qualitative data collected in this study, and all of those recommendations are supported by the literature. The first recommendation involves a complete assessment of the 480-hour basic training curriculum to include the specific courses taught and training delivery strategies. According to the literature, one method for determining training effectiveness is measuring learning transfer, which is “the ability to apply what one has learned from training back to one’s job” (McCraine et al., 2008, p. 56). This study evaluated the basic training processes, but a much more thorough assessment of the curriculum and delivery strategies and methods is recommended. Caro (2011) and Mathur et al. (2009) recommended continuous evaluation of basic training curriculum and activities based

upon a needs assessment of current officer knowledge and job-task analysis, as well as systemic thinking and student learning outcomes.

The second recommendation involves a thorough evaluation of the agency recruitment, interview, and selection processes for correctional officer trainees. Most law-enforcement agencies require extensive background checks before allowing admittance, and documented arrests will generally preclude someone's admittance (Bumphus et al., 1999). Henson et al. (2010) examined 10 years of postsecondary data for a police department's basic training program and determined that personal characteristics of candidates and job qualifications did relate to trainee success in basic training programs. Henson et al. also recommended that hiring processes in law-enforcement agencies should include selection criteria that are related to officer success. White (2008) further identified that the best predictor of being a top performer in basic training was reading level, specifically reading at the 12th-grade level or higher.

The third recommendation is to replace elements of the paramilitary methodology with adult-learning principles and techniques conducive to an educational environment. This study revealed critical areas in training methodology and activities that contributed to trainee retention, such as the components of a paramilitary training philosophy and residential academy environment. According to Drummond (2009), the military model of training was embraced by many law-enforcement agencies in the 20th century; however, education practitioners of the 21st century have suggested that a higher education classroom environment will provide learner-centered and problem-centered activities and applications desired by adult learners. Birzer (2003) and Feemster (2010) further asserted that the paramilitary training methods of the past are obviously disconnected from the public and community service missions of law-enforcement agencies today.

The final recommendation involves a review of basic training activities that have adverse effects on trainee motivation, specifically the prohibition of cell phone usage by trainees and the imposition of corporal punishment. Having access to personal cell phones provides a means of connection between trainees and their families while they are in basic training. Violanti (2001) determined that personal distress experienced by trainees during basic training requires the use of coping strategies. Access to communication with family members can serve as a coping strategy for trainees. Deprivation of that communication and connection to family can result in trainees withdrawing from basic training before graduation. Crawley (2006) determined that the level of stress in the training environment is one of the causes of early dropouts during basic training.

Crawley (2006) and Marion (1998) discovered that much of the stress on trainees is imposed by training instructors who exhibit sexism and elitism, which is discouraging to trainees. Twentieth-century basic training instructors were trained to grab trainees' attention by letting them know that the instructors were in charge, and, if trainees did not conform quickly to the routine, more discipline problems would occur (Ide, 1997). This type of interaction between instructors and trainees is no longer effective and creates unnecessary stress for trainees. Overall, the recommendations based upon the findings of this study are supported by existing literature.

Implications of Findings

Based on the findings, there are several items for the basic training academy at a state corrections academy in the southeast to consider for the program to achieve better retention rates and overall success. First, based upon the results of pretest and posttest basic training questionnaires, the trainee participants enrolled in the basic training

program must be better prepared to begin the training before they actually report for basic training. Learner preparation is crucial to ensuring learning transfer. According to Pollock and Jefferson (2012), learning transfer is “the process of putting learning to work in a way that improves performance” (p. 12).

Clarifying performance expectations for trainees before they attend basic training is the beginning of the learning transfer process. According to the National Institute of Corrections (2012), learning transfer “can be enhanced with proper interventions pretraining, during training, and posttraining” (p. iii). Thus, if the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast is to make improvements in retention, it appears that the area of trainee preparation and clarity in performance expectations will have to be greatly improved.

Next, conversations with withdrawing trainees and qualitative data collected throughout the study suggest that the paramilitary activities and organization of the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast need to be discontinued or modified. Much of the qualitative data collected from trainee participants referred to paramilitary activities in a negative light. Trainees withdrawing early from the program also referenced paramilitary activities as cause for their departure. It may be necessary to discontinue those paramilitary practices and replace them with adult-learning principles and learning strategies so that retention may be improved and learning will not be inhibited.

