LESSON PURPOSE PLAN

EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING
GUIDED DISCUSSION

VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP

8/19/2015

1. **TOPIC OVERVIEW**

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

There is a critical need for all Marines to prepare themselves mentally and physically for the responsibilities of leadership and the rigors of combat. Physical preparation has long been ingrained in our culture and Marines are well known for their physical conditioning. Mental preparation must receive the same emphasis since success in combat depends in large part on our collective capability to make and execute effective military decisions under physical and emotional stress. It is imperative that all Marines make every effort to exercise and develop their decision making abilities. Decisions made in the barracks or in conflict must frequently be made under physical and emotional duress. Our mental exercises and preparations in peacetime should replicate some of the same conditions. Imaginative combinations of physical and mental activities provide Marines the opportunity to make decisions under conditions of physical stress and fatigue, thereby more closely approximating combat in order to make each Marine a better leader in garrison and on the battlefield.

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.

Ensure you have followed the Instructor Preparation Guide (IPG), familiarized yourself with the subject, and reviewed the references.

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) Be able to describe the Operational Risk Management (ORM) Matrix and how it is implemented.
(b) Recognize options are available for a Marine to select in order to arrive at an effective solution.
(c) Understand how the Marine Corps' leadership traits and principles relate to decision making.
(d) Be able to describe the adverse effects of unethical or inadequate decision making have on unit moral and cohesion.
(e) Be able to explain how effective decision making skills are key to a successful career 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 your 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) Off Duty Accidents

A Southern California Marine base has suffered more non-hostile deaths from car crashes and suicides in the last seven years than in war zones, a newspaper investigation showed on Monday [24 March 2014].

Sixty service members from the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms have died in the Middle East since 2007, while 64 have died on American soil, the [Palm Springs and Coachella Valley News] Desert Sun reported.

An investigation by the newspaper found 28 Marines died in off-duty vehicle crashes while stationed at the base about an hour's drive from Palm Springs. A dozen Marines died on Highway 62, a 151-mile route that runs from the Coachella Valley to the Arizona border and takes Marines from the base to the nearest hub for dining, nightlife and shopping.

"Any civilian that gets killed is still just as much of a tragedy, but just to have to go to war and then come back and die at home during peacetime," said Curtis Kolb, a San Bernardino County sheriff's deputy who has investigated many of the crashes, "it just kind of puts it on a different level of tragic situation."

Extreme speed was listed as a factor in more than half those crashes, and more than a third of the vehicle deaths involved alcohol, according to the newspaper.

Studies have shown Marines are more likely to die in a vehicle crash after recently returning from a deployment. The Center for Naval Analyses found that Marines who had been back from a deployment for three to six months were 60 percent more at risk of dying in a vehicle accident.

The base in Twentynine Palms has reduced the risk of vehicle fatalities by requiring Marines to take defensive driver training. But it still has one of the highest fatal crash rates in the Marine Corps. While off-duty fatal vehicle accidents have been cut in half in the overall Marine Corps since 2007, they have held steady at Twentynine Palms, the newspaper reported.

"Accidents are an unacceptable risk to mission accomplishment. It degrades our effectiveness as a training installation and robs us of our most precious resource — our people," said Captain Justin Smith, a base spokesman.

One of the challenges, Kolb said, is that often the Marines — who may face near-death situations abroad — doubt anything will happen to them driving on local roads.

Marine Seargeant Steven Afalla acknowledged that many Marines dismiss the driving safety briefings, especially after returning from deployment. Afalla had recently returned from Afghanistan in February 2011 when the yellow Ford Mustang in which he was traveling with his friend Corporal (Cpl) Donald Fowler crashed in the desert off Highway 62, killing Fowler.

"I was like, 'I've been in the war. I don't need to listen to you people," Afalla said. "You know what I mean? I know how to keep myself alive. Thank you. Thank you for the advice.'"

Lance Corporal (LCpl) Joel Cohoe said he and his fellow Marines often went out to Palm Springs or elsewhere and did not designate a sober driver, knowing full well the risks.

