

TRENDS AND CHALLENGES IN INTELLIGENCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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Abstract: *The education and lifelong learning of the intelligence analysts will provide the right ingredients to evolve into incredible and increasingly operational environment characterized by uncertainty and complex challenges. Based on diagnosis of the current ways of education and training in the field of intelligence analysis, there seems to be only a few higher education programs that focuses exclusively on law enforcement intelligence community. Most education and training programs are based on intelligence courses that incorporate multidisciplinary topics and a broad theoretical approach to intelligence issues. An efficient program should not only educate students by enabling them to learn how to perform an intellectual process for having analytical products, but it should also train them by teaching them the structures, techniques, and procedures associated with the intelligence process.*

Keywords: education, training, intelligence, analysis, process

1. Introduction

Major events in the wake of the new millennium have cast serious doubts over the ability of the intelligence community to effectively address the challenges posed by an increasingly globalized and rapidly changing world. The failure to prevent the 9/11 terrorist attacks, as well as to accurately assess Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction program have highlighted the need for significant improvements in the way in which intelligence agencies around the world are structured and operate. Within such context, the training of analysts was identified as an important area to reform [1].

One of the first steps taken in this direction, especially in the United States, was the introduction of a series of organisms aimed at enhancing the training process for intelligence analysts. After opening the Sherman Kent School for Intelligence Analysis in 2000, the Central Intelligence Agency set up the CIA

University in 2002. This was followed by the establishment of the College of Analytical Studies by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), as well as of the National Intelligence University by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). The latter was designed as a 'virtual' institution responsible for improving coordination between the training programs of different intelligence agencies.

Alongside organizational entities, teaching methods also started being revised by members of the intelligence community. According to Marrin, the traditional paradigm for doing analysis, which largely depended on the analyst's own expertise on a specific topic, was recognized as increasingly obsolete. As a result, a growing amount of resources were allocated to training analysts to use structured analytical techniques such as *brainstorming, devil's advocacy, red team analysis, team A-Team B, Analysis of*

Competing Hypotheses, key assumptions check and alternative futures. The rationale behind this approach is effectively summarized by Heuer's claim according to which "*analysts should be self-conscious about their reasoning process. They should think about how they make judgments and reach conclusions, not just about the judgments and conclusions themselves*" [2].

A further trend related to the training of analysts emerged out of the realization that the intelligence profession still lacked the formalized doctrine and set of practices that are typical of other occupations such as journalism and medicine. This was assumed to prevent the full consolidation of intelligence as a profession and, therefore, to hinder the improvement of the entire system of intelligence analysis. The result was a progressive convergence between the spheres of training and education as well as between those of government and academia. Both in the US and in Europe, governments began to put considerable efforts into the advancement of intelligence as an academic field. More specifically, they started funding a number of programmes directed at providing university graduates with the specific knowledge and skills needed within the intelligence community.

An interesting case is the academic course in intelligence introduced by the War Studies Department at King's College London in the mid 2000s. The programme looked at the field of intelligence from a range of different angles, combining a functional, a historical/biographical, a structural and a political approach. The opportunity to engage with the discipline within the world of academia was considered a major added value for present and future analysts, as it exposed them to aspects of the subject such as the key literature, related academic fields as well as different and often contrasting viewpoints, which are much more difficult to convey in the relatively closed environment of governments. By

introducing students to a similar context, the course was explicitly aimed at creating "*that sense of being part of a single UK intelligence community, and of belonging to the virtual profession of analysts*" (Goodman & Omand, 2008) [3].

Despite this, the intelligence community still lacks a common basic training programme. Training is still largely considered a prerogative of single agencies, which in the majority of cases instruct new analysts based on their specific mission and needs. Such an approach makes it particularly difficult for analysts to communicate and interact with colleagues working in different areas or organizations [4]. As shown in the study conducted by Johnston, analysts tend to be reluctant in seeking resources from other agencies, either because their experience has been shaped by a rigid agency-centric focus or because they lack the necessary contacts. For example, one of the survey respondents explained that the reason why he hardly ever tried to reach beyond his organization was that "*it only really works if you trust the person on the other end on the phone [and] that's hard to do if you don't know them*" [5].