Finally, a major concern that was raised by this program evaluation was the character and quality of trainee applicants. Although this topic was not a focus of the purpose for this study, this appears to have been a concern for both trainee participants and instructor participants. The corrections agency responsible for hiring trainee

candidates to attend the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast does not currently conduct a structured interview, psychological testing, or any other form of extensive background investigation on trainee applicants. Trainee and instructor participants in this study both expressed concern regarding the character and quality of trainee applicants. Corruption among law-enforcement officers is not an anomaly, but psychological testing alone represents a reliable and valid predictor of good job performance (Arrigo & Claussen, 2003). If the program wants to increase retention rates and minimize trainee behavior problems during training, the corrections agency in the southeast will need to implement a structured preemployment screening process to identify questionable trainees before they are hired (Arrigo & Claussen, 2003).

Limitations

There are several limitations to this program evaluation. First, most of the data were collected using self-report questionnaires, thus raising the possibility of response set tendencies. Effective responses by participants may have been affected by daily events beyond the control of the researcher. Second, the questionnaires were collected anonymously, so the data were analyzed using independent *t* tests instead of paired-samples *t* tests, which could have revealed individual case data instead of group relationships. Third, this was an internal and formative process evaluation being conducted by the director of training. It may have been perceived by some stakeholders that the researcher lacked objectivity to effectively evaluate the program due to a conflict of interest. It might also be believed that the researcher knew too much (i.e., minutia) about the program and may have had difficulty in objectively reporting the findings of the research.

Another limitation was that the extent to which the findings generalized to law-

enforcement officers in other countries is not conclusive. It has been suggested that approaches to law enforcement vary across countries. Fourth, it is not clear the extent to which these findings would generalize to other occupations. Fifth, the program evaluation examined the academy training processes and not the potential of any one candidate to be hired as a law-enforcement officer. The individual law-enforcement agency's hiring processes were not evaluated in this program evaluation. The researcher was aware of these limitations and included procedures to control for them before beginning the evaluation. There is a possibility that other factors may have impacted trainee retention, academic achievement, and instructor effectiveness and that the program may have impacted gains in areas that were not being evaluated.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Because this program evaluation focused only on the process elements of the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast, there are several areas that surfaced relating to context, inputs, and outputs that might be worth evaluating with future studies. First, a study that evaluates the educational needs and established program objectives could be very valuable. This is an area that was highlighted throughout this process evaluation in the qualitative data, and a recommendation was made to perform a complete assessment of the basic training curriculum. A possible research design would be to select three to four basic training courses that utilize different training delivery methods and strategies. Then, the researcher would measure participant perceptions of perceived learning transfer based upon the varying training delivery strategies. This type of study would assist in determining the best training delivery strategy based upon the educational needs and program objectives.

Another recommended study is to examine what aspects of basic training

instructor inputs are affected by instructor efficacy. This is another area that was routinely exposed during the current study. Basic training instructors are an important input in the training program process and, according to the qualitative data in this study, instructors can have an adverse effect on training outputs. A possible research design would be to examine the relationship between instructor education levels and instructor efficacy as they compare to participant success in a basic training environment. This type of study would also lend to methods of measuring instructor confidence levels in assigned duties and responsibilities.

Finally, the researcher recommends that a future study be conducted on agency recruitment, interview, and selection processes for correctional officer trainees. Graduating and retaining correctional officers represent the ultimate outputs and products of the basic training program. Of the 85 graduates who completed the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast during the present study, 14 (16%) of the graduates had already left the agency within 1 year of graduating. A possible research design would involve a comparison of postsecondary employment data from a previous time frame when substantial preemployment screening was conducted with postsecondary employment data from a recent time frame when limited preemployment screening was conducted. Variables might include the length of employment, discipline history, and reason for separation from the agency. A study such as this would assist the agency in determining the worth of preemployment screening as it relates to retention.

This program evaluation was the first attempt to assess the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast. The researcher will discuss the results of this study with agency executive leadership, other law-enforcement basic training

administrators, and stakeholders of the basic training program at a state corrections academy in the southeast so that findings can be utilized as a tool in the decision-making process regarding any future modifications to the basic training program. The researcher is also hopeful that this study will serve as a springboard for further evaluation of the basic training program. This study may also be of assistance for other researchers who are considering conducting a program evaluation within their organization.