"I can honestly say I felt pretty invincible," Cohoe said. "I had my brothers to the left and right of me. I felt safe, like nothing could happen."

In November 2010, LCpl Cohoe was driving back to the base after a day of drinking and playing pool with friends when he collided with fellow Marine Cpl Omar Salazar, who was riding his motorcycle.

Cpl Salazar was flung from the bike and killed. Cohoe pleaded guilty to driving under the influence causing bodily injury and is now serving a five-year sentence at a minimum security facility.

Excerpt:
Associated Press. "Off-Duty Car Crashes on Desert Road Contribute to High Fatality Rate for California Marines." *Foxnews.com.* 24 Mar. 2014. [http://www.foxnews.com/us/2014/03/24/off-duty-car-crashes-on-desert-road-contribute-to-high-fatality-rate-for/]

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(2) Handling Home Dilemma

Scenario:
Lance Corporal (LCpl) Jackson went home on leave and got married to his high school sweetheart and brought her back to Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar, CA where he arranged for an apartment in town. After several months, LCpl Jackson realized that everything is more expensive than his home town.

His wife had never worked before and was reluctant to get a job. LCpl Jackson and his wife decide that it would be best for her to return home to live with his parents and for him to move back into the barracks. A few weeks after going home his wife calls and tells him that she is pregnant, and that his father is out of work, so she may

have to move in with her parents. He does not like this idea because her parents always talk bad about him and they did not want her to marry him.

Without discussing his problem with anyone, he put in a leave request to go home, but he was told by his squad leader that he has no leave on the books, and even if he did he could not go at this time because the unit has an upcoming training exercise. LCpl Jackson is considering going home to take care of his wife anyway, but knows that he will be run as absent with-out leave (AWOL).

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(3) Friends and Bad Decisions

Why do otherwise good kids seem to make bad decisions when they are with their friends? New research on risk taking and the teenage brain offers some answers.

In studies at Temple University, psychologists used functional magnetic resonance imaging scans on 40 teenagers and adults to determine if there are differences in brain activity when adolescents are alone versus with their friends. The findings suggest that teenage peer pressure has a distinct effect on brain signals involving risk and reward, helping to explain why young people are more likely to misbehave and take risks when their friends are watching.

To test how the presence of peers influences risk taking, the researchers asked teenagers, college students and young adults to play a six-minute video driving game while in a brain scanner. Participants were given cash prizes for completing the game in a certain time, but players had to make decisions about stopping at yellow lights, and being delayed, or racing through yellow lights, which could result in a faster time and a bigger prize, but also meant a higher risk for crashing and an even longer delay. The teenagers and adults played four rounds of the game while undergoing the brain scan. Half the time they played alone, and half the time they were TOLD that two same-sex friends who had accompanied them to the study were watching the play in the next room.

Among adults and college students, there were no meaningful differences in risk taking, regardless of whether friends were watching. But the teenagers ran about 40 percent more yellow lights and had 60 percent more crashes when they knew their friends were watching. And notably, the regions of the brain associated with reward showed greater activity when they were playing in view of their friends. It was as if the presence of friends, even in the next room, prompted the brain's reward system to drown out any warning signals about risk, tipping the balance toward the reward.

"The presence of peers activated the reward circuitry in the brain of adolescents that it didn't do in the case of adults," said Laurence

Steinberg, an author of the study, who is a psychology professor at Temple and author of "You and Your Adolescent: The Essential Guide for Ages 10 to 25." "We think we've uncovered one very plausible explanation for why adolescents do a lot of stupid things with their friends that they wouldn't do when they are by themselves."

