

Differences between Day and Night shifts

Ian Marshall

Day shift microbiologist Ian Marshall elaborates on the different routes taken on the two shifts, work and play.....

One of the most interesting aspects of being on an IODP expedition like this one is the massive unintended sociological experiment that is happening alongside all of the official science. We've taken a group of scientists from a diversity of scientific fields and nationalities and arbitrarily split them into two groups working different shifts. The only externally imposed difference between these shifts is that the day shift (my shift) starts work in daylight and stops in the middle of the night, while the night shift does the opposite. Theoretically there shouldn't be too much of a difference between the two shifts' operating procedures and behaviour, but it turns out that some subtle and not-so-subtle differences have emerged over the six weeks of the expedition so far.

For example, within the microbiology team I thought that we were working pretty consistently across the shifts. During extensive pre-cruise meetings in Copenhagen and Kiel we established detailed protocols for our sampling that continued in their development through the shift-change meetings that happen every twelve hours. We've tried hard to make every aspect of our work that affects the quality of the samples as consistent as possible. However, I recently had the opportunity to work on microbiological sampling for an hour with the opposite shift (the night shift), only to discover that almost everything we *hadn't* discussed that *didn't* affect the quality of samples was being done completely differently by the two shifts. "Where's the scissors?" I asked while trying to organise sample labels.

"Scissors? What do you need scissors for?" came the reply from a confused night shift member.

"You don't use scissors? You tear your labels apart by hand? The savages on this shift..."

And it didn't stop at the scissors - while the same number of people got the job done on each shift, everyone seemed to carry out different specialised combinations of tasks than the day shift did. Two *different* people cutting whole-round cores and taking syringe samples? How could they cope with such a chaotic state of affairs? Needless to say, working alongside the night shift I appeared a clumsy idiot compared to their well-oiled savage-label-ripping-by-hand machine. I'm sure that if a night shift member tried to work with the day shift the same thing would happen.



Night shift member Outi Hyttinen demonstrates little regard for order and neatness by failing to trim a straight line on a torn adhesive label backing sheet. © Bo Barker Jørgensen/ECORD/IODP

As divergent as our methods of working have become, the largest gaps between the two shifts have developed in how we spend our time when we're not working. The day shift started out the expedition playing an improvised version of the Scandinavian stick-throwing game Kubb, but without anyone around to teach the night shift the complicated rules this activity did not penetrate across the shifts. The day shift is also known for playing the Finland vs. Sweden table ice hockey game - I'm currently ranked number four in the official league table. However, an effort to start a night shift ice hockey league somehow didn't catch on. Meanwhile, the night shift has been holding daily betting contests on hard-to-predict variables like how deep we will drill or when we will arrive on station. A skipping rope (jump rope) brought on board by a night shift member has resulted in daily competitions to see who can do the most

jumps (I'm told the current record-holder is Andrea Torti with 95), but the rope is mostly left hanging unused by the day shift. Similarly, the night shift runs countless caption competitions, where an expedition photograph is chosen, people write witty captions for said photo, and voting determines a winner. The day shift has been invited to participate, but seems to only rarely contribute caption suggestions or votes.



Night shift member Barry Cragg submits his entry to the caption contest (top left), while day shift members Aarno Kotilainen and Thomas Andrén face off at the ice hockey table (topright). Night shift champion skipper Andrea Torti shows the others how it's done (bottom left) and Day shift members mid Kubb game (bottom right) © Nadine Quintana Krupinski/ECORD/IODP (top left), David Smith/ECORD/IODP (top right) Carol Cotterill/ECORD/IODP (bottom left and right).

So there you have it: the only thing necessary for two similar groups of people to develop different working methods and leisure activities is restricted contact with each other. I for one will find it very hard to adapt to onshore life, as I will be forced to spend time on the same shift (otherwise known as a normal workday) with my two colleagues from Aarhus University presently on the night shift. I'm just not sure how I'm going to cope with being around those weirdoes all day...