Another factor undermining the effectiveness of the training process has to do with the relationship between the skills needed by analysts and the type of training they receive. A needs assessment of intelligence training carried out in 2004 revealed low levels of training quality across all parameters, with intelligence analysts and managers being considered as the figures which most suffered from inadequate training. When asked to identify the main cause, the majority of respondents pointed out the insufficient funding, the lack of skilled trainers and the excessive costs of traveling and accommodation [6].

The problem of inadequate training concerns a wide range of intelligence organizations and is not limited to the US. According to a 2011 study (Intelligenceanalysis.net, 2011) the UK

still lacks training courses capable to properly teach intelligence analysis. Based on an examination of five different training providers, the study showed that training programs tended:

a) To interpret the role of intelligence analysts more as statisticians than as investigators (*e.g.*, out of the two intelligence analysis courses offered by one provider, both had a predominantly statistical character but lacked any reference to the investigative dimension of the job);

b) Not to consider analysts as fully-fledged investigators (*e.g.*, one course relegated analysts to the function of mere “advisors” in the context of major incidents);

c) To attribute managers a control function over the process of analysis (*e.g.*, by tying the work of analysts to “‘requirements’, ‘techniques’, ‘objectives’ and ‘parameters’” to be preliminarily agreed or negotiated with the clients).

Sloman looked at the same problem in a military context [7]. In his view, the complexity of the skills currently required by the job - a mixture of experience, data manipulation and critical thinking - demands a change in the process of selection and training of analysts as well as in the opportunities they are offered. He notes that the position of the analyst is often considered quite low in the military hierarchy, mainly because of its lower entry barriers compared to other intelligence professions. The result is that those occupying the latter are often the ones receiving the most advanced training and education. That is why - Sloman concludes - a “new intelligence analyst career field” should be introduced as a step towards matching the level of accuracy that is expected and needed from analysts with the one which could actually be achieved [8].

2. Education and Training Methods in Intelligence Analysis: seven case studies

The following sub-section will look with greater depth into the nature of training offered by various intelligence-related agencies and organizations. Seven case studies will be analyzed in order to highlight the most significant features characterizing each course, including duration, curricula, and skills provided and teaching methods. The aim is to provide a comprehensive account of currently existing training programs as well as to expose the reader to the most significant similarities and differences between them.

Case Study 1: The NSA’s course on critical thinking and structured analysis

One of the most important skills in the field of intelligence analysis is the ability to think critically. This can be defined as “*a deliberate meta-cognitive (thinking about thinking) and cognitive (thinking) act whereby a person reflects on the quality of the reasoning process simultaneously while reasoning to a conclusion. The thinker has two equally important goals: coming to a solution and improving the way she or he reasons*” [9].

Despite its centrality within the work of intelligence analysts (as well as in our everyday life), critical thinking has never been the main focus of teaching, whether outside or inside the intelligence community.

One relevant exception is the National Security Agency's (NSA) course on critical thinking and structured analysis. This represents the first IC program deliberately designed to improve the analyst’s own thinking skills both at an individual and at a group level. The course is distributed along a series of 10 four-hour long classes in which students are given the opportunity to “*learn a paradigm for critical thinking and critically explore 14 different structured methods of analysis*” [10].

The program is based on what is described as a Socratic method of teaching, meaning that students are required to actively get involved in the course by taking part in discussions, writing summaries of the assigned readings prior to each class and producing operational examples of structured analysis methods. Moreover, at the end of the program participants are assigned a group project where they have to apply five critical thinking and structured analysis methods in order to solve a specific problem. The results of the project are then presented by students in front of their class during a 15-20 minute briefing [11].

