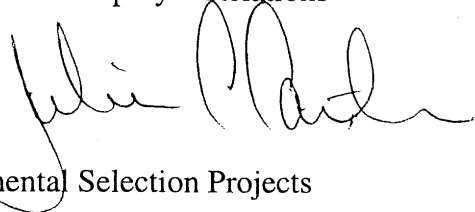


Memo

DATE: February 15, 2002

TO: Joint Subcommittee on Employee Relations

FROM: Julien C. Carter
Commissioner 

RE: Report on Experimental Selection Projects

Attached is a copy of the Report on Experimental Selection Projects. This annual report summarizes selection experiments conducted during the past fiscal year under the authority of M.S. 43A.04, Subdivision 9.

Seven agencies participated in twelve experimental projects during FY 2001. The greatest number of appointments under an experimental exam was made using the Minnesota Office Specialist Test (MOST) exam. Selection based on waiving eligible lists or exam scoring also continued to generate a great amount of interest. These experimental selection projects allow us to meet the special needs of agencies. They also enable us to try out new methods of selection that will increase our ability to compete for qualified applicants in today's tight labor market.

JCC:MJE

Report on Experimental Selection Projects

Submitted to
Joint Subcommittee on Employee Relations
FY 2001

Minnesota
Department of
Employee
Relations

*Leadership and partnership in
human resource management*

REPORT ON EXPERIMENTAL SELECTION PROJECTS

M.S. 43A.04, Subdivision 9. Experimental or research projects.

The commissioner of employee relations may conduct experimental or research projects designed to improve recruitment, selection, referral, or appointment processes for the filling of state classified positions.

The commissioner shall meet and confer with the affected exclusive bargaining representative of state employees concerning the design and implementation of experimental and research projects under this subdivision.

Any provision in sections 43A.09 to 43A.15, associated personnel rules adopted under subdivision 3, or administrative procedures established under subdivision 4, is waived for the purposes of these projects. The number of appointments under this subdivision may not exceed five percent of the total number of appointments in the preceding fiscal year.

The commissioner shall report by September 1 to the legislative commission on employee relations the results of the experimental research projects conducted in the preceding fiscal year.

Experiments conducted during fiscal year 2001

The Department of Employee Relations, in cooperation with state agencies, conducted 15 selection experiments during the past fiscal year.

- Waiver of eligible list or exam scoring
 - Director of Travel Management (Administration) (page 3)
 - NR Program Consultant – Wildlife Biometrician (page 4)
 - NR Specialist/NR Specialist Intermediate (Wildlife Research Biologist) (page 5)
 - NR Wildlife Research Manager (page 6)
 - Personnel Officer/Senior (page 7)
 - State Programs Administrator Manager Senior (Transportation) (page 8)
 - Transportation Generalist (page 9)
- Use of targeted recruiting in lieu of the *Minnesota Career Opportunities Bulletin*, along with waiver of eligible list or exam scoring
 - Director, Statewide Assessment (page 11)
 - EEO Contract Compliance Supervisor (page 13)
 - MINNCOR Vice-President Marketing (page 14)
 - State Programs Administrator Manager (Facilities Management Coordinator) (page 16)

- Use of an alternate examination process for a single location
 - Corrections Officer 1/Trainee (page 17)
- Supplementing an Eligible List Certification with names from the Skill Search database
 - Graphic Arts Specialist (page 19)
- Use of an unscored written test and position-specific search criteria
 - Minnesota Office Specialist Test (MOST) (page 20)
- Qualifying for transfer/demotion through on-the-job training and experience
 - Supervisory positions in the Middle Management Association (page 23)

Summary:

The most frequent subject of experimental projects was the waiver of an eligible list or exam scoring. This approach allowed agencies to use a "private sector" approach in which they collected, screened, but did not score applications by a predetermined examination process. This saved a great deal of time in the screening process, and eliminated sending out notices and dealing with appeals. This process allows an agency to consider a wide variety of potential candidates, or to search for specialized skills for a variety of vacancies within a single class.

The greatest number of appointments under an experimental exam was made using the Minnesota Office Specialist Test. While a minimum screen for qualifications common to all jobs was done, this exam basically involves assessing candidates' qualifications for individual vacancies, rather than testing for the job class as a whole. This allows us to accommodate many different types of positions with different skill requirements.

Costs of producing this report:

As required by Laws of 1994, Chapter 559, the estimated cost of preparing this report is \$2200.

Experiments 1 - 7:	Waiver of creation of eligible list or exam scoring
Description:	A "private sector" process was utilized to screen applicants, omitting formal scoring, notices, eligible list and certification
Experiment 1:	Director of Travel Management
Date begun:	August 18, 2000
Participating Agency:	Administration
Appointments:	1

Explanation: The agency requested an experimental exam to fill a single incumbent position for their Travel Management Director. The purpose of this experiment was to allow the agency greater flexibility in recruiting due to concerns about the current availability of candidates. It was determined that only preferred qualifications would be identified, but that the agency would apply job-related assessments to any applicants. It waived both the ranking and certification of eligibles (M.S. 43A.12 and 43A.13).

