

THE JAPCC EDUCATION & TRAINING MODEL HANDBOOK

A beginner's guide for the preparation, conduct and post-processing of an education and training event.

Introduction

The JAPCC Education & Training (E&T) model applies constructivism as the main concept for teaching and learning. It uses commercial simulation systems, also called CoSim, as the tool and ensures the necessary interaction between the instructor team (umpires and observers) and the trainees via continuous feedback.

This model also implies there is never a fixed scheme or set of rigid procedures to be used as this would completely contradict the character and the essence of the E&T model.

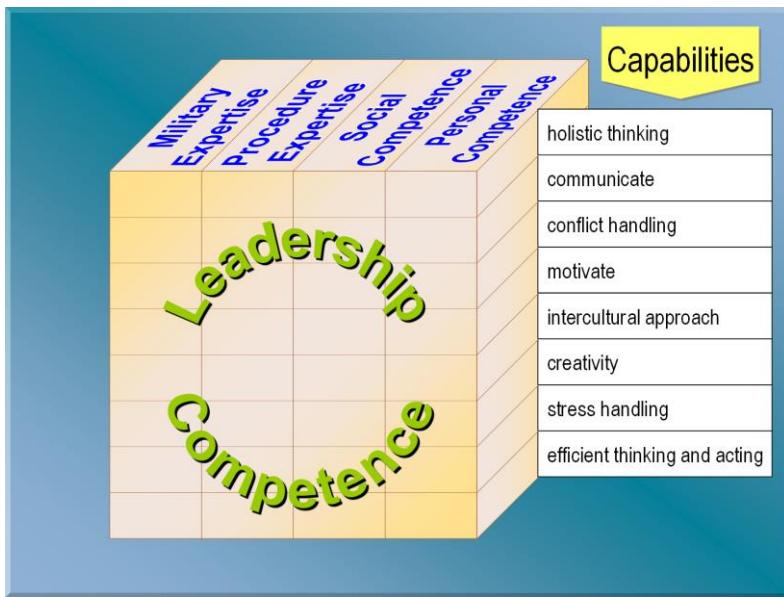
Therefore, the following elaboration provides a set of suggestions and propositions (and some recommended doctrine), but it is neither all encompassing nor obligatory.

CHAPTER 1 – PREPARATION

1.1. Command & Control / Leadership Competence

As the E&T model aims to improve the trainee's competence, a model addressing "competence" should be the starting point. Depending on the model, the instructor team selects or defines a subset thus aligning the E&T effort to the content.

Two examples:

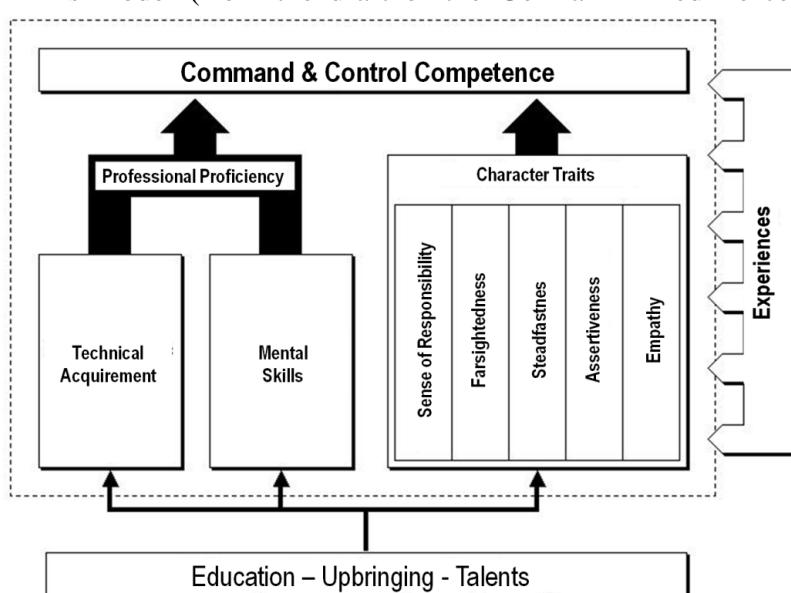


This "competence cube" as used at the German Armed Forces General Staff Academy, splits competence into four areas (from military expertise to personal competence) and links them all to eight capabilities (from holistic thinking to efficient thinking and acting).

