

# EDUCATION COI

## Newsletter



Vol 3, Issue 2

### *Message from the COI Manager..*

Greetings Education Community:

As we recently finished FY20, I am pleased we were able to initiate training opportunities for the community. We were able to offer our first courses and in a virtual environment. We do not currently know our FY21 funding level; however, our goal is to receive enough funding for another course or two this year based upon the results of the survey you participated in last year. Additionally, as many have been teleworking, I hope you have been able to take advantage of Linked In Learning via your personal devices.

Lastly, although work commitments put us a bit behind, we are finally sending out the suggestions for renaming the newsletter. As promised, the finalist submissions are below. Please send your vote name for the newsletter to our COI inbox @ [TECOM\\_COI.fct@usmc.mil](mailto:TECOM_COI.fct@usmc.mil). The suggestions are:

Collaborate!  
Involved Visions (IV)  
The Convergence

We look forward to hearing from you! Deadline 16 November 2020.

Rhonda Fortson  
Education COI Program Manager

### Inside this issue

Education COI Message .....	1
USMC COI Integrator .....	2
Emotional Intelligence .....	3 – 4
Decision/Problem Solving.....	5– 6
Editor's Corner .....	7



**Be Safe!**



## USMC CIVILIAN COMMUNITY OF INTEREST (COI) PROGRAM COI INTEGRATOR

by Nate Taylor, COI Program Integrator / Program Manager

The Community of Interest (COI) program mission is to execute **civilian** community management policy requirements, objectives, and responsibilities to support United States Marine Corps (USMC) Strategic Human Capital Management and Planning. In addition, the COI program executes USMC civilian community management activities that inform the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of the Navy (DON) and Civilian Command-Level Strategic Workforce Planning procedures and requirements. The Marine Corps established the COI program to enhance civilian careers. The Marine Corps COI program has 19 functional communities (APF/NAF), which aligns occupational series into groupings of similar types of work. Civilian employees are members of functional communities possessing a shared culture, professional identity, unique core competencies, and a common core training and development methodology.

A senior leader, normally a member of the Senior Executive Service with vested interest in representing a functional community, leads one of the 19 communities. The COI Leader provides oversight, guidance, and community-wide strategic vision and goals. Each community has a COI Manager (Action Officer) who performs planning, program and budget execution for the community. The COI Managers execute approved funding authorizations in order to maximize impact on community members by coordinating professional development programs that support objectives, missions, and goals.

As a team member of the Civilian Workforce Planning and Development Section (MPC-30), one of my roles is the Marine Corps COI Integrator / Program Manager. As the COI Integrator I support the Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (DC, M&RA) who provides oversight of the COI program and the Assistant Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ADC, M&RA) who has direct oversight and management functions for the COI Program. I also work closely with the COI Leaders and Managers as they carry out communication plans to ensure communities are informed of critical functional issues, community best practices, workforce regulatory and statutory requirements, function competency requirements, and developmental opportunities.

The Marine Corps understands the important roles and responsibilities of our Civilian Marines and the need to be on the cutting edge of technology. It is our objective to have a well-trained civilian workforce to meet the objectives of the CMC strategic plan and to provide the best support for our warfighters. The COI program is another tool that supports training, education, and career advancement opportunities. COI Leaders have determined that every Civilian Marine has a need for certain foundational skills that support the Marine Corps' mission. The program focuses on developing skills in the following foundational categories:

- Communication
- Project Management
- Information Technology
- Business Functions
- Personal/Professional
- Management Skills

To gain training for foundational skills, Civilian Marines can request an account for LinkedIn Learning, an online training platform, as a primary training resource for courses that will develop these skills. There are very limited accounts available on a first come, first served basis. Please reach out to your COI Manager to request an account.

Each year, HQMC, M&RA, MPC-30, and COI Leaders/Managers conduct Civilian Career Development Information Forums (CDIF) at selected Marine Corps Installations to inform civilians about their career development opportunities. The Forum is open to all Civilian Marines as well as military personnel that lead, supervise, and mentor Civilian Marines. Because we know not everyone is close to the flagpole, this is an opportunity for HQMC to bring some of the latest updates to our bases and installations. *We encourage commands, supervisors, managers, and employees to reach out to their respective COI Manager to learn more about how their functional community can support their mission and career development.*

In the present day, it is important that our civilian workforce is able to adapt to our ever-changing environment and to meet or exceed organizational mission requirements by having the knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet today's challenges and emerging mission requirements. To learn more about the COI program you can review MCO 12410.25 and visit our website at [https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/webcenter/portal/MPC30\\_CC/pages\\_home](https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/webcenter/portal/MPC30_CC/pages_home).



## Emotional Intelligence

Education Services Officer for Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point

By Teresa Hart Allen

As I considered the topics that might bring value to your career endeavors and overall quality of life, my thoughts continued to return to some phenomenal prior trainings and research regarding the importance of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and leadership success. EI understanding and knowledge has improved my leadership abilities and equipped me with added skills to build and maintain high trust levels as I support my team of employees, co-workers, and superiors. In addition, I am sure my current emotional state has influenced my topic selection, as tomorrow marks the first year anniversary of my husband's passing from a horrific battle with gastric cancer. The learned EI information has helped me professionally, personally, and with my two daughters as we continue down the grief journey.