The agency listed the vacancy with the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* newspaper for two weekends and with the *Automotive Fleet* magazine and NAFA (National Association of Fleet Administrators) *Fleet Focus Newsletter*.

Results/Analysis: The agency received 114 applicant responses. Applicants' resumes were scanned into the Resumix software database in order to use automated selection to screen the applicant pool. Agency Human Resources staff did initial screens and forwarded a list of 13 finalists to the hiring authority for further consideration. The Human Resources staff also assisted with the in-person and telephone interviews. An offer was extended in early November and the position was filled effective 11/22/00.

Assessment: The agency expressed concern about use of the software because organizing materials, obtaining applications, and conducting the database search took extensive time. They also expressed concern regarding the availability of certain terms in the software's lexicon of searchable terms. The agency asked to add a particular skill term, and the request was denied due to the function of the term within the system. This was one of the agency's first experiences using the Resumix software, and a number of problems stemmed from inexperience both at the agency and at DOER with the use of the software on this expanded basis. We have since worked with the agency to resolve these problems for any future use of the software.

Experiment 2: Natural Resources Program Consultant – Wildlife Biometrician

Date begun: October 13, 2000

Participating Agency: Natural Resources

Appointments: 0

Explanation: The Wildlife Research Unit had previously utilized this type of process for hiring a NR Specialist (Wildlife Research Biologist) with much success, so the agency decided to use the process for this particular class. The purpose of the experiment was to interview only those applicants with the most relevant education and professional experience. MAPE raised no objections to the process.

The specific laws that were waived in the process were M.S. 43A.12, Subd. 4, and M.S. 43A.13, Subd. 1 and 4. These statutes pertain to the ranking and certification of eligibles on a list. There was no eligible list created, and candidates on the roster were not ranked. This process reduced the amount of time required to process unqualified applicants and respond to appeals.

Results/Analysis: There were 21 applicants for the job. Based on the following factors, applicants were sorted into three categories: best qualified, well qualified, and not qualified. The factors were: experience in statistical consulting, analysis or research; experience in wildlife or ecological research or management; writing reports, publications and presentations; use of statistical programming software such as SAS and SPLUS; job-related coursework, including statistical theory sequence, experimental design, categorical data analysis, sampling finite populations, multivariate analysis, time series analysis, linear models, robust or nonparametric estimation, survival analysis, spatial analysis, ecology, ethnology, mammalogy, ornithology, physiology, wildlife management, or zoology. All five qualified applicants were invited to interview. Two persons were protected class members. Three of the five candidates dropped out of the process, including both of the protected class members. The other two candidates were interviewed, and offers made to both. However, each of them declined the offer.

Assessment: The agency continues to have a vacancy and is recruiting to fill it. They are having difficulty recruiting, as the salary for this class appears to be lagging in terms of the market for Biometricians.

Experiment 3: Natural Resources Specialist/Natural Resources Specialist Intermediate (Wildlife Research Biologist)

Date begun: August 18, 2000

Participating Agency: Natural Resources

Appointments: 1

Explanation: The Wildlife Research Unit had previously utilized this type of process with much success, so decided to use the process for this particular position. The exam was announced for two different levels to give the agency flexibility in determining the level of the position based on the qualifications of the person hired. The purpose of the experiment was to interview only those applicants with the most relevant education and professional experience. MAPE raised no objections to the process.

The specific laws that were waived in the process were M.S. 43A.12, Subd. 4, and M.S. 43A.13, Subd. 1 and 4. These statutes pertain to the ranking and certification of eligibles on a list. There was no eligible list created, and candidates on the roster were not ranked. This process reduced the amount of time required to process unqualified applicants and respond to appeals.

Results/Analysis: There were 58 applicants for the process. They were sorted into three categories based on their education and relevant experience: best qualified (9), well qualified (14), and not qualified (35). Best qualified applicants were further assessed on the following factors: degree; grade point average; relevant work experience; census and survey techniques and data analysis; wildlife research projects; reports, publications and presentations; data management, including specific software and hardware used; computer maintenance and repair. All nine best-qualified candidates were invited for a telephone interview on November 14, and 15, 2000. Two of them were protected class members. Two of the nine candidates dropped out of the process, one of which was a protected class member. During the interview process, the other protected class member was dropped out of the process based on the applicant's low interview score. The top three candidates were invited to present a one-hour seminar presentation of their research. An offer was made to the top candidate, who accepted the offer and is still working for the agency.

Assessment: The hiring supervisor was pleased with the outcome of the hiring process. The process was easier for him to administer, in that no specific passing and below passing scores needed to be determined for each applicant.