Excerpt:
Parker-Pope. Tara. "Teenagers, Friends and Bad Decisions." *New York Times - Well*, 11 Feb. 2011.
[http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/03/teenagers-friends-and-bad-decisions/?_r=0]

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(4) Contact at the Seven Mounds

Situation:

"You are a squad leader in 3d Battalion, 4th Marines. The battalion is making a movement to contact, moving north. The battalion's mission is to locate, fix, and destroy any sizable enemy forces in route to the march objective some 15 kilometers to the north. The battalion commander has made it clear that the march objective is merely a reference point for the direction of movement; the true objective is the enemy. Your platoon is the advance guard, and your squad has the point. Your squad is in a wedge formation with 3d Fire Team on the left, 1st Fire Team in the center and 2d Fire Team on the right. An attached machinegun squad is located with you behind 1st Fire Team. The platoon commander is about 100 meters behind you, and the rest of the platoon is another 300-400 meters back.

You are fighting lightly equipped infantry forces that generally rely on ambush and hit-and-run tactics. They will stand and fight when they have the advantage but will flee when the odds are against them. As you move through the rolling, wooded terrain you occasionally make contact with an enemy fire team or two sometimes just visual contact, sometimes a brief, long-range engagement. You think you've inflicted a few casualties, but the enemy disappears before the squad is able to close.

Your squad is approaching the Seven Mounds, a series of ancient burial sites with the ruins of a burial temple on the center mound. From experience you know that the enemy likes to fight on such terrain they believe they gain strength from their ancestral spirits. You have told your Marines to be especially alert. As 1st Fire Team exits the woods and clears a dry streambed, you see the Marines quickly drop for cover and begin engaging the enemy, who simultaneously opens fire from the north. You crawl forward to the streambed where 1st Fire Team has moved for cover and continues to engage the enemy. The 1st Fire Team leader points out enemy positions on the two mounds to your direct front. You estimate the enemy to be about platoon strength.

You look down the streambed to the right but see no sign of 2d Fire Team. You lost contact with 2d Fire Team once the engagement started. Where are they you wonder, more than a little angry. The machineguns are behind you in the woods. On your left, 3d Fire Team has taken up prone positions just north of the streambed. You hear automatic weapons fire from the mound to your right, but it does not seem to be aimed at you. In fact, as best as you can tell, it seems to be aimed at the enemy. You decide it must be 2d Fire Team.

The 3d Fire Team leader crawls toward your position from the left flank. "Do you want us to assault that position on the left?" he shouts over the din. "What'll it be, Sergeant?"

Excerpt:
Schmitt, Major John F. "Contact at the Seven Mounds - Tactical Decision Game #97-1." *Marine Corps Gazette*, 1 Jan. 1997. [http://kepler.pratt.duke.edu/NROTC/gazetteOLD/tdg97_1.html]

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(5) One Bad Decision

Scenario:
By age 20, Steve was warned many times: "Don't drink and drive." But like most kids, he thought bad things happened only to other people.

One night, he partied with some of his Corporals. Steve did not drink alcohol that evening, but in order to make it back to the barracks by the unit curfew, he rode with a guy who did.

"He started going very fast and fishtailing," Steve says. "That's when all of a sudden it clicked: I've made a major mistake. I started yelling at the top of my lungs: 'Slow down, slow down, slow down!' But he didn't."

The crash smashed the right side of the car. Other passengers survived unhurt, but Steve was nearly killed. "If I had not been wearing the seatbelt," he says, "I would have gone through the windshield and died."

Steve's badly bruised brain kept him in a coma for three weeks. He would spend many months at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in rehab, relearning simple tasks: tying shoes, brushing teeth, and eating with silverware.

"My dad helped me with physical therapy," he says. "He helped me first learn how to walk again. Gradually, he helped me start to run again."

Steve had to learn to talk again, too. He speaks more slowly now, and sometimes slurs his words. Steve notices that his friends from his old unit seem to have difficulty in facing him as he is being

medically discharged. He is a disturbing reminder of what can happen when you mix driving with alcohol.

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(6) Operational Risk Management Failure

After much anticipation, the young Sargent (Sgt) was thrilled to receive the keys of her newly rented townhome. For some time, she had envisioned the make-over that would take place in the two-story townhome. With hardwood floors throughout, it had taken her over a year to find this home, and it was precisely what she had wanted. She began moving all of her furniture and precious belongings into her new abode, and was immediately compelled to begin her housework with fresh paint on the walls, eliminating the drab backdrop left by the previous owners.

