**Instructional Design Process Model:**

**Military Intelligence Corps Association**

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# Introduction

This paper explores the potential for instituting an instructional design process model within a professional society in the U.S. Army, the Military Intelligence Corps Association, or MICA. Currently, there is no organizational process for analyzing training requirements or for developing training and learning materials. This analysis supports one of MICA's critical focus areas of increasing and professionalizing chapter membership. To that end, the paper will examine current organizational characteristics, any apparent training gaps requiring a learning design process, and a recommendation for a model to guide future training procedure design.

# Organizational Characteristics

## Mission and Structure

Established in 1994 as a non-profit association, MICA acts as the expert guild for the Army's intelligence branch, more formally called the Military Intelligence (MI) Corps.

Figure 1 - MICA Organizational Hierarchy (MICA National, 2022)
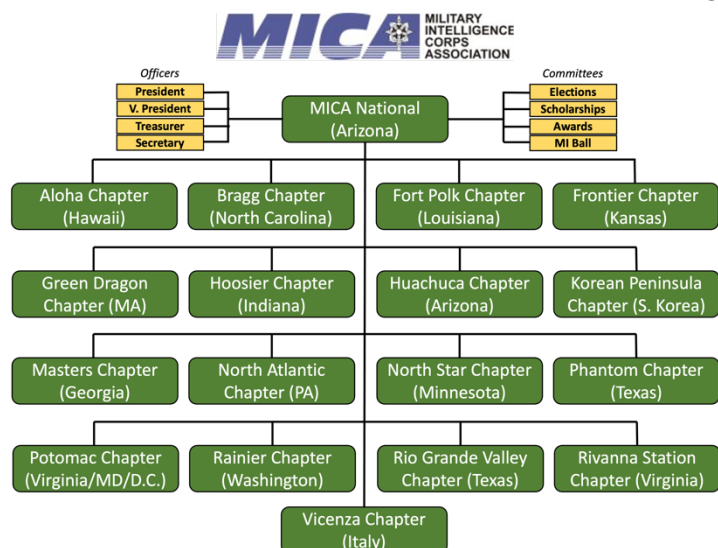


MICA was formed to preserve history, educate and share knowledge, honor past and present professionals, and award individuals for exemplary acts of service (MICA National, 2022). Membership is comprised of actively serving, reserve

component, retired service members, and contractors as well as others who support the Army intelligence mission. Figure 1 details the relatively flat organizational hierarchy: a central, national headquarters presides over seventeen regional chapters that have been organized at the state level. In regions where organizational membership is comparatively high, or in larger states (like Texas), multiple chapters have been organized. Several committees are organized to manage various activities or processes directed at specific events occurring at both the national and chapter level. Some of the key committees include Elections, Scholarships, Awards, and the annual MI Ball. Finally, the National HQ and each chapter maintain an Executive Board consisting of various officer positions that are elected annually.

MICA's "customers" are its members in each of the chapters. Chapters range widely in size from as small as a dozen to over 150 strong. Despite the scale differences, each chapter is organized and managed similarly with an executive board comprised of elected officers and a body of members. The members generally organize around purpose-built committees based on cyclical events, such as those identified in Figure 1. The only document that is consistently maintained across all chapters is the foundational charter which contains guidelines on how the chapter is structured and managed.

## Current Training Situation

While mandated organizational processes are included in the chapter charters, there is little evidence that the National HQ sees value in instituting a training development system to ensure all members are properly onboarded and understand how the organization is designed to function. Each chapter is left to its own designs on

how to train its members to execute association processes. This independence at the chapter level becomes problematic when they interpret charter guidelines differently. As some MICA procedures must be processed through or approved by the National HQ, these inconsistencies can lead to delays in executing resource-constrained planning events or delivering decisions on awards or scholarships.

## Organizational Training Context

Through its published constitution and charter, the National HQ sets forth guidelines for procedural requirements to ensure subordinate chapters operate within the legal boundaries of non-profits while also supporting the broader intent of the association. Reviewing those guidelines yields four knowledge requirements that will be used as a broad framework for exploring the need for a training and development strategy:

- *Executive Board Roles and Responsibilities*.  Various chapters use the elected officer positions in different capacities. As a result, friction exists between chapters and the National HQ when conducting day-to-day operations.

- *Internal MICA Processes*. The largest area of conflict concerns national scholarship approvals and award recommendations. These processes are validated at the National HQ and not every chapter understands submission requirements and timeliness standards resulting in significant delays.

- *Recruiting and Retaining Members*. Membership is stagnant, currently only increasing about 5% per year. Chapter members are eager to learn ways to engage potential members and get them interested in their activities.

- *Community Outreach.* MICA is designed with a key purpose of giving back to the communities in which they serve. Members are concerned about what they can do as a non-profit to stay engaged with other community organizations and leaders.