Experiment 4: Natural Resources Wildlife Research Manager

Date begun: June 23, 2000

Participating Agency: Natural Resources

Appointments: ?

Explanation: The Wildlife Research Unit had previously utilized this type of process with much success, so decided to use the process for this particular class. The purpose of the experiment was to interview only those applicants with the most relevant education and professional experience.

The specific laws that were waived in the process were M.S. 43A.12, Subd. 4, and M.S. 43A.13, Subd. 1 and 4. These statutes pertain to the ranking and certification of eligibles on a list. There was no eligible list created, and candidates on the roster were not ranked. This process reduced the amount of time required to process unqualified applicants and respond to appeals.

Results/Analysis: There were eleven applicants, but only nine were found to be qualified based on criteria outlined in the announcement: research experience determining the problems/issues to be studied, scope of the study, design and methodology to be used; experience writing reports and making oral presentations that distill and transform the data into useful information for both practitioners and policymakers; experience directing and supervising budgets, programs, projects, or professional level staff; demonstrated human relations skills, effective listening, persuasion, and ability to develop consensus among diverse interests in an objective and fair manner; demonstrated managerial and organizational skills with the ability to maintain and prioritize multiple workloads and manage several complicated tasks simultaneously; and advanced training and education in related areas. All nine of the best-qualified candidates were invited for a telephone interview. The top candidates were invited to present a seminar on December 8, 2000.

Assessment: The agency did not report this information.

Experiment 5: Personnel Officer/Personnel Officer Senior

Date begun: April 13, 2001

Participating Agency: Minnesota Veterans Home – Fergus Falls

Appointments: 1

Explanation: The agency wanted to be able to consider candidates with Human Resources experience from Fergus Falls and surrounding communities, in addition to candidates with State of Minnesota Human Resources experience. They wanted a pool of applicants with professional level Human Resources experience and felt that a written exam may have limited their options. Because of the limited number of available applicants for that location, they wanted to have the choice of hiring a candidate at one of two levels depending on their experience. They changed the exam from a written exam to an experience and training rating, to both speed up the process, and to review levels of Human Resources professional-level experience. The experience and training rating allowed them to focus on demonstrated skills.

The exam was announced with only minimum qualifications listed. Applicants were sorted according to professional HR experience within and outside of state service. Those with Minnesota state government, professional-level, HR experience in classification, selection, labor relations, etc., were rated as minimally qualified for the Personnel Officer Senior level. Those with private-sector professional level experience were rated as minimally qualified for the Personnel Officer level. If the vacancy was to be filled at the Personnel Officer level, they intended to upgrade the position to the senior level after the employee learned the Minnesota state government aspects of the job, i.e., classification, HRIS, labor relations, selection, etc.

Results/Analysis: The agency did not report this data.

Assessment: This process allowed the agency to hire a candidate within eight weeks from an uncertain market. Under the traditional method of announcing only one level at a time, or using the written examination process, this would have taken a much longer time. The agency was satisfied with the results, and given the critical nature of the vacancy, very pleased with the expedited time frame.

Experiment 6: State Programs Administrator Manager Senior
Date begun: January, 2000
Participating Agency: Transportation
Appointments: 1

Explanation: Mn/DOT created a new position to serve as the agency's Native American Affairs Coordinator. This position was created to function as an ambassador to the eleven sovereign nations in Minnesota and to other tribes residing out of state that have standing interests in Minnesota. This position establishes government-to-government relationships by representing the Commissioner's interests on decisions that have a direct impact on Mn/DOT's program delivery process. Requirements of this position include unique cultural skills, the ability to negotiate and a good understanding of highway/transit program development, tribal sovereignty and tribal land issues.

Based on the uniqueness of this position and its required skills, the agency elected to conduct a resume review process to screen applicants for this position. Recruitment efforts included the *Minnesota Career Opportunities Bulletin* and several Native American publications throughout the state.

Results/Analysis: Fifty-one applications were received. Candidates were assessed based upon their relevant experience with tribal government or tribal organizations, experience with state and federal regulations governing tribal issues or sovereignty, relevant networks or relationships with multiple tribes, and knowledge of the transportation field or transportation program development. As a result, four candidates were interviewed and one was selected.

Assessment: Management was very satisfied with the process and believed they found an excellent candidate.

Experiment 7: Transportation Generalist
Date begun: December 1999
Participating Agency: Department of Transportation
Appointments: 24

Explanation: This was a continuation of an experiment that was begun in December 1999, last fiscal year. The department wanted to continue the experimental exam because of their desire to significantly reduce the time that it takes to hire Transportation Generalist candidates. There is stiff competition for qualified candidates from other jurisdictions and the private sector. The department needed to establish a more streamlined, efficient and timely process for attracting and selecting highly qualified technical staff. The need became more critical when a recently completed workforce profile indicated that approximately one third of their technical and engineering work force would be eligible to retire over the next five years.