"This home will be different now," she thought. With a fresh coat of paint, the master bathroom would become modernized in a mere 48 hours. The woman planned to paint the in-suite bathroom a blazing orange with bright yellow accents. In preparation for her home improvements, she headed to the nearest hardware store to purchase all of the items needed to transform the master bedroom into a one-of-a-kind masterpiece. Checking the items off of her list, she purchased a six-foot ladder, tarp, primer, paint, painter's tape, and some high-quality brushes.

After preparing the base of the walls with the tape, covering the floors with the tarp and removing the light covers, the fastidious Sgt began painting. What she thought would be a two hour chore, turned into a six-hour nightmare. Painting from the baseboard upward, she was able to easily apply a coat to the six-foot mark on the twelve-foot wall. Even utilizing the newly acquired ladder, she found herself distressed that the remaining foot of wall-space was out of her reach. With no one in the home to stabilize the ladder from the bottom or observe her safety, her independent attitude urged her on to complete her richly colored walls.

As she slowly ascended the green, aluminum, ten-pound ladder, she noticed a clearly visible warning notice: "DO NOT STAND AT OR ABOVE THIS LEVEL, YOU CAN LOSE YOUR BALANCE."

Ignoring the sign and determined to fill in the remaining wall space to her chosen color, the just over five-foot tall woman had a plan for "safety." She intended to brace herself against the ceiling with one hand, while painting with the other, standing atop the apex of the ladder. This would allow her to reach the intricate top corner of the wall, above the Jacuzzi tub. Her precarious plan would prove fatal in the next three minutes. As she proceeded, her balancing act came tumbling down. While standing at the very top level of the ladder – an action clearly forbidden on the aforementioned safety sticker – the headstrong Sgt lost her footing when she flinched as the doorbell rang. The fall was so swift, she did not even have time to experience

pain as her head struck the edge of the bathtub. More vivid than the colors she intended for the walls, the red blood flowed slowly on the bathroom floor.

When she had begun this endeavor, all she wanted was to see the colors of a sunrise each morning on the walls of her master bathroom. Was perfecting paint on a wall worth forgoing obvious safety precautions?

Reference:
Brown, Gunnery Sergeant Khalilah. "Paint on the Walls & Fatal Falls." *Safety Gram – Safety.Marines.com*, Jun. 2014. [http://www.safety.marines.mil/Portals/92/Safety%20Gram/June%202014%20Safety%20Gram_FINAL.pdf]

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(7) Decision Making in Stressful Situations

Creeping through the hilly, wooded terrain, the squad of Marines spotted something across the river. It looked like three men having a picnic.

As they drew closer, squad members realized that two men were on their knees, hands tied behind their backs, and an armed man was standing over them.

"Help! We're American aid workers! Help!" the two captives shouted. The gunman warned the squad not to come any closer.

One squad member aimed his rifle at the gunman and waited for the order to shoot. Instead, the squad leader whispered, "Keep moving."

As the group moved on, the bound men begged them not to leave. Suddenly, two shots were fired and the captives slumped to the ground. Members of the squadron looked at one another in blame and embarrassment.

"I was focused on the mission," the squad leader said. "And I wasn't sure if they were Americans."

That "encounter" was one scenario that faced corporate executives and business students who volunteered recently to go through three days of ethics training at the Marine Corps Base at Quantico. The gunman and the captives were Marines playing roles in the exercise.

Steven Olson, a professor at Georgia State University's J. Mack Robinson College of Business, and the Marine Corps' Basic School for new officers designed the course to teach business executives how to execute ethical decision-making skills under extreme pressure. Begun in 2011, the course is offered three to four times a year to about 13 executives each time.

Marine Captain (Capt) Matthew Ingold, a course instructor, added: “We operate where things are very unclear, where there’s a lot of pressure and stress, and you have to make a quick decision.”

