

# THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

## LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY

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AS NEVER BEFORE, LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMIES AND TRAINERS ARE challenged by the increases in workloads and the complex anti-terrorism and information sharing demands of the post-9/11 world. New initiatives are hindered by lack of clarity and budget constraints, while the threat of litigation requires academies to seek training standardization and quality controls.

A recent white paper, entitled *Core Principles and Practical Applications of Law Enforcement Academy Automation*, was published

in June 2003 by IFORCES (Institute for Operational Readiness and Continuous Education for Security) to provide a modernization roadmap for the directors of law enforcement academies. Replete with process evaluation, re-engineering strategies, technical approaches and practical analysis, the white paper can serve as a roadmap for academies wishing to modernize.

The paper is required reading for directors and managers of law enforcement training, as its authors represent experts who have



managed successful modernization efforts within some of the largest academies in the country:

- ◆ Dr. Sandy Mihal, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center
- ◆ Linda Wilcox, DHS, Customs and Border Protection Academy
- ◆ Michael Baker, DHS, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Academy
- ◆ Ari Vidali, CEO of ENVISAGE

The paper is divided into theoretical (core principles) and practical approaches (evaluating technologies). The authors' research found that academies are struggling due to:

1. Inadequate strategic planning and/or funding
2. Operational inefficiencies/bottlenecks
3. Lack of standardization
4. Paper-laden processes and record keeping
5. Failure to maximize technology
6. Inadequate management reporting infrastructure
7. Loss of institutional knowledge from staff/instructor turnover

8. Lack of management infrastructure to benchmark performance
9. Resistance to change methods, practices and technologies

This article is a summary overview of the comprehensive white paper, and is intended to highlight the basic concepts for academy modernization. The full text may be downloaded from the IFORCES website at: <http://www.iforces.org/downloads/coreprinciplesandpracticalapplications.pdf>.

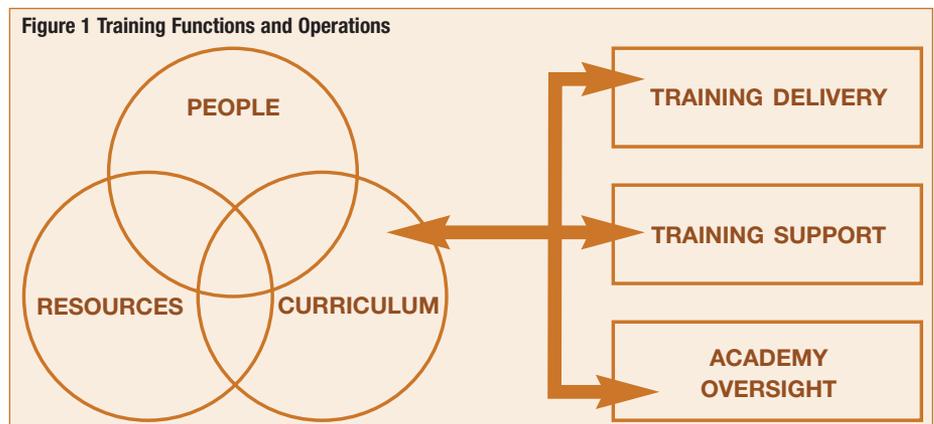
### Core Principles

The core principles of law enforcement

academy automation may seem obvious. However, to develop and execute a modernization strategy, a deeper understanding of these principles is necessary: awareness of the academy culture and the interlocking functions of training delivery, support and management oversight.

### Management Culture

Academy modernization efforts will fail without strong leadership and an internally designated implementation task force. Re-evaluating strategic imperatives requires creating and fostering an organizational culture that welcomes new ideas and inno-



vation, and is willing to sacrifice inefficient, costly processes.

## Structuring Training & Operations with Mission-based Learning Strategy

At their core, academies consist of two resources: people and curricula. These facilitate three interlocking functional categories: training delivery; training support, and academy oversight.

Evaluation of operations should encompass processes, staff, infrastructure, information technology and physical plant required to meet strategic objectives. Management must consider political, operational, human capital and budgetary constraints affecting modernization efforts.