The experimental examination was developed to allow on-the-spot job offers to candidate who possessed a two-year Civil Technology or related degree (i.e., Architectural Drafting, CAD, Surveying, Construction, and Mechanical Drafting) and passed a competency-based interview. Previous recruitment efforts proved ineffective because candidates were accepting positions with private industries well before Mn/DOT could finish the traditional exam process. The following sections of Chapter 43A were waived: 43A.10 Examinations, Eligibility to compete, 43A.12 Ranking of eligibles, and 43A.13 Certification of eligibles.

As part of this process, trained recruitment teams consisting of Human Resource professionals, hiring managers and Transportation Generalist incumbents visited schools within the five state area that offered the above mentioned degree programs. The recruitment teams gave presentations to the classes about Mn/DOT, the Transportation Generalist classification series, compensation and benefits, and current statewide vacancies. Immediately following the presentation, interested students were "tested" using a competency-based behavioral event interview process. Candidates who met the established threshold for the competency-based interview were given immediate job offers that were contingent upon graduating from the degree program and passing all required background checks.

Results/Analysis: Of the 59 candidates who went through the process, 40 met the minimum requirements (degree plus meeting the established threshold for the competency-based interview). Twenty-four candidates accepted offers and were placed in various locations upon graduation. Sixteen candidates declined offers. The remaining 12 were placed "on hold" awaiting openings in their preferred geographic locations.

Assessment: Management is very satisfied with the process and would like the ability to continue hiring under the experimental exam process. Additionally, the Office of Human Resources has been monitoring the performance of the hires by reviewing the mid-probationary reviews for all Transportation Generalist hired via this method. Preliminary results show that the experimental exam process has yielded hires that are considered to be above average in performance and have exceeded the expectations of their hiring managers and supervisors.

Experiments 8-11: Alternative recruiting, in addition to waiving creation of an eligible list or exam scoring

Description: Use of targeted recruiting in lieu of the Minnesota Career Opportunities Bulletin in addition, plus using a “private sector” process to screen applicants, omitting formal scoring, notices, eligible list and certification

Experiment 8: Director, Statewide Assessment

Date begun: September 14, 2000

Participating Agency: Children, Families and Learning

Appointments: 1

Explanation: The Director of Statewide Assessment position was created in September 2000. Because of the unique qualifications needed by the agency, they used an experimental examination process that allowed them to do targeted recruiting and simplify the process.

Results/Analysis: During the months of October and November, the agency conducted Phase 1 of a nationwide recruiting effort. Advertisements were placed in the *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, *Spokesman*, *Women’s Press*, *Native American Press*, *Education Week*, *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Chronicle of Higher Education*. In addition, e-mails were sent to 42 State Departments of Education, 45 State Universities throughout the United States, the Council of Chief State School Officers, 19 State Assessment Directors, 45 to people directly involved in assessment at other State Departments of Education, American Psychological Association, and National Association of Test Directors. It was also placed on the following websites: AERA, America’s Job Bank, Monster.com, CFL HR, MN Jobs, and NCME. This effort produced 31 candidates. After an initial evaluation of qualifications, ten candidates were referred to Assistant Commissioner Jessie Montano for her review. Ms. Montano and an interview team conducted telephone interviews with six of the candidates and narrowed the field to one. The candidate was invited to come in for an interview in November 2000. Despite numerous attempts by Ms. Montano and her staff to arrange a meeting with him over a two-month period of time, he never responded.

In January 2001 they started with Phase 2 of their recruiting effort by placing ads in additional publications and increasing their advertising through national websites. They also discussed the possibility of hiring a search firm to assist them, but because the position requires a unique combination of knowledge, skills and abilities, they did not believe it would be cost effective.

In February 2001, based on a recommendation from another state agency, Ms. Montano and William O'Neill, the Human Resources Director, met with Harry Bruel, Senior Vice President of Personnel Decisions International (PDI) to discuss the possibility of PDI assisting them in broadening their recruiting efforts. Mr. Bruel expressed an interest in working with them and started by assisting them with redesigning their brochure, designing supplementary correspondence and developing a targeted recruitment campaign. By late March, they had identified numerous organizations in targeted fields, including the American Association for Employment in Education, American Association of School Personnel Administrators, American Education Research Association, American Psychological Association, American Psychological Society, Journal of Psycho-Educational Assessment, National Association of School Psychologists, National Association of Test Directors, National Center for Education Statistics, National Council on Measurement in Education, National Organization for Competency Assurance, State and Provincial Psychological Associations, State Psychological Associations – Minnesota. They obtained membership lists from these organizations and began a letter writing campaign that resulted in letters and brochures being sent to 18,255 individuals throughout the United States and some foreign countries. Based on this campaign, 53 people expressed an interest in the position. After a review of those resumes, 38 were referred to Ms. Montano for her consideration. Ms. Montano had an interview team composed of herself, an Education Specialist 2 – Assessment Specialist, a supervisor in assessment with numerous years of experience in a school district, and the Director of the Office of Educational Accountability at the University of Minnesota. Twelve candidates were given a telephone interview. This group was narrowed to three candidates who were brought to CFL for an interview.