In a war zone, even junior Marine officers take on tremendous responsibility and are expected to make decisions based on sound judgment, Capt Ingold said.

“Good decisions and poor decisions can impact the overall strategic mission on a national policy level,” he said.

Marine Capt Katey Van Dam, another course instructor, said: “We don’t call this problem-solving, because there is no ‘solution.’”

One mission was to establish a relationship with an Islamic religious leader in a local village. The squad hiked through the woods, crossing shallow creeks and trudging through mud. They eventually came across a mosque where the religious leader greeted them with open arms. He was preparing to conduct a marriage ceremony.

“I’m so happy you could come today for the wedding,” he said, hugging each squad member.

The female squad leader spotted a sobbing young woman in a long white gown tied up behind the mosque. “Why is that woman tied up?” the squad leader said. “She doesn’t look too happy.”

“Oh, she is about to consummate the marriage,” the religious leader said, escorting the squad leader into a tent where the bride was now in hysterics. “She will learn to accept it.”

The bride suddenly broke free from her captors and ran toward the group, screaming that she would be raped. Some of the students tried to protect her, but the squad leader instructed them to let her go. The religious leader dragged her, kicking and screaming, back to the tent.

Sounds of the bride screaming and being beaten echoed in the still air. Even though the “villagers” were other Marines, the squad of students and executives learned a lesson in how to deal with their own responses.

“They’d never imagine they would let an American aid worker die, or let a woman be raped and not only that, they actually justify it afterward,” Mr. Olson said.

He said students taking the course tend to defer to the squad leader’s judgment or another authority figure instead of doing what they think is right. The students also tend to submit to a group ethic by cooperating with the squad rather than breaking its cohesion. They tend to be biased toward values such as “fairness and reciprocity” and

are afraid to offend those who were welcoming to them, such as the religious leader who hugged them and later dragged away the bride.

"When you're learning to walk, you fall a lot. Failures are so painful and costly, we shy away from discussing them and don't find out where our weaknesses are," Mr. Olson said. "You learn a ton from failure. You don't learn a lot from success."

Questions of "Did I do the right thing?" continue to haunt many troops when they come home from combat, Capt Ingold said. That is often a symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder.

"There's an internal dialogue that continues, and in a lot of ways it attacks your humanity. There's an identity crisis that you fall into," he said. Capt Ingold said the students get a taste of the training that young Marine lieutenants face to prepare them for battle.

Reference:
Wong, Kristina. "Training the Few, the Proud, the Ethical: Civilians Get Chance to Make Tough Decisions Like Marines." *The Washington Times*, 13 Feb. 2013.
[http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/feb/13/training-the-few-the-proud-the-ethical/?page=all]

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) Do you think the Marine Corps has a process for managing risk(s)? Who has heard of Operational Risk Management (ORM)? Please tell us what you think it is.

(2) What is the objective of Operational Risk Management (ORM)? Why do you think the Marine Corps uses ORM?

(3) How many steps are in the Operational Risk Management (ORM) process, and what are they?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Marine Corps Order (MCO) 3500.27: *Risk Management*
The five-step Operational Risk Management process includes:

- Identify Hazards (Step 1). Begin with an outline or chart of the major steps in the operation (operational analysis). Next, conduct a preliminary hazard analysis by listing all of the hazards associated with each step in the operational analysis along with possible causes for those hazards.

- Assess Hazards (Step 2). For each hazard identified, determine the associated degree of risk in terms of probability and severity. Although not required, the use of a matrix described in paragraph 6c of this enclosure may be helpful in assessing hazards.

- Make Risk Decisions (Step 3). First, develop risk control options. Start with the most serious risk and select controls that will reduce the risk to a minimum consistent with mission accomplishment. With selected controls in place, decide if the

residual risk is acceptable and the benefit of the operation outweighs the risk. If risk outweighs benefit or if assistance is required to implement controls, communicate with higher authority in the chain of command.