## Skills, Knowledge and Abilities Assessment

*Core Principles* explains how academies can develop a prioritized set of learning objectives essential for each job classification, starting from the "Mission-based learning strategy." Information discovered during an assessment assists in determining implementation requirements of training, curricula, and operations, while pinpointing current gaps in curriculum.

## Training Delivery

Training delivery encompasses curriculum development, training, student support, and lifelong learning. *Core Principles* explores requirements for training delivery including the analysis, technology and required process feedback for success measurement.

Analysis is the cornerstone for every successful process re-engineering or automation project. The white paper suggests that during the analysis process, key questions must be asked by the modernization team to provide the framework for addressing the quality of training, as well as the appropriate delivery vehicles. Questions that must be asked and answered prior to embarking on the re-engineering effort are provided as a starting point.

Analysis will reveal appropriate delivery technologies that allow academies to realize powerful capabilities to enhance teaching and learning. Delivery platforms

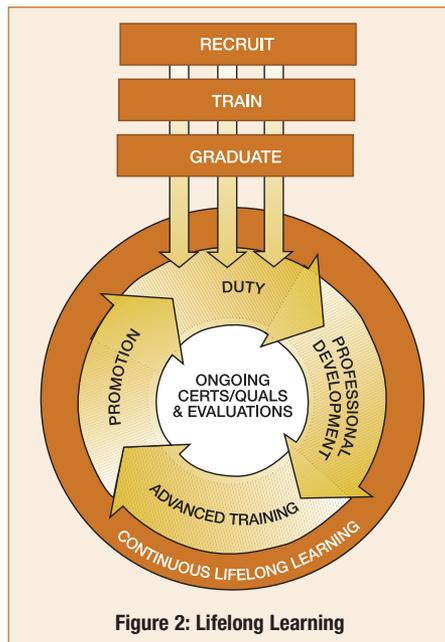


Figure 2: Lifelong Learning

for consideration include:

1. LMS - Learning Management Systems
2. LCMS - Learning Content Management Systems
3. Content Development Platforms
4. Synchronous Learning Platforms
5. Electronic Student Support Systems
6. Student Intranets

LMS and LCMS platforms are the primary means of organizing, storing and delivering online content. It is important to know that learning content should *not* be developed to suit technology; rather, technology should be selected to deliver desired content.

Finally, incorporation of student and instructor feedback for training delivery is important to measure curriculum effectiveness. Post-training surveys tied directly to applicable metrics provide the foundation for constant quality improvement by focusing on relevance, instructor performance, student achievement and satisfaction.

## Training Support

Training support encompasses all aspects of academy operations and administrative functions, including:

- ◆ Student registration and records
- ◆ Exam processing
- ◆ Inventory management
- ◆ Class/instructor/resources scheduling
- ◆ HR management

- ◆ Instructional design
- ◆ Research & evaluation functions

Many processes are currently paper-laden and manual, translating into significant ongoing administrative support costs. As training throughput increases, this problem is magnified. It is essential, therefore, in high volume training environments, that academies apply technology strategically to operational leverage points and bottlenecks.

Performing analysis allows administrators to gain a better understanding of training support within the framework of the mission-based learning strategy.

Support and logistics form the core of law enforcement academy administration. Successful academies place emphasis on qualitative and scalable processes that facilitate training delivery and are engineered to provide management with meaningful oversight information. Ideally, management will be able to measure administrative performance quantitatively and move the needle on strategic goals.

Application of technology to training support provides enhanced throughput, significant cost savings, and higher levels of service. Training support and administrative technologies significantly contribute to a better support environment and enhanced visibility into performance. Core technologies discussed in the white paper to create efficiencies within training support include:

1. Student Information System
2. Instructor Certification Tracking System
3. Automated Scheduling System
4. Workflow Automation
5. Online Course Catalog and Registration System
6. Automated Testing Platform
7. Enterprise Reporting Platform

## Academy Oversight

Solid oversight is the most crucial element in maximizing the effectiveness of all aspects of law enforcement training and proving return on investment. Oversight should encompass policy integration, training strategy, tactical implementation and resources required for proper execution. Effective articulation of the academy's vision and how it dovetails with the agency mission should be combined with internal

discussion and tactical innovation from instructors, administrators, and support staff to fulfill the mission-based goals.

