

LESSON PURPOSE PLAN

EMBRACING DIVERSITY AMONGST PERSONNEL GUIDED DISCUSSION

VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP

7/24/2015

1. TOPIC OVERVIEW

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

It is important to improve our understanding of America's diverse population. We must then use that important knowledge to attract quality young people to the Marine Corps, include their knowledge and abilities in mission accomplishment, retain them, and inspire them to be champions of military service in our Marine Corps. We must apply the strengths of our diverse population and create an inclusive environment that leads talent, values individuals, and develops Marines and Civilians who enhance our Corps and are prepared to lead in world-wide operations.

Use this time to present the topic of the guided discussion to your group. Cover why this topic is important to the Marine Corps, as a whole, and vital to the individual Marine. You may use the above paragraph to help introduce the topic, or develop a completely unique introduction. Aspects of your attention gainer should focus on your discussion topic. Authenticity is absolutely imperative; avoid glamorization or trying to shock and awe with any of the attention gainers or discussion.

Ensure you have followed the Instructor Preparation Guide (IPG), familiarized yourself with the subject, and reviewed the references. From Marine Corps Order (MCO) 5354.1_, *Marine Corps Equal Opportunity (EO) Manual*:

Cultural Diversity: A desirable condition in the Marine Corps brought about by gender, religion, racial, cultural, and social differences that Marines naturally bring to our organization.

Ethnicity: That which sets off a group by race (defined as genetic), religion (preferred denomination), national origin (country of one's ancestors), or some combination of these categories.

Minority: A group which differs from the predominant section of a larger group in one or more characteristics; e.g., ethnic background, language, culture, or religion and, as a result, is often subjected to differential treatment.

Sexism: Behavior, conditions or attitudes that foster stereotypes of roles, prejudice or discrimination based on the sex of an individual.

2. METHOD

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Inform your class that the instructional method you will be using for today's lesson is a guided discussion and that this method has been selected to actively involve students in the learning process.

The guided discussion can be effective at altering awareness and

behaviors of participants. The goal of the guided discussion method is to drive group participation through leadership and encouragement. To learn more about guided discussions refer to Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 6-11B W/CH 1 - *Marine Corps Values: A User's Guide for Discussion Leaders*.

It is up to you, as the discussion leader, to use your best judgment and adapt this period of instruction to make it most suitable to your unit and the experience level of the participants. Be prepared for controversy, and form a plan to deal with conflicting viewpoints in order to keep the discussion progressing.

The guided discussion should last approximately 25 to 35 minutes. Spend a few minutes on the introduction; and, the majority of your time on the discussion questions within the body. Do not go too far over your time, as you may start to lose the attention of the participants. Too much information can start to overwhelm what is intended to be a simple and focused session. Remember to allow a few minutes for reflection and the summary of your lesson.

Determine what aspect of the topic you want to concentrate your discussion towards. Design learning outcomes, or "takeaways," which participants should grasp at the end of this discussion that best exemplify your intended focus. You can create your own learning outcomes OR use one, or more, of the examples listed below.

Example learning outcomes are:

- (a) Understand the role that diversity plays in the success of the Marine Corps.
- (b) Understand strategies to promote diversity in the workplace.
- (c) Identify the various categories covered in the diversity program.
- (d) Identify the Department of Defense and Marine Corps offices that work to further diversity in the U.S. military.
- (e) Identify resources available to Marines dealing with discrimination in the Marine Corps.

3. INTRODUCTION

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Use this time to introduce yourself to the group if necessary, and to ensure the group is familiar with each other. This is also the time to introduce any ground rules, which will establish what behaviors are expected during the guided discussion. Some example ground rules are: everyone participates fully; permit participants to express themselves without becoming recipients of personal attacks from anyone regarding their views; keep language clean, as not to offend others; make head-calls, as needed, without disrupting the rest of the participants; etc.

4. BODY

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Start the discussion by giving your participants the learning outcome you developed for the guided discussion.

a. Gain Attention

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

A few attention-gaining stories are provided, but you are encouraged to personalize the attention-gainer to fit your personality, audience, and your desired learning outcome. You may use one of the provided stories, or conduct research in order to find others more applicable to your learning outcome.

(1) Unexpected Skills

Scenario:

As part of a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) training exercise, Staff Sergeant (SSgt) Simmons' platoon is tasked with setting up a remote water purification point and fuel supply station. SSgt Simmons is from Boston and one of his Corporals (Cpl), Cpl Gate, is from Delacroix in the bayous of Louisiana. SSgt Simmons and many of the other Marines in the platoon have a hard time understanding Cpl Gate's accent and often razz him about his speech patterns.