During this time, the department was also in contact with the Human Resource Directors at the Department of Education in the states of Washington, Ohio and South Carolina. They were also recruiting for a Director of Statewide Assessment and were experiencing the same problems in filling their positions.

Assessment: This experiment gave the department greater flexibility to recruit nationally and internationally. They were aware at the start of their search that the pool of qualified candidates would be small; however, it turned out to be smaller than they thought. Through the experimental process they were able to respond more quickly to candidates than through the normal examination process.

Experiment 9: EEO Contract Compliance Supervisor

Date begun: August 2000

Participating Agency: Transportation

Appointments: 1

Explanation: The Office of EEO Contract Management had just undergone significant reorganizational changes. Several vacancies existed, including this supervisory position that had been vacant for three months. Immediate filling of this position was critical to maintaining the operation of the unit. The examination for this class was announced in the July 21, 2001 *Minnesota Career Opportunities Bulletin*. Thirteen applications were received, of which seven passed. Upon review of these seven applications, management felt that this exam was not attracting candidates with the necessary skills, namely strong knowledge and experience in affirmative action, knowledge of affirmative action and business development programs, strong skills in facilitation, mediation, and investigation, as well as contract negotiation and administration. Management requested that the exam be re-announced. In an effort to decrease the time necessary to restructure and re-announce the exam in the *Minnesota Career Opportunities Bulletin*, the agency elected to send the vacancy announcement to targeted businesses, organizations and publications and refer candidates who best met the position requirements based on an assessment of their qualifications.

Results/Analysis: Three applications were received from this process. Of the three, the candidate whose qualifications best met the position requirements was offered and accepted the position.

Assessment: Although management would like to have seen greater response, they were very satisfied with the results and the selection that was made. They found that this process was most effective at identifying candidates with the necessary skill base.

Experiment 10: MINNCOR Vice-President Marketing

Date begun: October 9, 2000

Participating Agency: Corrections

Appointments: 1

Explanation: The Department of Corrections MINNCOR Division received permission to conduct an experimental examination to fill this position. Instead of the traditional examination process, they used a selection process that is similar to that used in the private sector. It was believed that the traditional examination process would not generate the type and quality of applicants necessary to qualify for this position. It is quite unusual to have a manufacturing industry in state government that must market its products and compete with the private sector. This experimental exam process waived M.S. 43A.10, Examinations, 43A.12, Ranking of eligibles, and 43A.13 Certification of eligibles. It was critical that this position be filled expeditiously and with a competent person as the MINNCOR division had less than two years remaining in their five-year plan to become profitable and self-sufficient as mandated by the Legislature. The Vice President of Marketing position is critical to MINNCOR in achieving this goal.

Recruitment efforts involved advertising in the Sunday publications of the Minneapolis and St. Paul newspapers, and the MINNCOR CEO publicized this position through their professional organizations and contacts. Resumes, applications and a cover letter describing qualifications in the following areas were requested from each applicant:

- 1 Education
- 2 Supervisory/managerial experience in marketing administration
- 3 Experience in:
 - Development of strategic marketing plans
 - New product research and introductions
 - Marketing communications development including printed, video and electronic promotions
 - Publicity, public relations and press releases
 - Marketing research including qualitative, quantitative and statistical business planning
 - Budget management
 - Supervisory experience.

The application materials, along with any sample work products, were reviewed, and the applicants' experience was screened based upon the above job-related criteria, which had been published and sent to each potential applicant. No scores were assigned, and no score notices or appeal right notices were sent to applicants.

Results/Analysis: Recruit efforts produced 20 applications from 18 males and two females. Of those 20, five individuals qualified to be considered on the pass/fail criteria.

All five were white males. Of these, two were offered and accepted an interview. Based upon the findings of the interview, one candidate possessed the essential knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for hire and was offered the position.

Assessment: The MINNCOR Division was very pleased with the experimental process and the results. The process represented considerable efficiency in time and effort by allowing them to quickly review and consider potential candidates for a critical position. This process placed them in a position that was competitive with the private sector in attracting potential candidates whose specialized skills are very desirable in the current job market.

Experiment 11: State Programs Administrator Manager (Facilities Management Coordinator)

Date begun: December 15, 2000

Participating Agency: Administration

Appointments: 1

Explanation: The Department of Administration requested an experimental examination to fill a vacant position with the working title of Facilities Management Coordinator. The examination was opened from December 15, 2000 through January 12, 2001. The agency had difficulty filling positions in this area previously, and wanted to try a different approach. They advertised the vacancy using the working title, not the classification. They listed no salary, and recruited through electronic advertising. They did not classify the position, but wanted to look at the caliber of candidates to determine whether or not they could fill it at the managerial level. If they candidates did not meet the expectations of that level, they would consider filling it at the professional level. The experiment waived M.S. 43A.10, Subd. 2 (Exam Criteria); M.S. 43A.12 (Ranking); Rules 3900.3200 (Public Notice); and Rules 3900.3300 (No Job Title and No Scoring). The agency ran advertisements in the National Association of State Facility Administrators' newsletter (a service free to members) and with MNJobs.com.

