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TO : Chief, Operations School

DATE: 5 July 1960

FROM : Chief Instructor, Information Reporting,
Reports, and RequirementsSUBJECT: Final Course Report - Information Reporting,
Reports, and Requirements No. 27,
6-24 June 1960Synopsis

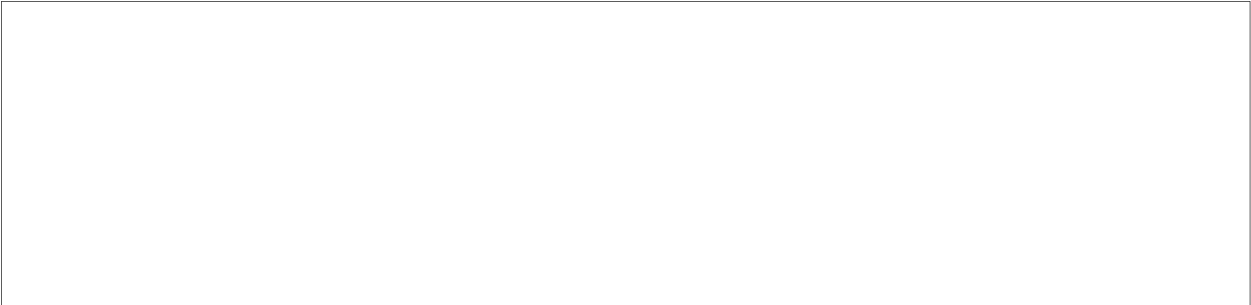
1. Although nine students were registered for Information Reporting, Reports, and Requirements Number 27, ten attended the class. The tenth student was [redacted] who already was enrolled in IRRR as a tutorial student. She is taking training beyond that obtained in the regular IRRR class. (b)(3)

2. Of the ten students attending the class, four were men. Two men and one woman had assignments or prospective assignments primarily in operations; in the woman's case consideration was being given to a change into reports. The others were headed for assignments as reports officers, only two of them in the field. Five area divisions, one less than in the preceding class, enrolled students. NE, as usual, led in enrollments with three; WH and WE followed with two each; and FE and IO brought up the rear with one each. [redacted] has been working on SR material, and the chance is good of her getting an assignment as a reports officer there. Again no student came from the Africa division. In respect to years, the class was one of unusual maturity; the average age of students was 36 years. Maturity of performance, unless one bases judgment on creaking decrepitude, did not measure up to that of years. More on that topic will come later. The age spread was from 25 to 54 years. The average GS grade of 8 was up one step over that of the preceding class, a class much higher in the level of performance. The roster of class number 27 and data on individual members follows. (b)(3)

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3. The early attitude of the class as a whole was one of bored indifference to instruction. During the first day of the session, there was not a perceptible spark in the whole group. They just sat, evidently expecting to absorb information without effort. In answer to an ultimatum served on them between 0830 and 0900 hours on the second day either actively to start collecting and recording course substance for a final report or suffer the consequences of a low rating, about half the class came awake. Others were snapped out of their lethargy by individual warnings. Two, though, never did become productively active - one because of semicovered indolence and the other because of inability to understand. As the course progressed, the awakened eight showed increasing receptivity by participation in class discussions and by asking questions of lecturers. In punctuality and in regularity of attendance, however, the class as a whole came up with a patchy record.

Student Performance

4. A breakdown of the 40 ratings given the class shows 1 of them to have been superior, 17 of them to have been excellent, 14 of them to have been satisfactory, 5 of them to have been failing and three of them to have been poor. As a matter of fact, on the formal student-evaluation forms, four of the failures were not recorded except as almost total lack of performance that could be evaluated. Incidentally, too, at least two of the excellents came not from the students' working to near capacity but from natural editorial gifts. Class number 26 had earned the high number of excellents; class number 27 earned perhaps the high number of poors and failures. The four areas of performance rated were production, requirements, editing, and reporting.

5. Four students - [redacted] and [redacted] - were rated excellent in all performance. [redacted] in reporting, including the collection of information, did superior work. Her final course report was among the best yet produced in completeness of coverage, understanding of substance, appropriate organization, and effectiveness of expression; the test was a searching one of her ability to collect information over a fairly extended period of time with the understanding necessary to its communication. Working quietly and steadily, [redacted] completely fulfilled the promise of an earlier test made of his ability to carry through a reporting assignment from the collection of

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information to organizing it and expressing it suitably. The preliminary test had been made at the request of the NE chief of reports and requirements before [redacted] was put to work in reports and then entered in the IRRR course. [redacted] who had received some preliminary tutorial training, in all respects kept to the high level of performance on which she had started. Her best effort was a steadily sustained one on putting long and complicated SR raw reports into finished form. Since she may be assigned as a reports officer to SR, the work has been practical for her and useful for the chief reports officer of that division. [redacted] starting day in the IRRR class was her starting day in the Agency. Her assignment calls for her going [redacted] with her husband as a contract employee to put into final form information reports. When one considers that in competition with a senior operations officer of 12 years' service in the Agency, [redacted] achieved an over-all higher level of performance, one realizes what remarkable progress she made. She entered the class with no knowledge of CS reports; she left it able to prepare effective finished reports and intelligence cables. Furthermore, she was well on her way to developing sound judgment in the appraisal of information values. After the general bad start of the class, the progress of these four members is a real achievement, both from their point of view and the instructor's.