Once the platoon arrives at the planned site, the Marines immediately recognize they will not be able to set up as planned due to the amount of loose mud and reeds surrounding the deeper water that the water supply truck needs source for purification. Since a suitable spot can be located in the immediate area, SSgt Simmons believes he must call to headquarters and ask for permission to relocate to another water source. Cpl Gate approaches SSgt Simmons and suggests that they can still use this location if they fabricate some pontoons to float the hose out to the deeper water.

Intrigued, SSgt Simmons asks Cpl Gate to elaborate on his idea. Cpl Gate explains that he grew up hunting and fishing in the swamps and often had to move equipment through the swamp. He then demonstrates how to construct simple pontoons from some of the dry reeds, using just a knife and some 550 cord. Pontoons are quickly assembled and the draw hose is floated across the muddy shallows out to the fresher water so filtering operations commence on the established timeline.

(2) How Effective is MCRC's Diversity 'Goal?'

Is Marine Corps Recruiting Command's (MCRC) inflated and overly specific diversity "goal" resulting in the submission of quantity-

over-quality diverse applicants and inadvertently placing Officer Selection Officers (OSOs) in an ethically hazardous position?

Diversity benefits organizations in many ways, such as increasing productivity, adaptability, creativity, and problem solving, and as a result, there is no question that recruiting diverse candidates to become Marine officers is vital to the future success of our Corps. In an effort to continue the Corps' pursuit of excellence and keep us connected with the evolving demographics of America, OSOs are assigned a diversity goal along with their assigned mission. In reality, however, the diversity goal is an element of the mission. If an OSO misses his assigned goal, he misses his mission; therefore, the diversity goal is a component of the mission. If OSOs and commanders are judged first and foremost on achieving the overly specific submission mission, is it more likely that OSOs are prospecting for any potential applicant that is diverse? Or are they prospecting for the more rare quality diverse applicant with the propensity to serve in the Marine Corps?

In January 1999, Brigadier General (BGen) Alexander McMillan, USMC (Ret), in the *Marine Corps Gazette*, wrote the following in his article, "Diversity and Divisiveness":

"The fact is that diversity is not a new problem, what is new is the Marine Corps' approach to the problem, an approach that was destined to fail and was sure to give rise to charges of reverse discrimination. The world has not changed that much over the past 20 years. The percentage of minorities in our major colleges is still too small to satisfy the needs of both industry and the military. The number of blacks in minority colleges, with the requisite qualifications to meet Marine Corps standards, is still extremely small. Minority organizations, associations, etc., still do not have the reach or motivation to influence a significant number of minority students to join the Services. Industry salaries and a low propensity to choose military service still hinder recruitment efforts."

BGen McMillan wrote this 15 years ago, and the situation has not changed. Have we as a Corps learned from the open discussion 15 years ago, or have we continued to trudge along with the "throw more assets and effort at it" mentality? There is no question in my mind that diversity benefits organizations throughout the world, but we as a Marine Corps can do better.

Reference:

Kelman, Brett. "How Effective is MCRC's Diversity 'Goal?'" *The Marine Corps Gazette*, Nov. 2014. [<https://www.mca-marines.org/gazette/2014/11/how-effective-mcrc-s-diversity-goal>]

(3) Cultural Awareness

"Many people believe that the United States cannot win the war in Iraq. One statement made states, because the ability of the terrorist to melt into the local population, it is unsure if our military can ever rid such an enemy. In short, the terrorist natural familiarity with the local customs and culture gave them a distinct advantage. The Marine Corps initiated a program that would neutralize that advantage. Initiated in 1965, the Combined Action Platoon or "CAP" program would produce the highest kill ratio for the number of enemy engaged! The Marines were the first to understand that the nature of this war required a different set of tactics and skills.

Building off of their experiences from the Banana Wars from the 1920s, Marines found that an appreciation, respect and application of knowledge and familiarity of local customs would pay large dividends in respect for and cooperation with the U.S. forces. Marines in CAP lived with their Vietnamese counterparts in the villages and interacted with the local population daily. They learned the language and studied the history. They ate and slept with the local populace. They demonstrated an understanding and respect for local customs. While fulfilling their distinct role as warrior/ambassadors the Marines managed to garner an unprecedented level of cooperation and respect from the villagers.