# Training Process Gaps

## Current Approach, Processes & Resources

MICA integrates new members individually and informally based on the role(s) they assume when joining. For example, when new board members are elected, the incumbent trains the incoming officer on their position-specific duties. If the chapter is well-organized, a continuity file may exist to be passed on to the incoming person. For specific MICA processes, the train-up depends on who is currently managing the process. Some processes, such as awards, are detailed enough that it would take several execution cycles to understand the various steps and organizational levels that interact to approve national awards:

*Figure 2 - MICA Awards Process*
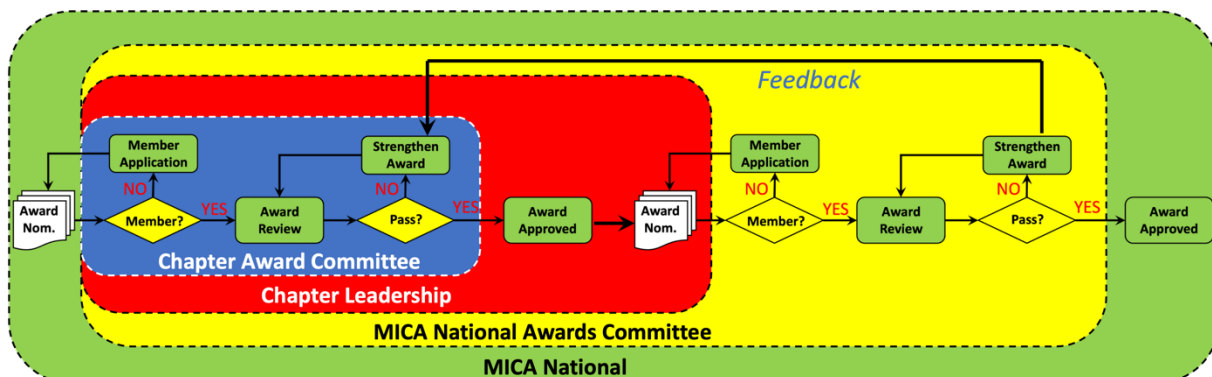
MICA has not dedicated any resources, either monetarily or in personnel, to develop or execute a training development strategy. Each role or process that is trained is executed at the individual level as an additional responsibility of the local subject matter expert. Resources are available, however, if the decision were made to hire additional staff members or out-source the development of training materials.

## Concerns with Status Quo

MICA members are frustrated with what is perceived to be different standards between the National HQ and the individual chapters. While each chapter charter is based on the National HQ document, many are written with completely different processes and standards. As a result, there are various levels of understanding as to the appropriate roles and responsibilities associated with each member of a chapter's executive board. Additionally, processes struggle to transfer between chapters as they don't directly align. This results in significant delays in procedural decisions. Finally, chapters are struggling to engage effectively within their local communities. This impacts their ability to recruit new members as well as instantiate themselves as a resource for veterans and their families. This lack of growth also reduces resources for MICA to support its outreach goals.

## Training Strategy Success Criteria

Convincing MICA to invest resources in training and development will require clear, simple, and achievable metrics for improving the association. Below are some initial criteria for achieving training success in the short term:

- *Executive Board Roles and Responsibilities.* Elections for new board members are held at the national and local levels annually. Participation in these events is quite low with usually only 1-2 candidates per position and less than 10% of the association voting (national elections) and slightly better (25%) at the local level. If members are more knowledgeable about what these positions are charged to accomplish, then we should see more interest in the election process. Increasing candidate pools to 2-3 per position and an increase in voter participation to at least 40% are solid initial goals for the program.

- *Internal MICA Processes.* Process improvements will be measured in participation and efficiency. For awards and scholarships, timing is critical. National awards should be approved with notification returned to the requesting chapter within 14 days. The scholarship selection process should be completed within 30 days from the submission deadline. If these efficiency goals are met, there is potential for the association to see an increase in those applying for both awards and scholarships due to more confidence in the system.

- *Recruiting and Retaining Members.* A better understanding of the national MICA mission and intent will make members feel more invested in the organization while also arming them with quality discussion points to recruit new members. Criteria for measuring this success will come in the form of less member turnover and more new members. Viable initial goals are a decrease in member turnover of 25% and an annual increase in new memberships of 15%.

- *Community Outreach.* Engaging with the community involves understanding key MICA messages while also being familiar with legal requirements for non-profit

sponsorship. Metrics for this training goal will be measured in an increase in the number of partnership agreements and sponsorships for MICA events. An achievable initial goal for outreach would be an increase in agreements and/or sponsorship by 25% annually.

The end state of the MICA training and development program would be an association that is stronger by internalizing its core values and purpose while also building a more effective partnerships with the surrounding community.