Results/Analysis: The agency recruitment resulted in reception of several resumes from MNJobs.com but none with the qualifications they sought. The agency eventually filled the position via a mobility assignment. The current incumbent is in a temporary unclassified appointment as a Planning Director State.

Assessment: The agency expressed frustration at the lack of available candidates and felt that the salary range for the job was a problem because it was not competitive. They noted that it took over a year to fill this position.

Experiment 12: Corrections Officer 1/Trainee

Description: Use of an alternative examination process for a single location

Date begun: April 1, 2000

Participating Agency: Corrections

Appointments: 11

Explanation: The Department of Corrections asked to have the passing point for Corrections Officer 1 Trainee reduced from 88% to 78% on the video examination for the single location of Lino Lakes. The purpose for this experiment was to produce additional officer trainee candidates and to serve as a trial for possible changes to the overall selection process for Corrections Office 1/Trainee. The characteristics of this experiment were as follows: the passing point was lowered; experimental trainees would be provided an opportunity to demonstrate on-the-job possession of the knowledge, skills and abilities required to pass the written/video examination; movement to probationary status would be contingent on successful completion of the trainee period.

Results/Analysis: Using the modified criteria, a total of 42 applicants were interviewed and tested on August 8 and 9, 2000, at the Lino Lakes facility. Of the individuals interviewed and tested, 23 successfully passed the selection process. On August 30, 2000 the Corrections Training Academy started with 21 candidates from Lino Lakes. Of this group 10 were hired using the standard criteria and 11 were hired using the experimental criteria. On October 10, 2000 another Corrections Training Academy started with 14 candidates from Lino Lakes. Of this group 7 were hired using the standard criteria and 7 were hired using the experimental criteria.

As a condition of getting permission to try this staffing experiment, in addition to tracking retention and attrition, Lino Lakes agreed to develop criteria to monitor the performance of the employees hired using the standard criteria in comparison to employees hired using the experimental criteria. Along with tracking overall attrition as well as attendance, use of leave, tardiness and disciplinary actions, a process was developed that would allow the facility to monitor and document overall performance. The same monitoring and evaluation process was used for all individuals who were a part of the August 30 and October 10, 2000 academies.

Retention rates were computed for employees hired under standard criteria, and those hired under the experimental criteria. Combining both the August and October academies, those hired under the standard criteria had a retention rate of 70.6%, and those hired under the experimental criteria had a retention rate of 83.3%.

As a part of the experiment, the performance of both Academy classes was carefully monitored. All employees were evaluated using an on-the-job checklist that identified eleven separate activities including inmate movement, inmate interactions, inmate property, mail, security, searches, radio, gates/control centers/perimeter, policy/procedures/post orders, computers, and communication/teamwork. These activities were subdivided into 53 specific tasks that had to be performed successfully. Employees hired using standard criteria completed 89.2% of the tasks. Those hired using the experimental criteria completed 88.9% of the tasks. In both instances, the participating employees reported that with additional on-the-job coaching and practice they would be able to successfully complete all of their assigned tasks.

Assessment: Based on an assessment of retention, attrition and overall performance during their probationary periods, there is no statistically significant difference between the employees hired using the standard employment criteria and those hired using the experimental hiring criteria. Utilizing the lower passing score on the video examination portion of the selection process did not negatively impact employee retention, attrition or overall performance. In fact, it afforded a much broader labor pool containing a wide variety of candidates clearly capable of succeeding as Correction Officers. Therefore, it was determined that if the video examination should continue to be a part of the Correction Officer selection process, a passing score of 78% should be utilized.

Experiment 13: Graphic Arts Specialist

Description: Supplementing an Eligible List Certification with names from the Skill Search database

Date begun: August, 2000

Participating Agency: Employee Relations

Appointments: 1

Explanation: The agency had used the current competitive eligible list with a selection certification for knowledge of printing processes. They received the names of sixteen candidates. All sixteen were contacted by mail, but only eight responded. Seven were interviewed, but the supervisor determined that only three had skills that were current. In order to expedite the filling of the position, the agency requested supplemental names from the Skill Search pilot, as many resumes of candidates interested in Information Officer positions had been collected in that database. It was thought that there would be a great deal of crossover between skills needed for this position and skills needed for Information Officer positions. A number of classes had been already placed in the Skill Search pilot, but Graphic Arts Specialist was not one of them.