- Implement Controls (Step 4). The following measures can be used to eliminate hazards or reduce the degree of risk. These are listed by order of preference:
  - Engineering Controls. Controls that use engineering methods to reduce risks by design, material selection, or substitution.
  - Administrative Controls. Controls that reduce risks through specific administrative actions, such as:
  - Providing suitable warnings, markings, placards, signs, and notices.
  - Establishing written policies, programs, instructions and standard operating procedures.
  - Training personnel to recognize hazards and take appropriate precautionary measures.
  - Limiting the exposure to a hazard (either by reducing the number of assets or personnel exposed, or the duration of exposure).
  - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Serves as a barrier between personnel and a hazard. PPE should be used when other controls do not reduce the hazard to an acceptable level.

- Supervise (Step 5). Conduct follow-up evaluations of the controls to ensure they remain in place and have the desired effect. Monitor for changes, which may require further ORM. Take corrective action when necessary.

(4) What does OODA stand for, and how do you use the OODA Loop?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

MCWP 2-1: *Intelligence Operations* defines the OODA Loop as:
A simple model that is known as the observe, orient, decide, and act (OODA) loop is used to describe the Command and Control (C2) process.

The OODA loop applies to any two-sided conflict, whether combatants are individuals or large military formations. When engaged in conflict, participants—

- Observe. Take in information about the environment, the friendly status, and the threat.
- Orient. Make estimates, assumptions, analyses, and judgments about the situation to create a cohesive mental image.
- Decide. Determine what needs to be done, whether it is an immediate reaction or a deliberate plan.
- Act. Put the decision into action.

The OODA loop reflects how decision-making is a continual, cyclical process. In any conflict, the participant who can consistently and effectively cycle through the OODA loop faster—who can maintain a higher tempo of action—gains an increasing advantage with each cycle. The essential lesson of the OODA loop is the importance of generating and maintaining tempo.

(5) Describe when any of you dealt with a situation where you had to assess someone's temper and intent before you reacted, and whether you were in a combat environment or "off-duty" when it happened.

(6) What do the terms "Gut-feeling" or "intuition" mean to you? How would they affect your decision making process?

(7) How could you train yourself and your Marines to improve your reaction times?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

This training is best accomplished by playing rapid "what if" games. After this, it can be practiced in force on force and tactical field problems.

(8) Life changing decisions can be made at any time on or off-duty. Describe the role of peer pressure in an individual's decision making process?

(9) How can the consumption of alcohol, over use of prescription drugs, or use of illegal drugs affect an individual's decision making abilities?

(10) What part of the attention-gaining story did you find most relevant to your current position**?**

(11) Describe an event in your life that a single decision, good or bad, had a dramatic long-lasting effect on your life?

(12) Who in in your life would you try and emulate your decision making process on, and why would you choose that person?

(13) Do you have a personal decision making process you use when planning for difficult situations or events? How would you describe your process, and why do you feel that this process is the best for you? Have you learned anything today that you may incorporate into your decision making process in the future?

(14) How do the Marine Corps' leadership traits and principles relate to a leaders decision making considerations?

(15) Explain how effective decision making skills determine the success of your career in the Marine Corps.

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

References:

- Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 6-11: *Leading Marines*
- Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 6-11B W/CH 1 - *Marine Corps Values: A User's Guide for Discussion Leaders*
- MCRP 6-11D: Sustaining the Transformation: Discussion Leader's Guide
- MCWP 5-1: *Marine Corps Planning Process*
- MCWP 2-1: *Intelligence Operations*
- Marine Corps Order (MCO) 3500.27: *Risk Management*
- The Ethical Warrior: Values, Morals and Ethics - For Life, Work and Service. Jack E. Hoban, Apr. 2012.
- "Developing the Ethical Marine Warrior." Marine Corps Gazette. June 2010 [https://www.mca-marines.org/gazette/2010/06/developing-ethical-marine-warrior
- Navy and Marine Corps (NAVMC) Directive 1500.58: *Marine Corps Mentoring Program (MCMP) Guidebook*
- MCO 1500.55: *Military Thinking and Decision Making Exercises*