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6. It was unusual to have two students in an IRRR class whose performance was rated as generally unsatisfactory. They were not troublesome in the sense of making nuisances of themselves. Although [redacted] dozed through many a lecture or dreamily visited far lands, she did so unobtrusively and to the annoyance of no one but the speaker who, facing her, could not help noticing his lack of effectiveness in holding her attention. She just was not interested in learning; ergo, she did not learn. The problem was as simple as that. Obviously, too, she was not interested in working either. On the other hand, [redacted] worked hard and long; she missed no time from class, and she worked in the laboratory after hours and on week ends. Despite all her work, though, achievement was so negligible as to make performance unratable. First, the substance of the course was to a large extent incomprehensible to her. Second, although English may be her native tongue and she may be fluent in Spanish, her English is larded with illiteracies. She consistently wrote subordinate clauses as sentences. She failed to distinguish between such words as site and cite, principal and principle, navel and naval, overtly and overly, there and thier [sic], and its and it's. Often her subjects and verbs did not agree in number. A member of her Career Service panel said that she had been entered in the course as an experiment in what could be done in making a reports officer of her. He was told that the experiment had failed. In education of any sort, miracles do not happen, particularly in raising a 54-year-old woman's level of comprehension appreciably and erasing patterns of illiteracies deeply engraved by the years. Making an acceptable reports officer out of [redacted] even with the constant help of her labors, would be a miracle indeed.

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7. [redacted] was the second student in two successive classes who made no strong effort to realize her full potential, which was unusually high. Apparently as an operations officer with not too much to do and plenty of time in which to do it, her work habits have become leisurely. That work pattern carried over into the IRRR class. Her comings and goings were too largely a matter of the pressures of personal business instead of Agency duties, with the result that her attendance record was shaky and her tardiness record consistent. Obviously she did not collect the knowledge of course substance that she should have. In assignments requiring steady application and fairly long concentration, the resulting reports generally showed a steady decline through the later stages until the collapse came at the end. In at least two reports, however, one of them the final one on the course, [redacted] did work to capacity; they were excellent products in substance, in organization, and in expression. When she really tried, [redacted] wrote with rare effectiveness. If she wanted to, and could, regain a sense of urgency in going all out in a drive to do a job, she no doubt could become a top-flight reports and requirements officer. To an instructor, it brings a sense of failure to see potentials falling off and skills withering instead of growing. (b)(3)

Student Comments

8. In final reports made of information on the course substance collected during the three weeks, student reactions are required in a comment section. Some made by this class that may be significant follow.

"I believe I am a much more valuable person to the Agency after having been a student for the past three weeks."

"Since I had no knowledge of the organization of this Agency or of its regulations and procedures when I entered the class, the instruction has been invaluable to me. I am amazed at the amount of material covered in three weeks. I feel that it would have taken me many months to learn these things on the job; and in all probability I would never have had another opportunity to learn some of them."

"Perhaps of greatest interest in the long run was the renewed awareness I gained of the fact that production of information and intelligence, and not merely the collection or the establishment of access in order to collect, is the real objective of the FI function."

"This course has been most useful in not only teaching the writer [of this report] to write more effectively but also in helping him to learn a great deal about how operations should be conducted for maximum productiveness."

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"One of the most valuable parts of the IRRR course is sending out students on actual reporting assignments. This is the only way that they can begin to realize the difficulties involved in the reporting process and be aware of the high level of skill necessary to be a good reporter. They learn to appreciate the problems that face reporters and to realize the importance of adequate direction in the assignment of a reporting job."

"I found the experience and knowledge gained from the course to be of great value to me in my future career."

"The three-weeks length of the course is long enough to present the topical material, but the period of time available within the three weeks for actual collection and reporting of information under guidance seems short. This is the most important part of the course and for many students represents the first opportunity to write with informed supervision."

Conclusions and Recommendations

9. The course is on the right track. It will be noticed that consistently running through student comments on it is emphasis not on entertainment values, interest, effectiveness of presentation, and such, but on its usefulness to the student in increasing his skills and in furthering his career. With increase in practicable skills will come improvement in the intelligence information product-the purpose for which the course was developed. To further the practicality of the course, in line with many student suggestions, the attempt will be continued to limit presentation of substance to the first week and increase to two weeks the amount of time for actual collection of information and its organization and expression within the framework of official practices in format.

10. It is recommended that [redacted] presentation of the [redacted] handling of the intelligence cable and the TD report, given for the first time to this class, be retained. In thoroughness, in clarity, and in effective speaking, it rated high among talks given in the course.

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11. The recommendation for appointment of another instructor in the IRRR course has changed in tone since the report on the 26th class. The real need is now apparent for a replacement before the first autumn class. Being tied down completely for three weeks at a stretch reduces too sharply the over-all effectiveness of a single instructor. There is no change in attitude toward the desirability of a youthfully flexible and energetic man.



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