Main readings selected for the course:

- Elder, L. & Paul, R. (2003). *The Foundations of Analytic Thinking: How to Take Thinking Apart and What to Look for When You Do*. Dillon Beach, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking;
- Heuer Jr., R. J. (2007). *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis* (2nd ed.). Reston, VA: Pherson Associates LLC;
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Case Study 2: The Sherman Kent School's Career Analyst Program (CAP)

According to the CIA website [12], the Career Analyst Program (CAP) is the Directorate of Intelligence's "basic training program and introduces all new employees to the basic thinking, writing, and briefing skills needed for a successful career. Segments include analytic tools, counterintelligence issues, denial and deception analysis, and warning skills". During its sixteen-week period of duration, analysts are provided with a wide range of exclusive information related to the sphere of intelligence, which if applied, can significantly enhance the quality of analysis [13].

After the initial introductory week, analysts undergo a process of familiarization with the main skills required by the intelligence profession such as analytic thinking, writing, briefing, data analysis and teamwork skills. This is followed by an interim assignment lasting four weeks and directed at enabling analysts to appreciate the interconnections between, on the one hand, the directorate of intelligence, and, on the other, the CIA's various ramifications, the broader intelligence community as well as the sphere of decision-making.

Once such an assignment has been completed, analysts receive classroom training on more complex issues such as drafting longer documents and identifying deception indicators. At the same time, they are introduced to the work of other intelligence positions while being instructed on the key concepts, methods and techniques needed to effectively examine raw data, including structured analytical techniques. Here cases of past failure in intelligence analysis are consistently illustrated to trainees as an example of the key mistakes to be avoided.

The final stage of the CAP involves another four-week interim assignment followed by a further set of classes, which culminate in a two-day simulation of a terrorist attack. This provides trainees with the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills developed throughout the course and deal with situations that might occur in their future careers. At the end of the simulation the performance of analysts during their training period is assessed, with results being sent to the respective home offices.

The CAP program integrates a series of different modules and methodologies. The CIA website [14] divides the former into six key areas: critical thinking skills and techniques; writing skills; briefing skills; the business of intelligence; collaboration skills; history, mission and values. These are taught to students through a combination

of traditional teaching methods (e.g., lectures and case studies) and more interactive ones, based on the principle of 'learning by doing' (e.g., task forces and interim assignments) [15].

Case Study 3: National Training and Education Division's (NTED) courses

The NTED constitutes a branch of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), an organization part of the US Department of Homeland Security. It works in partnership with several training providers in order to "*make high-quality training available to first responders that enhances their skills for preventing, protecting, responding to, and recovering from manmade and natural catastrophic events*" [16]. To this end, the NTED provides more than 200 courses designed for a wide range of state, local and tribal organisms. This research will only examine one specific course, selected because of its explicit and direct relevance to the activity of intelligence analysis.

The course is titled "Criminal Intelligence Analysis Essentials" and is offered by the National Sheriff's Association. It is delivered over a period of 20 hours at the awareness level. This means that the program is "*designed for responders who require the skills necessary to recognize and report a potential catastrophic incident or who are likely to witness or investigate an event involving the use of hazardous and/or explosive device*" [17]. Such entities are identified as law enforcement, governmental administrative and emergency agencies.

The aim of the course is to provide participants with the skills necessary to improve the quality of intelligence analysis in a comprehensive context including all kinds of criminal hazards: from terrorist attacks to more traditional forms of crimes. Some of the key areas covered by the course are the various purposes of intelligence analysis as well as the

relationship existing between intelligence producers and consumers. The program also explores more specific aspects such as the multiple stages of the intelligence process and the way in which creativity and critical thinking can boost each stage.

Finally, the course looks at a number of critical issues pertaining to the realm of information sharing as well as to the underlying legal framework of intelligence analysis. Overall, the course sets out to enhance the capabilities of participants to both prevent and respond to criminal activities by combining nine different modules and a variety of methodologies. These include instructive lectures, collective discussions as well as scenario-driven practical activities.

Case Study 4: Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) training programs

The DEA organizes a number of training programs in intelligence directed at providing participants with the most advanced analytical skills required to support its investigations. The courses vary in content and length, and are all generally held at the DEA Training Academy located at Quantico, Virginia. The main course is the Basic Intelligence Research Specialist (BIRS), established in 1974. Its duration has changed over time, with the number of weeks being extended from 9 to 14 in 2006. The program is mandatory for every newly hired intelligence analyst, who is required to get a score of at least 80 in order pass the course [18].