The 21st century has encouraged more focus on learning and performance within law enforcement and correctional agencies (National Institute of Corrections, 2012). Researchers and leaders in the field of law enforcement recognize the ongoing need to “collect, interpret, and disseminate information and evidence as it relates to learning and performance” (National Institute of Corrections, 2012, p. 1). Caro (2011) also recommended continuous evaluation of basic training curriculum based upon a needs assessment of current officer knowledge and a job-task analysis of current officer roles and responsibilities. In this era of budget reductions and an increasingly evolving workforce, program productivity and accountability are crucial elements to program sustainment and success.

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Appendix A
Entrance Questionnaire

Entrance Questionnaire

Section 1: Demographic Data

Please respond to the following questionnaire regarding your background prior to attending the basic training program. Please select only one choice per question.

1. What is your gender?
 - a. Female
 - b. Male

2. What is your age?
 - a. 25 years of age or younger
 - b. 26 – 32 years old
 - c. 33 – 39 years old
 - d. 40 – 46 years old
 - e. 47 years of age or older

3. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. Black
 - b. Hispanic
 - c. Native American or Alaskan Native
 - d. White
 - e. Other, please specify_____

4. What is your highest degree of education attained?
 - a. High school / GED
 - b. Associate Degree
 - c. Bachelor Degree
 - d. Master Degree
 - e. Doctoral Degree

5. What is your marital status?
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Separated
 - d. Divorced
 - e. Widowed

6. Do you have any children?
 - a. No
 - b. Yes

7. Have you ever served in the military?
 - a. No
 - b. Yes

8. Do you have family members who are or have been a law enforcement officer?
 - a. No
 - b. Yes

9. Do you have acquaintances who are or have been a law enforcement officer?
 - a. No
 - b. Yes

10. Prior to becoming a Correctional Officer Trainee was most or all of your acquired information about law enforcement obtained from various media sources e.g. the news?
 - a. No
 - b. Yes

11. How long do you plan to remain a correctional officer?
 - a. 0 – 5 years
 - b. 6 – 10 years
 - c. 11 years or until retirement
 - d. Uncertain

Section 2: Basic Training Program Perceptions

Please respond to the following questions regarding your perceptions and attitudes about the basic training program. Please select only one choice per question.

My perception of basic training program includes:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12. A typical day will usually be exciting.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
13. The majority of trainees are in good physical condition.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
14. The basic training program instructors will enforce the rules fairly.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
15. The job of a correctional officer is regarded as a prestigious career.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
16. Generally, a correctional officer is admired by the public.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
17. Generally, a correctional officer is knowledgeable of the laws, rules, and regulations they enforce.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
18. The basic training program will properly prepare me for the expected role requirements as a correctional officer.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
19. "War" stories expressed by instructors will benefit my understanding of class learning objectives.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
20. "War" stories expressed by course instructors will encourage					

me to be a more effective correctional officer.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
21. The skills training will be challenging.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
22. The academic curriculum will be challenging.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
23. Instructors will be challenging as they lead us professionally.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
24. Being a trainee in the basic training program will be a rewarding experience.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
25. I expect my family to be supportive during my enrollment in the basic training program.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
26. I feel I will benefit professionally from the basic training program.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
27. As a trainee in the basic training program, I will have gained realistic expectations of the job.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
28. I expect instructors to follow strict protocols pertaining to rank structure with trainees.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
29. As a result of the basic training program, I expect to be proficient in all major aspects of the profession.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
30. As a result of the basic training program, I expect to be knowledgeable in all major aspects of the profession.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
31. As a result of the basic training program, I expect to be able to perform the job requirements of a correctional officer with confidence.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
32. As a result of the basic training program, I expect to have a high commitment to the job as a correctional officer.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
33. As a result of the basic training program, I expect to be adequately prepared for the position of a correctional officer.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
34. The physical fitness training will be challenging.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
35. The CPR, AED, and First Aid training will be challenging.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
36. The firearms training will be challenging.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
37. The Legal Issues training component will be challenging.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
38. The basic training program will push me to limits I have not	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)

experienced in the past.					
39. I expect basic training activities to mirror the work environment inside correctional facilities.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
40. I expect the basic training program to be a stressful experience.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)

Appendix B
Exit Questionnaire

Exit Questionnaire

Section 1: Demographic Data

Please respond to the following questionnaire regarding your background after attending the basic training program. Please select only one choice per question.