*Core Principles* outlines the fundamental questions that form the framework required for development of an oversight strategy that, once answered, can be distilled into key goals and objectives. These objectives must include a clearly defined set of performance metrics for evaluation of processes and functions.

Academy leadership can use these metrics to form the basis for sound decision-making regarding direction, technology implementation and resource utilization. Metrics also allow management to monitor critical performance areas and identify trends before they become problems.

Additional benefits include instant access to aggregate information and statistics for planning, performance-measurement, budget, and facility utilization.

## Evaluating New Technologies

Evaluating new technologies requires that fundamental questions be asked to contextualize capital investment and technology implementation within the framework of the mission-based strategy. Critical to the evaluation are both a justification of how technology supports the mission and objectives, and a clear understanding of return on investment.

## Training Delivery

While the allure of eLearning as an alternative delivery method is strong, *Core Principles* discusses some of the key criteria for making an informed decision concerning the delivery of training, including academy culture, technical infrastructure, and content development. The white paper strongly cautions academies to ensure that core systems and organizational culture support the deployment of eLearning. Deploying eLearning too early without a full understanding of the consequences or expense can have *disastrous consequences*.

Should it be deemed that eLearning is appropriate, academies should carefully select a learning management system based on the type and volume of content to be delivered, security requirements, functional needs and ability to integrate the technology with other core academy systems.

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# Support and logistics form the core of law enforcement academy administration.

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Automated testing platforms allow students to take exams online from their PC or proctored at a computer lab. The advantages of automated testing are the ability to randomize questions and answer sets, and offer instant grading, feedback, and real-time statistical analysis of question validity against learning objectives.

## Training Support

Internet provision of course catalog information and student registration can be effective and inexpensive. By capturing a fair percentage of registrations online, academies can realize substantial cost savings. Printing and data entry costs are reduced, training authorizations streamlined, and student notifications automated. Student registration features include the ability to wait-list students, with automatic notification when slots become available. Thus, student services are significantly enhanced.

*Core Principles* stresses that centralized tracking of ongoing certification requirements is important, as it provides timely notification of expirations and streamlines scheduling of re-certification training. Centrally managing re-certification helps academies avoid expensive litigation by ensuring policies are followed.

An automated scheduling platform can be integrated into core academy systems to optimize resource utilization. In order to work, automated scheduling must be “intelligent,” “rules-based,” and must automatically facilitate the resolution of scheduling conflicts. For large academies, automated scheduling can achieve much more efficient resource utilization and instantly realign schedules should training resources become unavailable.

A primary friction point for academy management is the redundant data entry into disparate systems and paper-based processes. Implementation of workflow automation provides a consistent, repeatable and scalable process for accomplishing myriad tasks. These tasks include access and creation of information and standard operating procedures, as well as generation of all necessary letters, certifications, status

reports, documents, and forms—automatically pre-filled with appropriate data.

## Academy Oversight

Enterprise reporting tools enable managers with real-time access to operational reports, utilization statistics, and ad hoc information. Information in an aggregated, consistent and accessible format creates enormous benefits. For enterprise reporting to succeed, managers must be able to clearly articulate reporting needs and link them directly to operational management objectives.

## Summary and Conclusions

The white paper concluded that, when properly followed, the core principles of academy automation can achieve phenomenal results. Not only will academies be able to scale their business processes but, in addition, can do so at a lower cost, more effectively utilize resources, and achieve and measure stated strategic objectives. ♦

*The full transcript of the white paper is available at <http://www.iforces.org/downloads/coreprinciplesandpracticalapplications.pdf>*

*IFORCES is a unique, nationwide public and private sector consortium dedicated to practical scientific research and exploration into the application of effective practices, next-generation methodologies, and continuous learning and performance technologies for the acceleration of security, law enforcement, first responder and military readiness ([www.iforces.org](http://www.iforces.org)).*

*Envisage Technologies is an innovative enterprise software development company focused on the implementation of powerful internet-based training automation and human capital management platforms for law enforcement academies. The company possesses expertise within the federal, state and local law enforcement, criminal justice, first responder and military communities.*

*In 2002 Envisage launched Acadis (Academy Administration Information System), a modular COTS product designed over the past five years with three of the largest federal law enforcement academies in the United States.*

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Assistant Director, Academy Operations  
Department of Homeland Security, Citizenship and  
Immigration Services Academy

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