Results/Analysis: The agency searched the database drawing on the skills as they were announced in the original examination announcement for Graphic Arts Specialist. In addition, all the resumes pulled from the database were reviewed against the same criteria used with the eligible list. Two persons met those criteria and were referred to the hiring supervisor to be given equal consideration with the candidates from the eligible list. One of those people was available for an interview and was offered the position.

Assessment: Using the experimental process, the agency was able to consider additional names without having to take the time to announce and advertise the position. It would have taken at least a month to go through the announcement process and get a new list, and the supervisor needed to fill the position as soon as possible. This experiment supports the direction that the Staffing Division is taking in expanding the use of Skill Search, and allowing agencies to use a combination of candidates from Skill Search and the existing eligible lists.

Experiment 14:	Minnesota Office Specialist Test (MOST)
Description:	Applicants take an unscored written test to qualify for a single candidate pool used for vacancies in four clerical classes. Hiring agencies designate position-specific search criteria for referrals from the pool. All candidates meeting the criteria are referred in random order.
Date Begun:	December 18, 1998
Job Classes:	Office Specialist, Central Services Administrative Specialist, Customer Services Specialist, Office and Administrative Specialist
Participating Agencies:	Statewide
Appointments:	FY 2001, 152

Explanation: Over the past several years, the State and AFSCME, Council 6 (the exclusive representative for the State's clerical employees) cooperatively developed a plan to consolidate clerical jobs into fewer job classes, each encompassing a broad range of duties and qualifications. In July 1998, several thousand clerical employees moved from some 50 clerical job classes into 13 new consolidated classes.

On December 18, 1998, a single application and selection process was announced for the four classes at the first two levels of the new consolidated clerical series. While this was an open competitive announcement (the public, as well as current employees, may apply), information is maintained on whether applicants are state employees and, if so, where they are employed. This allows agencies to receive referrals limited to state employees or only employees of their own agency, as well as open competitive referrals.

Process: Applicants submit one application and take one test to be eligible for referral to all four classes. Several sections of the written test assessing skills determined to be essential for all types of clerical work (speed and accuracy, math, filing) are required. Depending on time and interests, applicants may take additional sections assessing more specialized skills such as proofreading and coding. Finally, all applicants respond to a set of Skill/Interest Inventory questions to indicate their interest in and qualifications for particular types of work. Examples include "I have at least six months of full-time training and/or experience with one or more word processing packages and I would accept jobs that involve word processing as a major activity," and "I would accept jobs that involve dealing with customers/clients in person as a major activity (e.g., receptionist)."

While the written test is unscored, applicants are required to correctly answer a certain number of questions in the required sections. This was intended only as a minimal screen

for qualifications common to all jobs so the cutoff is intentionally low (59 correct out of 110 items) to eliminate just those applicants with little likelihood of success in clerical work. In lieu of scores, applicants receive a customized notice stating their number of items correct in each section of the test and explaining the referral process and other special procedures. Those who do not qualify receive information about their number of items correct in comparison to the cutoff. Under the standard retesting policy, individuals may retake the written test every six months to try to improve the number correct or to take additional sections. Test instructions and sample questions are available on the DOER web page and in hard copy to help applicants prepare. Candidates in the pool are able to update Skill/Interest Inventory responses at any time without reapplying or retesting.

As vacancies occur, agencies search the pool for candidates whose qualifications, interests and availability (e.g., employment condition and location) match the position. Agencies may use the number of items correct on one or more sections of the written test, skill/interest responses or a combination of both. For example, an agency with a word processing vacancy might look for candidates who had high numbers of items correct in the proofreading and spelling sections and selected word processing on the Skill/Interest Inventory. Agencies may also administer additional testing to screen for essential qualifications and verify Skill/Interest Inventory responses.

Everyone in the referral pool who meets the search criteria is referred to the agency. Names appear in random order. In addition to the usual information such as name and address, agencies receive a report showing each referral's number of items correct on sections of the test. At first agencies did not receive applications in an effort to move the process along more quickly. Recently, the Department of Employee Relations has completed an imaging project that allows agencies to view applications of all certified eligibles on the Internet as soon as the certification process is completed.

In addition to detailed instructions on requesting referrals and a form to document search criteria, agencies have received a variety of information to assist in developing criteria. This has included a description of the written test content areas and Skill/Interest Inventory items; the content areas and relevant skill/interest items for former class titles that became part of the new classes; the mean, median and range of items correct that applicants have achieved on each section of the written test; and the number of applicants selecting each Skill/Interest Inventory item.

Results/Analysis: Through the end of fiscal year 2001, 1,665 candidates had taken the Minnesota Office Specialist Test. Of these, about 1,047 candidates (63%) qualified for the referral pool. Items correct on the required sections ranged from 21 to 105 of the 110 questions, with a mean of 70.20 and median of 71.00.