We all know people who are brilliant and have an IQ off the chart but are not successful because of their lack of emotional intelligence. In some of my readings, the percentage was referenced that IQ only accounts for approximately 20 – 25 % of one's success in life. The bottom line is, there is more to becoming a successful person, family member, or leader than "book smarts." Below are some of the tips that have had positive impacts on my leadership skills and career endeavors.

Per Daniel Goleman's idea of Emotional Intelligence, the key to success is determined by a person's psychological traits and learned skills. The five areas of EI are: empathy; self-motivation; self-awareness; one's handling of relationships; and managing one's emotions. Building EI is beneficial for positive and productive workflow in any work environment. How people feel when fully involved in work that suits their abilities, while interacting with others, is cost effective and will enhance overall production.

Using our body parts, the Personify Leadership Training provided an interesting and helpful way to intentionally incorporate the five areas of EI throughout each day as you lead your team. Briefly, those core competencies are:

- Heart – intention to look out for the best interest of others
- Mind – emotionally resilient
- Voice – good communication
- Ears – listen for understanding with both ears
- Hands – provide guidance/direction
- Feet – walk the walk you talk
- Spine – leader during challenges and obstacles
- Eyes – future visionary

Our emotions are tightly woven into every part of our being. Our mind is made up of two parts that operate independently, what one thinks and what one feels. Emotions are so powerful and if left out of balance with logic, it impedes clear thinking, sound judgement, weakens our intellect and has negative impacts on relationships with others. Leaders, looking to build healthy environments, must continuously seek to master self-awareness; self-management; social awareness; and relationship management for success in life while encouraging others to do the same. Understanding yourself, your emotions and the powerful impact EI has on every aspect of your personal life, performance and professional relationships is step one and incorporates your heart, mind and spine. Learning to manage self-control under duress while adapting to difficult circumstances is step two and takes your entire body. Using your eyes, ears, heart and mind to effectively read other people's moods and gauge their needs and concerns is step three. Lastly, where the rubber meets the road, is relationship management. In step 4, you have the potential to lead, inspire, and influence others, while cultivating trusting relationships where others work together as a team to manage conflict and change in both life and business situations. An EI organization provides a productive and positive work environment, where the members trust one another, feel comfortable to collaborate ideas, and take the necessary action to get the job done. As an EI leader, the more EI you can bring when dealing with both internal and external customers, the better attuned you are to their unique needs and concerns and the greater your ability to come up with winning business solutions. Striving to boost EI isn't just good for the workplace in developing positive working relationships and team cohesiveness, it is also beneficial for career advancement. (continued on page 4)

## **Emotional Intelligence**

Education Services Officer for Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point

By Teresa Hart Allen

### **Background:**

For the past twelve years, Teresa Allen has served as the Education Services Officer for Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point. Her progressive career track began as an educator in an elementary school setting where she taught for eight years followed by two years as an assistant principal. She smiled as she shared the two major life changing blessings that occurred during the first quarter of 1997, which redirected her career pathway. On 14 February, she married her soulmate Terry Allen, and on 17 March, she continued her education career with the federal government, serving five years as the Training and Curriculum Specialist for the Children, Youth, and Teen Programs, one year as the Child Development Center Manager, and six years as the Children, Youth and Teen Program Administrator. Education and Training: Master's Degree in Educational Leadership and Supervision with certification in Curriculum Instructional Specialist, East Carolina (1993), Bachelor's Degree in Education, East Carolina University (1987)

To ensure she provides state of the art education and career resources to our Service members, their families, and civilians aboard the installation, she continues her quest as a lifelong learner by adding certifications and credentials. Some examples are: Certified Career Services Provider (CCSP); Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF); Career Development Facilitator Instructor Certification, NCDA; Certified Career & Education Advisor, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL); Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Project Certification Completed; Certified Coach through the Coach Training Alliance; and Command Financial Specialist (CFS).







## Decision Making and Problem Solving

By Veronica Ham

I love it when I receive e-mails from Ms. Terra Eiding on behalf of the COI because I know they will be filled with methods that I can use to improve my career and interpersonal skills and goals. The Education COI offers professionally presented and highly educational avenues in which to grow; one only needs to participate in those opportunities. The latest program offering, Decision Making and Problem Solving, is just one of the many chances that I have had to participate in the program. This class, sponsored through Graduate School USA, was facilitated by Mac Bogert over a two-day timeframe.

This course, simply put, aims to answer the question ‘How can we problem solve more efficiently so that we can improve the quality of our decision making?’ We learned about an abundance of tools to help us answer this question beginning with defining decision making and problem solving. Decision making is a *cognitive* process; a combination of ideas, processes and actions that help us reach a decision. Problem solving is an *analytical* process; it involves creativity, logic, inferences, thinking and reasoning that help us solve a problem. Together, decision making and problem solving help us make more effective decisions. It is imperative that good communication skills are utilized in these two processes as well as an understanding of the organizational climate/culture (i.e. how people work in groups, managerial styles, communication between workers at all levels, and individual/organizational values). Do people feel safe enough to talk about the problem? What is the true root of the problem versus the symptoms? What’s the best (and worst) that could happen if the problem is solved or not solved? Who actually owns the problem?