1. What is your gender?
 - c. Female
 - d. Male

2. What is your age?
 - f. 25 years of age or younger
 - g. 26 – 32 years old
 - h. 33 – 39 years old
 - i. 40 – 46 years old
 - j. 47 years of age or older

3. What is your ethnicity?
 - f. Black
 - g. Hispanic
 - h. Native American or Alaskan Native
 - i. White
 - j. Other, please specify_____

4. What is your highest degree of education attained?
 - f. High school / GED
 - g. Associate Degree
 - h. Bachelor Degree
 - i. Master Degree
 - j. Doctoral Degree

5. What is your marital status?
 - f. Single
 - g. Married
 - h. Separated
 - i. Divorced
 - j. Widowed

6. Do you have any children?
 - c. No
 - d. Yes

7. Have you ever served in the military?
 - c. No
 - d. Yes

8. Do you have family members who are or have been a law enforcement officer?
 c. No
 d. Yes
9. Do you have acquaintances who are or have been a law enforcement officer?
 c. No
 d. Yes
10. Prior to becoming a Correctional Officer Trainee was most or all of your acquired information about law enforcement obtained from various media sources e.g. the news?
 c. No
 d. Yes
11. How long do you plan to remain a correctional officer?
 e. 0–5years
 f. 6–10 years
 g. 11 years or until retirement
 h. Uncertain

Section 2: Basic Training Program Perceptions

Please respond to the following questions regarding your perceptions and attitudes about the basic training program. Please select only one choice per question.

<i>My perception of basic training program includes:</i>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12. A typical day was usually exciting.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
13. The majority of trainees are in good physical condition.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
14. The basic training program instructors enforced the rules fairly.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
15. The job of a correctional officer is regarded as a prestigious career.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
16. Generally, a correctional officer is admired by the public.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
17. Generally, a correctional officer is knowledgeable of the laws, rules, and regulations they enforce.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
18. The basic training program properly prepared me for the expected role requirements as a correctional officer.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
19. "War" stories expressed by instructors benefited my understanding of class learning objectives.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
20. "War" stories expressed by course instructors encouraged me to be a more effective correctional officer.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
21. The skills training was challenging.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
22. The academic curriculum was challenging.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
23. Instructors were challenging as they lead us professionally.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
24. Being a trainee in the basic training program was a rewarding experience.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
25. My family was supportive during					

my enrollment in the basic training program.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
26. I feel I have benefited professionally from the basic training program.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
27. As a trainee in the basic training program, I have gained realistic expectations of the job.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
28. Instructors followed strict protocols pertaining to rank structure with trainees.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
29. As a result of the basic training program, I am proficient in all major aspects of the profession.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
30. As a result of the basic training program, I am knowledgeable in all major aspects of the profession.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
31. As a result of the basic training program, I am able to perform the job requirements of a correctional officer with confidence.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
32. As a result of the basic training program, I have a high commitment to the job as a correctional officer.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
33. As a result of the basic training program, I am adequately prepared for the position of a correctional officer.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
34. The physical fitness training was challenging.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
35. The CPR, AED, and First Aid training were challenging.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
36. The firearms training was challenging.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
37. The Legal Issues training component was challenging.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
38. The basic training program pushed me to limits I had not experienced in the past.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
39. The basic training activities mirrored the work environment inside correctional facilities.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
40. The basic training program was a stressful experience.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)

Additional Comments:

Appendix C
Exit Interview Questions

Exit Interview Questions

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your ethnicity?
4. What is your highest degree of education attained?
5. What is your marital status?
6. Do you have any children?
7. Have you ever served in the military?
8. Tell me about how you've come to the decision to depart the basic training program before completion?
9. What is your main reason for leaving?
10. What are the other reasons for your leaving?
11. Within the basic training program you have experienced, what was it that concerned you particularly?
12. What could have been done to prevent the situation or provide a basis for you to remain in the basic training program?
13. What can you share about the basic training processes, procedures, or systems that have contributed to your decision to depart prior to graduation?
14. What specific suggestions would you have for how the program could be managed differently?
15. How do you feel about the department's basic training program?
16. What training methods and topics did you find most useful?
17. What training methods and topics did you find least useful?