The DEA website states that the course curriculum "*emphasizes the development of analytical skills, the use of computerized tools, and a broad range of academic subjects critical to providing mission-oriented intelligence*". These are taught through a variety of classes including National Security Information Handling, Terrorism Financing Activities and Techniques, Internet Telecommunication Exploitation Program, Telephone Tolls Analysis and Basic Law

Enforcement Report Writing. As the DEA website points out, "*all subjects [are integrated] into increasingly complex individual and group practical exercises designed to test each student's ability to make and present critical analytical judgments to investigators, prosecutors, other agencies, and policy makers*" [19].

So far, the BIRS program is considered to have been considerably successful. The results of a survey of past students carried out in 2008 revealed that positive opinions about the course were shared by as much as 75 per cent of respondents, with only 1 student out of 4 declaring that the program failed to match their expectations. Some doubts regarding the effectiveness of the program, however, were raised by a number of supervisors and intelligence analysts. More specifically, some complained that classes such as Defensive Driving and Firearm Safety were not very relevant to the work of

intelligence analysts. At the same time, others pointed at courses like Government and Financial Planning as more suitable to be delivered using a different methodology (e.g., Internet-based training) [20].

Case Study 5: The US Department of Justice's Minimum Criminal intelligence Training Standards

In 2007, the U.S. Department of Justice's published the Minimum Criminal intelligence Training Standards for Law Enforcement and other Criminal Justice Agencies in the United States, as an attempt to "*provide perspective and guidance for the development and delivery of law enforcement intelligence training*" [21]. Each intelligent analyst's training module, through the corresponding curricula is urged to adopt the philosophy and the curricular issues as presented below through specific objectives.

Objective I	Intelligence analysts will understand the criminal intelligence process, intelligence-led policing, the information sharing framework, and their roles
Topics to be considered for Curriculum	Collection, Analysis, dissemination, production, collation, evaluation, assessment Origin – history of intelligence Roles and responsibilities of the Information Analyst Intelligence-led policing Liaise with peers, other agencies and professional memberships Information Sharing Initiative Threats facing community, state Community Policing Professional standards Information sharing technologies
Objective II	Analysts will gain an understanding of the proper handling and collation of criminal intelligence information, including file management and information evaluation
Topics to be considered for Curriculum	Security of file management Electronic, Archiving and filing of information management Evaluation, reliability and validity of sources Confidential Information and marking
Objective III	Analysts will experience the development of intelligence through the processes of critical thinking, logic, inference development, and recommendation
Topics to be considered for Curriculum	Critical thinking Fallacies of logic Inference development Crime indicators Crime patterns and analysis

Objective IV	Analysts will understand the methodical process of developing and implementing collection and analytic plans
Topics to be considered for Curriculum	Strategic and tactical needs of intelligence consumer Intelligence requirements collection Development of collection and investigative plans Feedback infusion into the intelligence cycle
Objective V	Analysts will be familiar with the legal, privacy, and ethical issues relating to intelligence
Topics to be considered for Curriculum	Law and relative legal aspects Privacy, civil liberties and civil rights Ethical considerations Civil liability
Objective VI	Analysts will be provided with information on sources, information sharing systems, networks, centers, commercial and public databases
Topics to be considered for Curriculum	Sources of information and available resources
Objective VII	Analysts will be able to demonstrate a practical knowledge of the methods, tools, and techniques employed in analysis
Topics to be considered for Curriculum	Analytical Techniques pertaining threat assessments, crime pattern analysis, association analysis, telephone records analysis, flowchart analysis, financial analysis and strategic analysis Analytical tools such as spreadsheets, flowcharting applications, analytic software and presentation software
Objective VIII	Analysts will be able to demonstrate a practical knowledge of the methods, tools, and techniques employed in analysis
Topics to be considered for Curriculum	Principles of good report writing Differences between intelligence investigative reports and briefs Oran and written briefings

Case Study 6: The LEIU's Foundations of Intelligence Analysis Training program

The association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Units (LEIU) has designed the "Foundations of Intelligence Analysis Training" (FIAT) program towards providing quality analytic training, a basic understanding and knowledge of the law enforcement analysis profession. The curricula include the following modules: History of Intelligence; Legal Issues/Ethics; Sources of Information; Creative/Critical Thinking; Logic; Inference Development; Competing Hypotheses; Crime Pattern Analysis; Association Analysis; Flow Analysis; Strategic Analysis; Financial Analysis; Communication Analysis; Products of Analysis.