The written test answer sheet is also the means by which applicants record their skills and interests. Capturing the information in scannable form is important because keying all the data is not feasible from a workload perspective. Applicants have had some difficulty

correctly recording their responses in this format. DOER subsequently developed a hard copy checklist so applicants may later modify data provided on the answer sheet. It's a positive sign that a survey of agencies found that most felt applicants were accurately reporting their skills and interests.

Assessment: While it is encouraging to note that in fiscal year 2001, 4256 people applied for the MOST, only 1,665 actually took the examination. This reflects the competitive labor market for clerical employees. Many applicants are able to obtain positions in the private sector before they are actually scheduled to take the examination. As we move forward into our reengineered selection systems, we hope to reduce the time lags that cause us to lose good candidates. Also, as we develop our recruiting plan we hope to increase these numbers and create a more diverse applicant pool. Overall, the results of the MOST are positive and DOER staff and agencies have gained experience and are more comfortable and knowledgeable with the process.

Experiment 15: Use of on-the-job experience and training to demonstrate qualifications for transfer or demotion.

Description: Instead of passing the standard selection process for the class, supervisors on notice of permanent layoff may demonstrate their qualifications to transfer or demote to a new job class through a trial period of up to 18 months in the job.

Date Begun: November 5, 1993

Participating Organizations: Middle Management Association and all state agencies

Number of Appointments: 1 since November 1993

Explanation: During negotiations for the 1993-1995 contract, the Middle Management Association, representing state supervisors, raised concerns about the ability of its members to locate other state employment when displaced by layoff. As agencies reorganize to flatten organizations, one group particularly affected is supervisors. The Association expressed concern about what it sees as a trend toward a smaller number of supervisors. At the same time supervisors are being impacted by downsizing and restructuring, the lack of new supervisory positions and the low turnover among supervisors mean those facing layoff have less opportunity for placement in another state position.

In order to address those concerns, the Department of Employee Relations and the Middle Management Association jointly developed this experiment to allow additional flexibility in placing supervisors who might otherwise be laid off. This was the first experiment designed cooperatively by the department and an exclusive representative. The experiment was subsequently extended for the 1995-1997, 1997-1999, and 1999-2001 contracts.

Under several of the agreements between the State and its exclusive representatives, employees notified of layoff are eligible to claim vacancies in other job classes and agencies. However, to be considered for the position, the employee must receive a passing score on the existing examination for the job class. Under this experiment, supervisors notified of permanent layoff may express interest in transfer/demotion to a vacancy for which they do not qualify through the normal selection process. (If the supervisor is able to qualify, the normal provisions of the contract apply instead.)

The agency with the vacancy compares the supervisor's qualifications to their needs and the requirements of the position. Based on this review, the agency determines whether the supervisor might reasonably demonstrate the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities for the vacancy through a period of experience and training in the position. If so, the agency may place the supervisor in the position for a period of up to 18 months.

During that time, the hiring agency is expected to provide experience and training to allow the supervisor to develop and demonstrate qualifications for the job. The agency is also responsible for evaluating and documenting the supervisor's possession of the knowledge, skills and abilities essential for the position. If the agency determines that the supervisor has demonstrated these during the trial period, the supervisor may be appointed to the vacancy on an unlimited basis. If, during the 18 months, the agency finds that the supervisor is not successfully demonstrating qualifications for the position, the supervisor is placed on layoff from the original agency and job class.

Results/Analysis: Information about the experiment was included in the 1993-1995, 1995-1997, 1997-1999, and 1999-2001 MMA agreements to make supervisors aware of this new alternative. Materials explaining the experiment and encouraging agency participation were distributed to all state agencies.

In the first fiscal year of the experiment (1994), no appointments were made. One appointment occurred at the end of FY 95. The supervisor, on notice of layoff from an accounting job, accepted an experimental appointment to a supervisory vacancy in the information technology field. After just over two months on the job, the supervisor decided he preferred to remain in his previous field and subsequently accepted demotion to a supervisory accounting position in another agency. There have been no further appointments under this experiment.

Assessment: The experiment has produced only one appointment since November of 1993. However, the number of permanent layoffs among supervisors has limited opportunities for its use. From the time of the distribution of the procedures through the end of the first fiscal year, there were no permanent layoffs in the MMA bargaining unit. Any supervisors notified of layoff were able to locate other positions within state government. During FY 95, there were four layoffs among supervisors where the individual was unsuccessful in locating another state position. In FY 96, agencies laid off 17 employees in MMA, 18 in FY 97, nine in FY 98, three in FY 99, six in FY 00, and one in FY 01.

While initial use of this experiment by state agencies had been disappointing, we continued it for yet another biennium, especially in view of continuing layoffs. The approach represents a win/win situation for both the State and the employee and offers the opportunity for significant savings to the State if we can avert a layoff. When permanent layoffs occur, we will continue to encourage agencies and supervisors to explore the use of this alternative.