Other comments or suggestions:

Appendix D
Course Evaluation

Course Evaluation

Please respond with your level of agreement to the statements below regarding your opinion of <i>Instructor Delivery of Content</i> in this course:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Topic: Instructor:					
1. I was satisfied with the way the class was presented.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
2. The instructor was knowledgeable in the subject.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
3. The subject was logically presented in a systematic manner.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
4. The instructor was enthusiastic about the subject matter.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
5. The instructor communicated the subject matter clearly.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
6. The instruction increased my knowledge of the subject.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
7. The instructor's pace of instruction allowed for note-taking.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
8. The instructor's use of examples or personal experience helped to get point(s) across.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
9. The instructor used a variety of methods to teach the concepts.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
10. The instructor promoted dialogue among students.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
11. The instructor increased my interest about the subject matter.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
12. The instructor helped connect the subject matter to my daily work performance.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)

Appendix E

Instructor Sense-of-Efficacy Scale

Instructor Sense-of-Efficacy Scale

Instructor Beliefs	Agreement				
<p>Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for instructors in training activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.</p> <p>I believe:</p>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I get through to the most difficult trainees.					
2. I help trainees think critically.					
3. I control disruptive behavior in the classroom.					
4. I motivate trainees who show low interest in training.					
5. I make my expectations clear about trainee behavior.					
6. I get trainees to believe they can do well in training.					
7. I respond well to difficult questions from trainees.					
8. I establish routines to keep activities running smoothly.					
9. I have the ability to help trainees value learning.					
10. I gauge trainee comprehension of what I have taught.					
11. I craft good questions for trainees.					
12. I foster trainee creativity.					
13. I have the ability to get trainees to follow academy rules.					
14. I improve the understanding of a trainee who is failing.					
15. I calm a trainee who is disruptive or noisy.					
16. I establish a classroom management system with each group of trainees.					
17. I have the flexibility to modify the lesson plan.					
18. I adjust the lesson plan to the proper level for individual trainees.					
19. I use a variety of assessment strategies in the classroom.					
20. I keep a few problem trainees from ruining an entire lesson.					
21. I provide an alternate explanation or example when students are confused.					
22. I respond to defiant trainees well.					
23. I implement alternative strategies in the classroom.					
24. I provide appropriate challenges for very capable trainees.					

Additional Comments:

Appendix F

Results for Items About Trainee Perceptions and Attitudes

Results for Items About Trainee Perceptions and Attitudes

Section 1

Summary of Training Perceptions and Attitudes for Items 12-20

Item	BTEN				BTEX			
	<i>N</i>	Mdn	Min	Max	<i>N</i>	Mdn	Min	Max
12. A typical day will be (was) usually exciting.	106	3.00	1.00	5.00	85	3.00	1.00	5.00
13. The majority of trainees are in good physical condition.	106	4.00	1.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00
14. The basic training program instructors (will) enforce(d) the rules fairly.	106	4.00	1.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00
15. The job of a correctional officer is regarded as a prestigious career.	106	4.00	1.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00
16. Generally, a correctional officer is admired by the public.	106	4.00	1.00	5.00	85	3.00	1.00	5.00
17. Generally, a correctional officer is knowledgeable of the laws, rules, and regulations they enforce.	106	5.00	3.00	5.00	85	4.00	2.00	5.00
18. The basic training program (will) properly prepare(d) me for the expected role requirements as a correctional officer.	106	5.00	2.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00
19. "War" stories expressed by instructors (will) benefit(ed) my understanding of class learning objectives.	106	4.00	1.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00
20. "War" stories expressed by course instructors (will) encourage(d) me to be a more effective correctional officer.	106	4.00	1.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00