Unfortunately, the CAP program was not widely implemented until late in the war shortly before American forces began to withdraw. But the enduring lesson of the CAP program is that the study of the local people, their history and customs and the proper application of this knowledge will assist Marines in the successful accomplishment of their missions. In short, knowing how to work in and around the local populace will help Marines foster trust, facilitate the flow of information and ensure that Marines continue to use cultural concepts as a basic skill."

Reference:

Walt, General Lewis W. USMC Retired. "The struggle was in the rice paddies, in and among the people, not passing through, but living among them, night and day... and joining with them in steps toward a better life long overdue." *Marine Combat Training Battalion, School of Infantry*, Cultural Awareness Lesson Plan 30 Oct. 2007

(4) Diversity in Professional Military Education

What difference does diversity or lack thereof make in education? Educators are supposed to challenge students, and that includes challenging them from differing perspectives. A non-diverse body of people, teaching the same constituencies as themselves does little to broaden personal perspectives. In fact, in some cases it simply reinforces what can be already very narrow perspectives and the undermining of the independence of ideas becomes the norm.

Blindly building on non-diverse inputs has the inherent risk of insularity. Homogeneity can be a huge hindrance in what is today an increasingly dynamic, cross-cultural, cross-functional, joint military environment. Demographics of military situations and issues in general are making the military a more complex structure requiring a broadening of the composition of those who work with and for the system. It is the breadth of perspectives that comes from diversity that aid in the effective execution of changing requirements for the curricula, creation of more informed counsel for college governance and strategic oversight. Diverse environments allow for more productive situations in which the challenging issues of today's military can be confronted as well as open situations to opposing and non-like-me opinions.

Why are there so few women in Professional Military Education (PME)? The often-heard reason is "we cannot find qualified women." Having served as a department chair for eight years with responsibility for multiple faculty searches during that period, the problem is actually twofold: hiring and retention. Many of the highly-qualified women invited to interview would look around, see how few women there were, and consider that as prima facie evidence women are not really wanted, with a consequently high potential for a hostile work environment. Some women who came did not stay, finding the work environment indeed "difficult."

Experiences vary. The professional opportunities offered to PME faculty can be significant and the teaching very rewarding, and women certainly recognize and appreciate that. However, some highly-qualified women find the environment personally demoralizing.

During Joan Johnson-Freese's tenure as a department chair at the Naval War College, issues were raised to her ranging from offensive offhand statements and finding diverse input into discussions unwelcomed, to sometimes outright bullying by both male students and colleagues, and a case of simple assault. Though it is easy to say individuals who take offense should "toughen up or leave," that approach defeats the benefits of diversity.

Reference:

Johnson-Freese, Joan. "Some thoughts on the Need for Greater Diversity in Professional Military Education." *ForeignPolicy.com*, 03 Dec. 2013. [<http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/12/03/some-thoughts-on-the-need-for-greater-diversity-in-professional-military-education/>]

(5) Party Pooper

Scenario:

Your shop completes the Commanding General's Inspection Program with no discrepancies. The Shop Staff Non-commissioned Officer In Charge (SNCOIC), GySgt Palmer, invites everyone to a celebration at

his house on base after work on Friday. Everyone is excited about the event except Corporal (Cpl) Philip, who is an Orthodox Jew. Rather than say anything about Friday night being his Sabbath, Cpl Philip just does not show up. GySgt Palmer assumed that Friday evening is a time for going out and that everyone could attend. Cpl Philip assumed that GySgt Palmer would not understand his religious observance, or even worse, may not care. When Cpl Philip did not attend, GySgt Palmer concluded that he was not a team player, and many other Marines assumed he was a snob.

b. **Potential Discussion Questions**

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

The provided questions can be altered, but all questions should be carefully formulated to focus the discussion toward your desired learning outcome. It is the facilitator's responsibility to provoke thought, foster discussion and involvement on the part of the participants, manage the group, and keep discussion flowing. Choose several questions from the following list, which will help accomplish your learning outcome in the specified time.

The discussion format is intended to have the majority of the input come from the participants. Ensure you conduct comprehensive research on this topic using the provided references. Having a comprehensive understanding of the subject material is essential in order to clarify portions of the discussion that may be confusing, and to ensure only accurate information is disseminated during this exchange. This is not intended to be a lecture, so keep your comments direct and focused to keep the group discussion moving.

Do not insert too many of your own convictions, as it may cause the group to skew their input just to mirror your positions, and may not be a true representation of the participants' thoughts. Ensure you have writing material throughout the discussion so you can capture key elements of the discussion, which arise in each segment, in order to create follow-on questions and to summarize each key point.