Based on this grasp of "competence", the instructor team can now select any set of the 32 "drawers", e.g. military expertise when it comes to creativity, procedure expertise regarding communication,

social competence to motivate, and personal competence challenged by stress handling.
Note: experience tells us to keep such a set limited to about 4 drawers; otherwise the whole undertaking might drop down to indeterminacy.

This model (from the draft of the German Armed Forces Operational Doctrine Capstone document) defines competence as the combination of three blocks (technical acquirement, mental skills and character traits), influenced by the individual's formative environment and his/her experience.



The E&T model allows addressing any characteristics of those three blocks, e.g. application of the OODA-loop, exertion of abstraction, and intentional consideration of empathy. Any prolific changes achieved by the

trainees will result in competence improvement.

Again, the instructor team should define a set of characteristics as the starting point.

The chosen set of “competence” chips will influence the tool, i.e. the CoSim, to be selected and played. The next step deals with the main subject of the E&T effort: the trainees.

1.2. The Trainees

In fact, the composition of the trainees, i.e. their age, background, professional occupation, etc. does not restrict the model’s application. On the contrary, the more heterogeneous the group of trainees, the more inviting the learning environment becomes for them as they are confronted/challenged with a multifaceted group of stakeholders.

Of importance is the number of trainees, as this directly impacts the eligible options of:

- ⊕ set up of the teams for the CoSim play;
- ⊕ selection of the overall CoSim category (solitaire, two parties, three or more parties);
- ⊕ structuring the teams (e.g. to reproduce Command & Control hierarchies).

Experience shows a minimum learning group size of 6 to 8 trainees are required, otherwise the efforts to run the E&T event are out of proportions.

The minimum number for each trainee team is four; if less, there will be no resounding group effects which are required to trigger group dynamic activity and behaviour based on, and affecting, the social competence.

There is no upper limit¹ to the trainee group size. The recommended total number should not be above 20 until the instructor team gains sufficient experience and confidence with the application of the E&T model.

Once the group size is known, the instructor team must decide the overall “simulation game” set up.

- ⊕ Option 1: The trainees are split into two teams, fighting against each other. This could be seen as the most common case, as the vast majority of CoSim are “duel” or two-party systems.
- ⊕ Option 2: All trainees are part of the same team. This leads to the next decision to either use a “solitaire” CoSim², or having the trainees play against the instructor team³.
- ⊕ Option 3: The trainees are split into more than two teams, each forming a separate faction fighting against each other⁴. This setup requires significantly more observers compared to the previous two options.
- ⊕ Option 4: Apply options 1 or 2, but build groups of teams within the same party, e.g. a solitaire game could be used, but there are 4 trainee teams competing against each other in order to prevail regarding the execution of each game turn.

Once started, this basic playing structure must not be changed.

¹ Dealing with a group of 50+ trainees requires a lot of effort from the instructor team and is definitely not to be attempted without thorough knowledge and skills regarding all aspects and factors of the E&T model (e.g. CoSim play, application of Constructivism, background knowledge about the simulation topics and simulation systems, flexibility in the conduct of the event, time management, etc.).

² Such game systems allow the player/s to compete against an opponent handled by the system.

³ Normally, this role can be fulfilled by one umpire.

⁴ This set up could also include one or more factions played by the instructor team. This, again, requires a well-experienced instructor team where a high level skill of playing CoSim is indispensable.

1.3. Environment/Infrastructure

For the execution of the E&T event, the basic rule is to provide one room for each team of trainees, plus one additional room for the game play. Separating the CoSim execution (which is providing the one and only “true” situation and its development) from the trainees automatically provides the “what is the actual state of affairs” challenge for them⁵.

