

03/17/13

I returned Friday evening from two weeks at Ft. Bragg where my colleagues and I worked with Army intelligence analysts, collectors, and operational planners to improve their 'how to think' capabilities. We now have worked with 1055 intelligence analysts, intelligence collectors, and operational planners in 44 seminars over four years and seven months to help them engage in deep thinking and to find joy in thought. Our broad goals, as always -- help our students learn 'how to think,' better than they today and mentor them to learn a system of thought for advanced analysis.

Advanced analysis was an important part of the curriculum in which for this particular course the information environment was the overarching emphasis (hence the triumvirate of analyst, collector, and planner). We had great students, and they made significant progress over this grueling two-week curriculum. Now, inculcation and application of the thought models and concepts they learned through this introduction to advanced thinking rests upon them, as individuals, as thought leaders, and organizations.

We spent time reading from/about and discussing a range of warriors, theorists, and historians such as H.H. Scullard (*Scipio Africanus Soldier and Politician*), Sun Tzu (*The Art of War*), Clausewitz (*On War*), Galula (*Counterinsurgency Warfare*), Bohm (*Wholeness and the Implicate Order*), Claxton (*Hare Brain Tortoise Mind*), Waldrop (*Complexity*), Holland (*Hidden Order*), Zukav (*The Dancing Wu Li Master*), Card (*Ender's Game*), Mao Tse-Tung (*On Guerrilla Warfare*), T.E. Lawrence (*Seven Pillars of Wisdom*), F. Scott Fitzgerald (*Tender is the Night*), Gladwell (*Blink*), Kilcullen (*The Accidental Guerrilla*), and Checkland (*Systems Thinking, Systems Practice*), to name a few.

We spent some time talking about thought leadership – an attitudinal and cognitive skill essential for winning in any competitive struggle now and in the future. Thought leaders purposefully engage in deep thought from several perspectives:

- Life-long learning for their minds.
- Continuously help and mentor their subordinates to purposefully engage in critical reading and thinking and improving their cognitive processes so as to improve their 'how to think' skills. This responsibility is a moral imperative for leaders of all ranks and positions.
- Help their seniors improve their 'how to think' skills and to assist in senior leaders' efforts to develop learning organizations.
- Engage and influence key adversaries, competitors, and others' (e.g., populaces') minds to influence how they perceive, think, plan, decide, act, assess, use five kinds of observables, collect, recompose, synthesize, evaluate, learn, and adapt.
- Help people understand nonlinearity, the basics of complexity theory, and how to work against and win when engaged in mental combat bouts with adversaries and competitors.

- Understand the importance and roles of complex adaptive systems (CAS) in conflict.
- Sense, shape and affect critical elements of the nonlinear and linear operational contexts to enhance decision-making.
- Learn A2's nine thought models that help them search for, find, seize, & hold the initiative and open the door for the other six kinds of advantages.
- Develop the freedom to think differently, creatively, and deeply.

We also spent time talking about the importance of having an aggressive attitude, the cognitive skill of precognition (imagining what could and is likely to happen with the goal of preemption), anticipation, and how both capabilities lead to seizing and holding the initiative. Possessing the initiative, of course, means we provide our leaders with the capability to dictate the terms of action in an operation and, of course, open the door, so to speak, for the emergence of a few or all of the other advantages (besides initiative) such as tempo, momentum, knowledge, decision, position, and freedom of movement/maneuver.

We have a straight advanced analysis seminar for the Canadian Defense Force coming up the last week in February and the first week in March in Colorado Springs Colorado. I'm looking forward to working with these fine professional military people and America's long-term friends.