Case Study 7: The FLECT's Intelligence Analyst Training Program

The Financial Fraud Institute of the Investigative Operations Division of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLECT) has designed the Intelligence Analyst Training Program (IATP) as an introductory level training program on law enforcement intelligence analysis. The curricula of this program include the following modules: Introduction to Law Enforcement Intelligence; The Intelligence Cycle; Intelligence Analysis: Core Competencies; Introduction to Intelligence Analysis; Legal Issues for Intelligence Analysts; Intelligence Plans; External Information Sources; Electronic Sources of Information For Law Enforcement; Analytical Methods & Techniques; Report Writing for Analysts; Electronic Spreadsheets as an Investigative Tool; Financial Analysis;

Geographic Information Systems and Geographical Profiling; Analytical Products and Presentations.

3. Learning how to integrate the LEILA experiences

The evolution of organizations and the mutations determined by the new collaborative intelligence paradigm, concurrent with the technological progress, have determined massive changes within the intelligence framework, at organizational and also at the actionable level. Even though the tools generated through the ITC technologies cannot be a substitute for the human thinking and cannot direct the intelligence processes, they can optimize the information flows, offering an analytical capability in support of the information integration.

In this general context, the NDU had the opportunity to be member of the Law Enforcement Intelligence Learning Application (LEILA) FP -7 project, aiming to develop gaming solutions and engaging learning experiences addressing the needs of the security intelligence analysis community.

Valuing the LEILA project outcome, the NDU has initiated a change in the *Master of military art and sciences* curriculum in order to integrate the LabRint and VUCA learning experiences, especially in the area of intelligence staff analysis, operational planning, decision making, leadership and command and staff disciplines. Also the LEILA approach has been tested with success in two post graduate courses namely in the strategic planning course and in the pilot course for critical infrastructure protection liaison officers.

Primarily, before starting the specific practical activities, the main epistemic competences, relevant for the analysts and staff officers' profile, were tested. The VUCA modules were used to gradually assess, consolidate and improve awareness, skills and competencies, as well as static and dynamic interrelationship, at individual and team level.

The LabRint learning experience has been used in the planning phase of the security and defense specific activities, due to its potential to offer the possibility to create a complete package of data and information captured through different types of intelligence sources, to be structured, analyzed, processed and disseminated. Also, the potential to determine the relations between data and information, and subsequently, based on the inference scheme, to assess the possibilities, probabilities and predictability of specific events occurrence has been valued by the training audience.

We can state that, through the integration of the intelligence cycle into the operational planning process using the LEILA approach, the efficiency of training and education has increased, adding value to the intelligence products generated during the planning, preparation, execution and evaluation of specific security and defense activities.

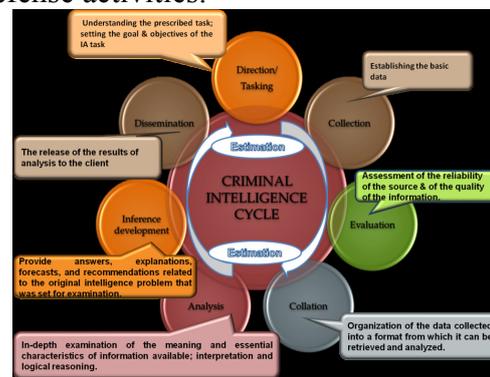


Figure 1

The serious games solution has been well received by the students and instructors, as an interesting and innovative complement to the traditional education and training tools and methods the NDU staff is using regularly.

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