The main intent to keeping the trainee teams separated is to ensure a lack of intelligence between the competing parties, of course. It also serves to make the trainees aware of the necessity for permanent and effective communication. For example, if one party consists of two teams (due to the applied command & control structure), their separation adds additional challenges beyond the task to win the CoSim as such.

Each team’s room must provide sufficient space to allow its members to get organized, set up their HQ and to execute their tasks and activities (planning, discussions, briefings, further separations into cells, etc.).

Depending on the available “class room” size, more than one team could share the same room but it is still required to provide them their own realms.

The room hosting the CoSim placement and execution also serves as the main assembly location for the instructor team (although the observers will spend the majority of their time with the trainee teams).

The detailed set up of each room is left to the individual E&T event execution (e.g. a specific area for briefings for ALL participants, arrangements of the teams’ HQs etc.). The overall configuration of the rooms used (distances between each other; connections; access, etc.) must also be taken into consideration.

You will be surprised how inventive some of the trainees become to attain some intel about their opponents.

1.4. The Instructor Team

Applying the E&T model is a team effort!

The most important requirement for the instructor team: all team members must be highly motivated and committed to the whole endeavour.

The instructor team always consists of at least one umpire and the group of observers. The umpire is an expert of simulation systems⁶ in general and the CoSim used in particular⁷. As expected, there is no sole approach to achieve the necessary umpire skill level to run the E&T event effectively. A proposition to familiarize oneself with the “theory” part: read in the books “The Art of Wargaming”⁸ and “Simulating War”⁹.

⁵ The moment the trainees start to play, their overview of the situation will differ from that represented on the “game board” and this discrepancy will continue to rise.

⁶ The umpire must be ready, knowledgeable and skilled to answer and explain the nature, theory, construct, purpose and value of “simulation” and “simulation systems”.

⁷ It is definitely not necessary to instruct the trainees comprehensively about the CoSim they play. This simply is not possible without disrupting the whole E&T effort (time required, data overflow for the trainees, superfluous information). But the umpire must emanate her/his competence and neutrality regarding the game system and its use.

⁸ Peter Perla; Naval Institute Press (March 1990)

⁹ Philip Sabin; Bloomsbury Academic; Reprint (April 2014)

When it comes to master the application of CoSim, learning their rules, and playing them should not be sidestepped. See Chapter 1.7 for an introductory list of CoSims to start with.

The key role of the observers is to attend to the trainees in their struggle to master the challenge provided by the CoSim and its execution.

Regarding the number of required observers, the following rule of thumb could be applied: an observer should not be responsible for more than six to eight trainees at a time. No trainee or team/party should ever be left without observers. In its preparation, the instructor team assigns the observers to the teams initially. During the event execution the team has to remain flexible allowing for changes in assignment as the situation demands and/or allows. There is no way (and should also never be tried) to predict the flow of events when applying this E&T model.

Part of the instructor team's preparation must include the establishment of a common understanding of the general elements of the E&T model (e.g. constructivism, the value and limits of simulation systems, the feedback methods including its rules), and the specifics of the upcoming event (e.g. the CoSim, the simulated object (normally a historical skirmish, battle, campaign, operation, war, etc.). Separately; there is no need to standardize the team members' mind set; on the contrary, the E&T model depends on the diversity of all team members.

Note: JAPCC provides a specific training for umpires (5 working days) and observers (2 working days).

1.5. Means

The heart of the matter is the CoSim and its game components. They must be modified¹⁰ as required. Additionally, the trainees must be supplied with the "classic" material for staff work, e.g. paper, pens, flip charts, dividers, laptops, projectors, etc.

The provision and use of electronic equipment might be deliberately restricted, or not, since it may contribute directly to the competence increase objective. Example: allow the trainees to use mobile phone cameras to take pictures of the game board. This enters a specific quality of ISR to the whole event and activities.