Section 2
Mean Ranks of Trainee Perceptions and Attitudes for Items 12-23

Item	Mean ranks			<i>p</i>
	BTEN	BTEX	<i>Z</i>	
12. A typical day will be (was) usually exciting.	109.32	79.39	-3.87	.00
13. The majority of trainees are in good physical condition.	95.03	97.21	-.29	.77
14. The basic training program instructors (will) enforce(d) the rules fairly.	114.99	72.32	-5.57	.00
15. The job of a correctional officer is regarded as a prestigious career.	101.94	88.59	-1.75	.08
16. Generally, a correctional officer is admired by the public.	107.27	81.95	-3.27	.00
17. Generally, a correctional officer is knowledgeable of the laws, rules, and regulations they enforce.	109.65	78.98	-4.23	.00
18. The basic training program (will) properly prepare(d) me for the expected role requirements as a correctional officer.	107.42	81.76	-3.54	.00
19. "War" stories expressed by instructors (will) benefit(ed) my understanding of class learning objectives.	90.53	102.82	-1.61	.11
20. "War" stories expressed by course instructors (will) encourage(d) me to be a more effective correctional officer.	94.39	98.01	-.48	.63
21. The skills training will be (was) challenging.	106.56	82.83	-3.11	.00
22. The academic curriculum will be (was) challenging.	108.55	80.35	-3.67	.00
23. Instructors will be (were) challenging as they lead us professionally.	107.61	81.52	-3.49	.00

Section 3
Summary of Trainee Perceptions and Attitudes for Items 21-29

Item	BTEN				BTEX			
	<i>N</i>	Mdn	Min	Max	<i>N</i>	Mdn	Min	Max
21. The skills training will be (was) challenging.	106	4.00	1.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00
22. The academic curriculum will be (was) challenging.	106	4.00	1.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00
23. Instructors will be (were) challenging as they lead us professionally.	106	4.00	2.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00
24. Being a trainee in the basic training program will be (was) a rewarding experience.	106	5.00	2.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00
25. (I expect) my family to be (was) supportive during my enrollment in the basic training program.	106	5.00	1.00	5.00	85	5.00	1.00	5.00
26. I feel I will (have) benefit(ed) professionally from the basic training program.	106	5.00	1.00	5.00	85	5.00	1.00	5.00
27. As a trainee in the basic training program, I (will) have gained realistic expectations of the job.	106	4.00	3.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00
28. (I expect) instructors (to) follow(ed) strict protocols pertaining to rank structure with trainees.	106	5.00	2.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00
29. As a result of the basic training program, I expect to be (am) proficient in all major aspects of the profession.	106	5.00	3.00	5.00	84	4.00	1.00	5.00

Section 4
Mean Ranks of Trainee Perceptions and Attitudes for Items 24-32

Item	Mean ranks			
	BTEN	BTEX	Z	<i>p</i>
24. Being a trainee in the basic training program will be (was) a rewarding experience.	100.71	90.13	-1.47	.14
25. (I expect) my family to be (was) supportive during my enrollment in the basic training program.	97.16	94.55	-.42	.67
26. I feel I will (have) benefit(ed) professionally from the basic training program.	102.07	88.04	-1.95	.05
27. As a trainee in the basic training program, I (will) have gained realistic expectations of the job.	98.75	92.58	-.84	.40
28. (I expect) instructors (to) follow(ed) strict protocols pertaining to rank structure with trainees.	112.20	74.87	-4.96	.00
29. As a result of the basic training program, I expect to be (am) proficient in all major aspects of the profession.	116.45	69.06	-6.47	.00
30. As a result of the basic training program, I expect to be (am) knowledgeable in all major aspects of the profession.	113.80	73.80	-5.47	.00
31. As a result of the basic training program, I expect to be (am) able to perform the job requirements of a correctional officer with confidence.	108.05	80.97	-3.76	.00
32. As a result of the basic training program, I (expect to) have a high commitment to the job as a correctional officer.	102.97	87.31	-2.19	.03

Section 5
Summary of Trainee Perceptions and Attitudes for Items 30-37

Item	BTEN				BTEX			
	<i>N</i>	Mdn	Min	Max	<i>N</i>	Mdn	Min	Max
30. As a result of the basic training program, I expect to be (am) knowledgeable in all major aspects of the profession.	106	5.00	3.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00
31. As a result of the basic training program, I expect to be (am) able to perform the job requirements of a correctional officer with confidence.	106	5.00	3.00	5.00	85	4.00	2.00	5.00
32. As a result of the basic training program, I (expect to) have a high commitment to the job as a correctional officer.	106	5.00	3.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00
33. As a result of the basic training program, I expect to be (am) adequately prepared for the position of a correctional officer.	106	5.00	3.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00
34. The physical fitness training will be (was) challenging.	106	4.00	1.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00
35. The CPR, AED, and first aid training will be (was) challenging.	106	4.00	1.00	5.00	85	3.00	1.00	5.00
36. The firearms training will be (was) challenging.	106	4.00	1.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00
37. The legal issues training component will be (was) challenging.	106	4.00	1.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00

