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Training & Education for the Homeland Security Intelligence Community

By Michelle Black and Lana Obradovic

What is the state of training and education in the intelligence community, what are core competencies for analysts, and how can training be improved in the future?

Intelligence is vital to the national security framework advanced by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The intelligence mission spans 17 DHS components tasked with various elements of our nation’s protection, as well as multiple agencies across the broader intelligence community (IC). Building and strengthening the DHS workforce in counterterrorism operations starts with effectively trained and educated intelligence workers.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION CHALLENGES

To effectively train intelligence analysts, DHS must navigate **seven core challenges:**

- Core competencies** Lack of standardized DHS intelligence core competencies across the Department.
- Specialized training** Lack of or difficult to attend specialized training needed for an analyst to perform their job in a specific functional or mission area (e.g., open-source, forensics, cyber).
- Balancing demand** Difficult to balance demands of training with operational needs.
- Training delivery** Challenges in delivering training to a distributed workforce.
- Communication expectations** Challenges in defining DHS training expectations and communicating training opportunities across **and** the components.
- Joint curriculum** Challenges in developing joint curriculum and training for the IC and law enforcement.
- Identity** Challenges in collective identity (across DHS components, state & local, law enforcement & IC).

INTELLIGENCE ANALYST COMPETENCIES

Intelligence analysts working within DHS and its components should have **six basic Core Intelligence Analysis Competencies** as well as **Intelligence Fundamental Skills:**



Analytical Writing



Communication



Critical Thinking and Reasoning Methods



Collaboration



Project Management



Basic Technology

Familiarity with national intelligence structures and policy, the intelligence cycle, and intelligence writing and analytic tools

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

1. Develop a standardized core intelligence analyst competencies matrix
2. Integrate core intelligence analyst competencies matrix into the DHS performance/learning management system
3. Engage with IC and DHS centers of academic excellence to meet hiring and educational needs
4. Provide a mandatory core intelligence analyst competencies online course during onboarding
5. Improve retention and merit-based advancements through educational opportunities

METHOD These findings are based on a two-pronged research approach involving

- 1) interviews with IC members including many DHS participants and
- 2) in-depth research and domain analysis drawing on academic literature and published government reports.

For more information, please contact the researcher at michellblack@unomaha.edu

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