The instructor team also has to consider the option to send specific material (e.g. the CoSim game rules) to the trainees well in advance. Experience tells such material is not effectively used as intended.

In case the E&T event is going to take place over a period of more than 2 days, it is helpful for all participants to have an agenda listing the topics and the planned sequence of events (either send out in advance or right at the beginning of business). For shorter sessions, such an overview briefed at the very start has proven sufficient.

¹⁰ As CoSim are commercial game products, most of their components will lack the sturdiness required to "survive" the execution of the E&T model. Examples: game boards must be enlarged, counters replaced by larger and more robust blocks, game tables etc. enlarged and copied, and so on. It also helps to create electronic versions of the game components (e.g. scanned game cards can be presented on a screen instead of relying on the small original versions precluding the presentation of their content to all at the same time).

1.6. Time

This is the most crucial factor.

The E&T model requires at least one working day in order to unfold its potential and effects with a chance of trainees retaining the skills. Further; two and a half days ensures high quality results; and an entire week provides for tremendous E&T effectiveness. The model has no time limits, entire training courses can be based on the model's application (using only one or a whole set of CoSims).

No matter the available time, the following agenda should be applied (as a recommended starting point).

- ⌘ Part 1 – Introduction
Present and explain the JAPCC E&T model.
- ⌘ Part 2 – The topic of the CoSim
In most cases, the historical period¹¹ and events covered by the game system are briefed¹².
- ⌘ Part 3 – Introduction of the CoSim as a game system
The trainees get a chance to execute a few game turns focussing solely on the processes and procedures forming the simulation system.
- ⌘ Part 4 – The game is afoot
The teams of trainees prepare their HQs and conduct the initial planning required to start the “hot” simulation.
- ⌘ Part 5 – Action
The simulation is run applying the battle rhythm based upon the game system and the modifications installed by the instructor team.
- ⌘ Part 6 – The final feedback session
A formal stage for all participants to provide feedback on their impressions, remarks, assessments, verdicts.

Note: Feedback must not be limited to Part 6, it must be continuous throughout the whole E&T event.

1.7. The Conflict Simulation Games (CoSim)

Astonishingly, this type of simulation system is not widely known although there is a great number of such games available on the market.

Here is an overview of some of the game companies currently in the business.

- ⌘ Avalanche Press
- ⌘ Clash of Arms
- ⌘ Columbia Games
- ⌘ Dan Verssen Games
- ⌘ Decision Games
- ⌘ Fantasy Flight Games
- ⌘ GMT Games
- ⌘ Lock'n Load Publishing
- ⌘ Multi-Man Publishing

¹¹ It is strongly advised NOT to use a CoSim or topic dealing with World War II, as this could create a lot of misunderstandings OUTSIDE the E&T event (this time period is still a “No-Go” for Germans).

¹² There is no limit to the type/category of CoSim selected: competence improvement can also be achieved by having the trainees experience their capabilities and skills in a science fiction or fantasy setting, for example.

- ⌘ Victory Point Games
- ⌘ Worthington Games

Further information regarding the companies and the products available can be found on their website. Upon request, the JAPCC will provide a list of CoSims assessed as suitable for any intended E&T event using the JAPCC E&T model.

The JAPCC recommends while the umpires begin developing their skill for this model, to utilizing solitaire systems. Here is a listing of candidates:

- ⌘ The States of Siege series from Victory Point Games (namely: Cruel Necessity, Dawn of the Zeds, Israeli Independence, Keep up the Fire!, Levee on Masse, Ottoman Sunset, Hapsburg Eclipse, Zulus on the Ramparts, Nemo's War);
- ⌘ Space Infantry (Lock'n Load Publishing);
- ⌘ The Leader series from Dan Verssen Games (Phantom Leader, Hornet Leader, Thunderbolt/Apache Leader).

When selecting a standard two-party game, umpire newcomers have found simulation systems engaged in the tactical level a good introduction to the CoSim event management.