Section 6
Mean Ranks of Trainee Perceptions and Attitudes for Items 33-40

Item	Mean ranks			
	BTEN	BTEX	Z	<i>p</i>
33. As a result of the basic training program, I expect to be (am) adequately prepared for the position of a correctional officer.	107.74	81.36	-3.64	.00
34. The physical fitness training will be (was) challenging.	114.26	73.23	-5.30	.00
35. The CPR, AED, and first aid training will be (was) challenging.	113.47	74.21	-5.05	.00
36. The firearms training will be (was) challenging.	99.53	91.59	-1.03	.31
37. The legal issues training component will be (was) challenging.	109.36	79.34	-3.88	.00
38. The basic training program (will) push(ed) me to limits I have not experienced in the past.	105.04	84.72	-2.61	.01
39. (I expect) basic training activities (to) mirror(ed) the work environment inside correctional facilities.	113.46	74.23	-5.11	.00
40. (I expect) the basic training program to be (was) a stressful experience.	86.15	108.28	-2.84	.01

Section 7
Summary of Trainee Perceptions and Attitudes for Items 38-40

Item	BTEN				BTEX			
	<i>N</i>	Mdn	Min	Max	<i>N</i>	Mdn	Min	Max
38. The basic training program (will) push(ed) me to limits I have not experienced in the past.	106	4.00	1.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00
39. (I expect) basic training activities (to) mirror(ed) the work environment inside correctional facilities.	106	4.00	2.00	5.00	85	3.00	1.00	5.00
40. (I expect) the basic training program to be (was) a stressful experience.	106	3.00	1.00	5.00	85	4.00	1.00	5.00

Appendix G

Correlation of Instructor Delivery of Content and Trainee Academic Achievement

Correlation of Instructor Delivery of Content and Trainee Academic Achievement

Course	<i>N</i>	<i>R_s</i>	<i>p</i>
Sexual harassment in the workplace	86	.09	.22
Corrections as a profession	85	-.04	.37
Overview of the criminal justice system	85	-.07	.25
Inmate behavior	85	.14	.11
Hostage situations in a correctional facility	85	.01	.45
Use of force	85	.05	.32
Staff rights and responsibilities	82	-.12	.15
Disciplinary procedures	82	.01	.46
Security, custody, and control	84	-.17	.06
Institutional hygiene	83	-.27	.01
Key and tool control	83	-.15	.09
Visitation procedures	83	-.04	.35

Appendix H

Correlation of Instructor Sense of Efficacy and Trainee Academic Achievement

Correlation of Instructor Sense of Efficacy and Trainee Academic Achievement

Course	<i>N</i>	<i>Rs</i>	<i>p</i>
Sexual harassment in the workplace	86	.42	.04
Corrections as a profession	85	.32	.13
Overview of the criminal justice system	85	.07	.73
Inmate behavior	85	-.19	.37
Hostage situations in a correctional facility	85	-.30	.19
Use of force	86	-.24	.26
Staff rights and responsibilities	86	-.08	.70
Disciplinary procedures	86	-.24	.27
Security, custody, and control	85	.07	.73
Institutional hygiene	85	-.24	.27
Key and tool control	85	.08	.72
Visitation procedures	85	.31	.14

Appendix I

Correlation of Instructor Sense of Efficacy and Instructor Delivery of Content

Correlation of Instructor Sense of Efficacy and Instructor Delivery of Content

Course	<i>N</i>	<i>Rs</i>	<i>p</i>
Sexual harassment in the workplace	24	-.46	.02
Corrections as a profession	24	.13	.53
Overview of the criminal justice system	24	.05	.82
Inmate behavior	24	.20	.39
Hostage situations in a correctional facility	24	.01	.95
Use of force	24	-.23	.28
Staff rights and responsibilities	23	.05	.83
Disciplinary procedures	23	.30	.17
Security, custody, and control	24	-.32	.13
Institutional hygiene	24	.30	.16
Key and tool control	24	.16	.46
Visitation procedures	24	-.05	.83