Decision making needs to happen with people who have both the individual and organizational knowledge necessary to not only see the problem from all sides, but to see it with the culture that surrounds it as mentioned earlier. There are 8 steps that lead to a quality decision: defining the problem, determining objectives, options for solving, merits of those options, strategy to be used, making the decision, plan of action, and evaluation of outcomes. Since problem solving is woven into the decision making process, scientific problem solving involves: identifying and defining the problem, analyzing the problem and determining why it exists, identifying and examining options, establishing criteria for evaluating options, selecting an option, developing a plan, and monitoring and evaluating the plan. You’ll need to consider the differences between individual versus group problem solving and decision making. Each has their pluses and minuses but they also have their collective benefits: people with their knowledge about the subject area and their skills to problem solve and make decisions; interpersonal skills such as active listening, group interaction and conflict resolution; and basic project management skills.

When working with a group/team, always be aware of group think. Group think happens when members of a group or team place the views of the group above their own ideas or opinions. They concern themselves with preserving harmony and relationships with each other rather than on the problem at hand. Members become so committed to the work of the team, that they come to believe that the views of the majority must be right and the minority wrong. Therefore, the minority doesn’t voice their difference of opinions and continue to operate as though everything is alright. As a result, the group may make questionable or wrong decisions if group think is allowed to continue. A good example of this, which we have all probably seen or heard of, is the NASA Challenger group think phenomenon around the heat shields that led to its explosion. Group think played a part in the Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba in 1961 and the Korean and Vietnam Wars. If the group has a facilitator, they can use a technique that helps alleviate group think and that is the “devil’s advocate”. The facilitator can help the group view the problem from a different perspective by asking questions to ensure all comments made are clear and understood as presented. (continued on page 6)

## Decision Making and Problem Solving

By Veronica Ham

Generally speaking, when decisions are made using a good, ethical base with core values intertwined, the decision is more satisfying to a diverse group, the group's members operate ethically and strive for excellence, public trust is maintained, and it aids in sustaining a 'helping' environment/culture within the organization. Acting honestly and in a responsible manner, avoiding unethical behavior, admitting mistakes, and doing what you say you will do are all hallmarks of this ideal decision making and problem solving process.

To sum it up, the process consists of 8 steps:

1. Define the problem to be solved and the decision to be made
  - A clear problem definition enables those participating in the process to understand the problem and make decisions to solve it.
2. Determine the vision and objectives
  - Objectives serve several purposes: they give the individual or group a set of targets to aim toward and when reached the feeling of achievement and accomplishment. It also aids in determining what information is needed and from whom, what actions need to be taken and when/in what order, and what needs clarifying.
3. Determine what options are available
  - This is where problem solving analysis begins. It sets the stage for determining what course of action will be taken – decision making. These options should be fresh, new ideas and not ones borrowed from old actions or decisions. At this step, NO evaluation is done – merely information gathering.
4. Determine the merits of each option
  - Here you consider cost, time, people, and other resources needed. At the same time, examination of assumptions and constraints need to be reviewed so uncertainty about any of the options can be kept to a minimum.
5. Determine the strategy
  - Strategy is a plan of action designed to reach a goal. Review what has been done in the last four steps and consider the risk of implementing the options that have been developed.
6. Make the decision
  - At this point, you are ready to make a decision. You've identified the problem, developed objectives, and examined options and their merits. Don't procrastinate here! Make the decision.
7. Develop a plan of action
  - The decision has been made and now a plan of action need to be developed to ensure the problem is solved and the decision that has been made is implemented. This plan enables those who are implementing the decision to follow a plan of action.
8. Evaluate the outcomes
  - Is it working? If you have been diligent through the process, your plan should be successful.

# EDITOR'S CORNER



*Hello Community Members,*

A special thank you to the article contributors for this edition. Please continue to send suggestions for articles and tell us what is happening with your work community at your locations. Also, if you attended any previous training “testimonials” are needed. Many community members may benefit from your testimonial as a future training opportunity.

This holiday season reminds us what a close-knit COI work family we’ve become while working together during this pandemic. Your ongoing support is appreciated as we’re seeking “holiday photos” from home and office for the Dec edition. This is a great way to encourage community engagement for all the Education COI membership and let your light shine during this challenging time.

*Recap:*

- Please send your vote, suggestions, testimonials and articles for the newsletter to our COI inbox @ [TECOM\\_COI.fct@usmc.mil](mailto:TECOM_COI.fct@usmc.mil).  
The suggestions are:

Collaborate!  
Involved Visions (IV)  
The Convergence

Submit the holiday photos and testimonials deadline Monday, 30 Nov 2020. Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any suggestions, concerns and questions send email to the COI inbox.

*Terra Eidinger, Editor*

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