# Training Program Recommendations

## Proposed Instructional Design Model

A key purpose of instructional design is to increase organizational effectiveness and efficiency through improved employee performance (Rothwell et al., 2016). As MICA does not currently have a training development process, the recommendation is to institute a training development strategy addressing critical association inefficiencies by proposing ways to close member knowledge gaps in a way that is low maintenance and aligns with the organization's limited resources.

This strategy will employ a project management approach to design a learning model that can be exported virtually and used by chapters independent of their physical location. The proposed design model is an adaptation of the ISD Model 2 (Seels and Glasgow, 1998) and can be summarized as a regrouping of the standard phases associated with the ADDIE framework:

*Figure 3 - Design Model Comparison*
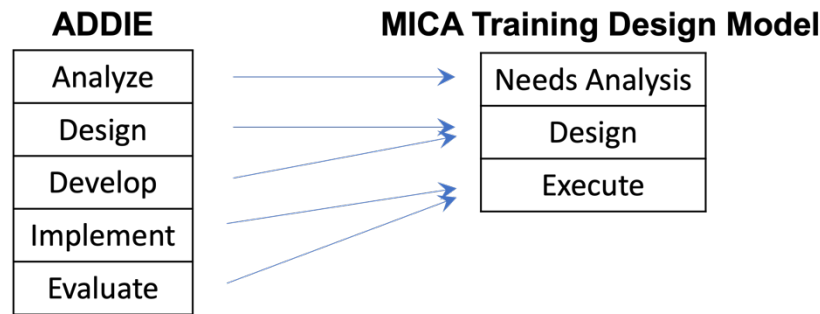


The MICA model employs three management phases that will result in an online meeting space hosting both learning and organizational management tools. A needs assessment will validate specific requirements, but the dispersed nature of the association will drive towards a virtual solution that can be implemented in various locations asynchronously.

*Figure 4 - MICA Training Design Model (Expanded)*
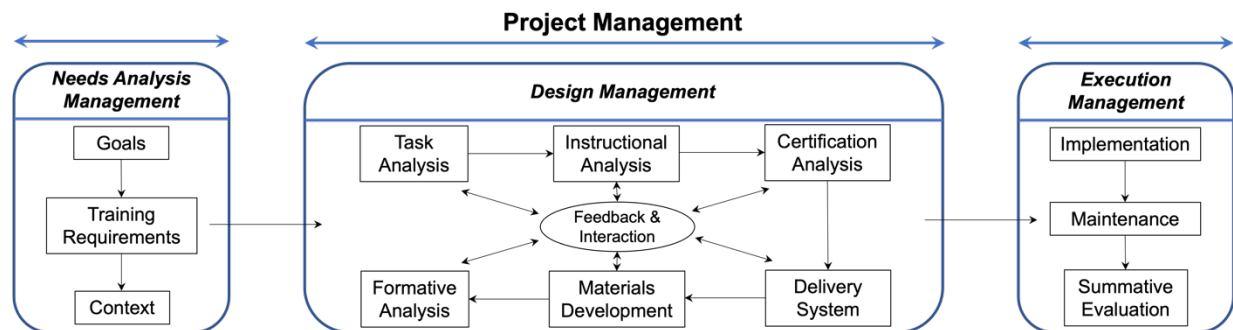


1. <u>Needs Analysis Management.</u> The training development process begins with understanding MICA's organizational challenges and member knowledge gaps. The results of this phase will indicate whether a new or improved training solution is required.

   - ***Goal Assessment*** entails analyzing the MICA mission and stated intent. Each association member must understand and internalize why the organization exists

if they are expected to perform in a way that moves this message forward.
Understanding the future desired end state of the organization is the first step in
identifying any potential gaps in meeting that goal.

-   ***Training Requirements Analysis*** involves conducting a needs assessment
    based on understanding where the organization is in relation to its goals. This
    assessment will identify the specific problem areas that are preventing the
    organization from realizing its desired end state. This step should also provide
    insights into which tasks should be prioritized for the most immediate or long-
    lasting impacts.

-   ***Context Analysis*** focuses on determining the constraints, resources, and
    member attributes that will impact training solution design. As an example, one
    specified constraint could be that MICA must operate within specific legal
    authorities to maintain its nonprofit status. Each chapter may have unique
    budgetary, technological, or geographical constraints that enhance or limit their
    ability to employ an online training and management tool.

2.  Design Management. The dynamic design management phase includes multiple
    steps that ensure the training solution suits the association members' learning
    needs. Designers and users are involved in each step as indicated by the "Feedback
    & Interaction" bubble central to this portion of the model.

    -   ***Task Analysis*** identifies specific responsibilities executed by member roles in
        the association. Outside of basic duty descriptions in the charter, there are no
        MICA documents that describe these positions or their responsibilities in detail.
        This step may also discover positions that don't exist but may be necessary for

key processes to work more efficiently. Once the positions are properly identified,

training needs will be developed specifically for those roles along with realistic

performance standards.