As the facilitator, you may use a question to initiate a topic for discussion. After the discussion develops, follow-up questions can be used to guide the discussion. Follow-up questions may help a participant to explain something more thoroughly, or enable you to bring the discussion back to a point from which it has strayed.

Questions are so much a part of teaching, they are often taken for granted. Effective use of questions may result in more student learning than through use of any other instructional technique. In general, you should ask open-ended questions, which are thought-provoking and require more mental activity than simply remembering facts. Questions should require students to grasp concepts, explain similarities and differences, and infer cause-and-effect relationships.

Plan at least one lead-off question for each of your desired learning outcomes. While preparing questions, remember the purpose is to stimulate discussion, not merely to get answers. Avoid questions, which require only short categorical answers, such as "yes" or "no." Lead-off questions should usually begin with "how" or "why."

- (1) What is diversity? How does it apply to the Marine Corps?
- (2) Explain why the U.S. Marine Corps, as a whole, is or is not a diverse organization? What aspects of the Marine Corps are the most, and least, diverse?
- (3) Describe some characteristics you associate with diversity.
- (4) Why is diversity important to the composition of the Marine Corps?
- (5) What are some various categories commonly associated with diversity, and do they all apply to the Marine Corps?
- (6) How can having people of different ages, genders, religions, and cultural backgrounds benefit a unit?
- (7) What additional leadership challenges are there in an age, gender, religious, and culturally diverse unit?
- (8) Give an example of something you experienced growing up that is unique when compared to the experiences of many other Marines in your unit? How can that experience, or knowledge gained from it, benefit your unit?
- (9) Was there any individual or situation that the attention-gainer story reminded you of in your Marine Corps experience? Please share that story, and explain how it exemplifies the need for diversity in an organization?
- (10) How do the Marine Corps' Leadership Traits and Principles relate to the topic of diversity in the Marine Corps?
- (11) What challenges does the Marine Corps Recruiting Command face in attempting to further diversify the Marine Corps?
- (12) How might a leader respect diverse cultural requests from unit personnel without appearing to show favoritism?
- (13) What resources are available to Marines seeking information on diversity in the Marine Corps?

(14) What effects result from a leader ignoring the needs or legitimate concerns of a specific group of personnel in their unit? How might that affect the morale, and eventually effectiveness, of the unit?

(15) What actions can you, as a leader, take to help Marines better understand and appreciate diversity.

5. **REFLECTION**

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Incorporate reflection questions here, in order to prompt the participants to re-evaluate the issues discussed and topics covered. The more mentally involved each participant is in the active review of the topic, the greater their retention of the subject will be.

Reflection questions should be meaningful in relation to the experiences of the students and should bridge the gap between their discussion involvement and the abstract issues discussed in class. Questions posed during reflection are for personal consideration, as the participants may be uncomfortable openly sharing responses.

Reflection questions can be broken down into the following categories:

1. What? Ask the participants to re-examine in detail the content of the discussion.
2. So, what? What difference did the event make to their perceptions of the issue?
3. Now what? How will the participants think or act in the future as a result of this new perspective?

6. **SUMMARY**

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Provide overview of main ideas covered. No questions should be asked here. Provide closure that is relevant to MOS, the Marine Corps, or applicable to the participants in some other manner.

INSTRUCTOR REFERENCE MATERIAL

From Marine Corps Order (MCO) 5354.1_, *Marine Corps Equal Opportunity (EO) Manual*:

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Sexism: Behavior, conditions or attitudes that foster stereotypes of roles, prejudice or discrimination based on the sex of an individual.

Suggested Guidance:

- Peers/Fellow Marines
- Chain Of Command

Suggested Resources:

- Chaplain Services Unit/Base
- Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 6-11, *Leading Marines*
- MCRP 6-11D, *Sustaining the Transformation: Discussion Leader's Guide*
- Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity (ODMEO)
[<http://diversity.defense.gov/>]
- ODMEO *Diversity and Inclusion Plan*
[[http://diversity.defense.gov/Portals/51/Documents/DoD Diversity Strategic Plan %20final as%20of%2019%20Apr%2012\[1\].pdf](http://diversity.defense.gov/Portals/51/Documents/DoD%20Diversity%20Strategic%20Plan%20final%20of%2019%20Apr%2012[1].pdf)]
- Human Resources and Organizational Management
[<http://www.hqmc.marines.mil/hrom/SponsoredTraining/Course127.aspx>]
- Commandant of the Marine Corps White Letter 2-13, *Commandants Diversity Task Force Initiative*
[<http://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Portals/142/Docs/White%20Letter%202-13.PDF>]