- *Instructional Analysis* will explore how each training task can be taught while

also focusing on who the most likely audience will be for each training module.

Understanding the audience will influence how the training material is delivered

to the learners. A better understanding of who needs to be trained on each task

will ensure the right association members are attending the right training

sessions.

- *Certification Analysis* will determine the most optimal path to validate learning.

Some learning tasks may require industry-accepted certifications while others

may only need locally developed tests to check that learning has occurred. It's

critical to develop understandable metrics that are recognizable across the

organization. The final product from this step is a validated training plan that

captures the logic of how each training task is taught and certified.

- *Delivery System Analysis* examines different avenues for training content

delivery. From pre-packaged, hard copy documents to a suite of self-paced,

online modules, multiple methods will be explored to determine how best to

distribute the training requirements nationally.

- *Materials Development* begins once a decision has been made on the delivery

system. Subject matter experts within the association will partner with technical

developers to transform MICA training material and ideas into working learning

modules. This step is where the outputs of the four previous steps combine into a

coherent training management plan with all the required technology in place to implement the strategy.

- ***Formative Evaluations*** include the multiple reviews of products that will be conducted during and between steps in this design process. The evaluation data will be collected through both expert reviews and random sampling of member experiences using the training tools. Expert reviews will be provided by current association leadership that has experience with organizational policies and processes. They will be able to give technical feedback as well as user-level experiences. Random sampling will occur by recruiting a small subset of association members from each of the subordinate chapters. Their input will indicate how useable and effective the training tools are for the dispersed training audience. The feedback from these evaluations will be analyzed to inform updates to the learning management system prior to it going "live" to the association at large.

3. Execution Management. The final phase delivers a product that integrates the ideas and feedback from previous stages.

- ***Implementation*** is the execution of the training strategy. During this step, MICA members will use the training tools and interact with the complete range of capabilities within the learning management system. Chapters will be able to track learning tasks and report progress to the national level. National level processes will be tracked online for transparency to the state chapters. Evaluation of each training module's content, as well as the system itself, will continue during implementation.

- *Maintenance* will be conducted throughout implementation to ensure the system works as designed. The key to the longevity of the development strategy is to have association members trained to update and maintain the system. This task should be built into the contract for the technical design team.

- *Summative Evaluation* takes place at the conclusion of the training courses. While the process to collect this data is similar to the formative evaluations, the purpose is different. In this case, the evaluations focus on how effective the training modules are at preparing members for their association duties. Additionally, an evaluation will be conducted on how well the system enables MICA and its chapters to manage association processes. These evaluations will lead to recommendations on training content updates and should be revisited each time a learning cohort finishes a block of training.

## Model Implications

The most significant factor in implementing this training development strategy is resources. MICA does not currently maintain training developers. For this training system and model to be effective over the long term, either new staff members should be hired, or current staff will need to be trained to execute additional training manager roles. In the initial implementation phase, the recommendation is that 2-3 staff members are dedicated to managing this function for MICA. Once the full breadth of maintenance responsibilities is understood, the roles could potentially be integrated into the responsibilities of other full-time staff. Lastly, an additional role for a training manager should be added at the National HQ and in each subordinate chapter.

To instantiate this new training model into MICA's organizational culture, all current executive board members and permanent staff should be educated on the context for this change and trained on how to implement the model and interpret the results. This process is likely to increase leader buy-in, which is critical if the model is to be accepted by the association members.

## Conclusion

This professional guild needs a training and development program that will standardize operations. Member frustrations with inconsistent leadership guidance, inefficient processes, and limited community outreach have led to stagnating growth nationwide. The proposal focuses on developing a program that can be accessed remotely while allowing users to complete the modules at their preferred pace. Costs should be kept within budget as the online learning and process management system will be easily maintained by MICA staff once it has been initialized. Since MICA would like to have this program up and running soon, the model emphasizes implementation and formative evaluations. While less time is spent on the needs assessment portion, the leadership is confident the key issues will be easily recognized as modules are built to service them.

One of the potential challenges to implementing this program long-term is the subject matter expertise required to maintain the online portal as processes evolve and learning content changes. If MICA maintains a tech-savvy member on staff, this will keep operational costs relatively low. An alternative would be to hire a part-time staffer that would manage the online system either on-site or remotely.

To remain relevant, MICA must professionalize its staff and processes. The model presented here gives MICA an opportunity to develop and employ a systematic approach to training its members to effectively move the organization closer to its goals of honor and service. Meeting those goals requires growth which will only come when the association members are confident that MICA has a solid plan and is investing in them. This training and development strategy is a key indicator of that investment.

# References

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