A further recommendation is to start with a CoSim that uses a rules package of 8 or less pages. Instructor team proficiency will quickly remove these limitations and each team/umpire will develop their specific branch of preferred game systems and topics.

The instructor team must play their game of choice as a team before the actual event. This will add to the confidence of the umpire(s) and provides the necessary understanding of the simulation system flow and particulars. To keep the spirit of the whole E&T model, the instructor team must not be limited to one game only. A good compromise for a quick and effective learning process is to keep the same simulation system but use different scenarios. Here are some examples:

- ⌘ Command & Colors: Ancient (GMT Games)
- ⌘ Command & Colors: Napoleonic (GMT Games)
- ⌘ Hold the Line (Worthington Games)
- ⌘ The Leader series (Dan Verssen Games)

In the long run, it remains the best strategy for the umpires to learn and use as many different game systems as possible. This might sound contradictory but one develops a high degree of mastery in the world of CoSim most effectively by challenging oneself with different systems¹³.

1.8. CoSim Adaptation

Once the game system for the upcoming E&T event has been selected and played enough to ensure instructor team confidence, it is time to prepare the game components for the real purpose¹⁴.

The simplest (and most effective) modification is the enlargement of the original game components. They also have to be made sturdy, as the trainees are merciless. Starting with the game board, all those elements should be scanned then printed at a scale that allows all

¹³ This is just another occurrence of competence and its improvement.

¹⁴ Modifications of the game system as such will come with growing experience; as beginners the instructor team should stick with the original game system.

participants to easily access and behold them¹⁵. There also can never be too many maps (in different sizes, as appropriate) when copying the game board.

A simple rule: the game board should be presented in a size not smaller than DIN A1. Maps used for planning etc. could be as small as DIN A4.

Regarding the counters, wooden blocks (about 1.25 centimetres edge length at least) have proven their value as the most effective design. This might not be possible in all cases.

Game system elements like combat and terrain tables, orders of battle, sequence of play overviews, etc. should be made available in sufficient numbers for all trainee teams and also in the “game room”.

Rolling the dice is crucial. In order to avoid any trouble with dice crossing the table, lost to the floor, etc., it is recommended to provide a dice tower. This eliminates wasted time and opportunity for discussion during the execution of the game play.

Finally, protect any and all original game cards (of standard poker card size and smaller) with card sleeves. This minimizes the loss of game material due to wear and tear.

Depending on the battle rhythm foreseen by the instructor team, time management might play an important role. Hourglasses have proven their value as they demonstrate the trainees the “flow and passage of time” in a very direct manner.

As each team of trainees struggle with the command & control / leadership challenge, a most effective support for them is to provide each of them a complete copy of the game (not all components must be modified as for the master copy, of course). But this is not mandatory. Lack of such “luxury” rather triggers the inventiveness of the trainees.

¹⁵ The involved game companies accept the proceeding modifications; the only restriction: none of those self-made components may be turned into a product for sale.

CHAPTER 2 – EXECUTION

2.1. Setup

Based on the completed preparation, the instructor team has to give attention to the E&T event execution. The team's work has to start well before the event starts. All the rooms planned for use must be prepared in advance. It is important to have the trainees face a specifically arranged environment from the beginning. This does not include the trainee teams' HQs set-ups as this is an inherent part of the event execution.

The “game room” must be ready, i.e. all game components must be in place, the setup must also allow execution of part 3 of the agenda. All equipment required for part 3 must be in place at the beginning of the event to present a constant environment.

In addition to this static setup, all rooms should host some tacit pedagogic. A common example for this are posters fixed to the rooms' walls and dividers presenting material the instructor team finds helpful to support the E&T effort. For example:

- ⌘ the OODA-Loop;
- ⌘ a battle rhythm;
- ⌘ the elements of behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism;
- ⌘ examples for methodologies regarding planning, decision making; structures for decision briefings;
- ⌘ the sequence of play;
- ⌘ Orders of Battle;
- ⌘ ...

It does not matter if any of the material will be used during the event execution. The instructor team should not plan to address the supporting material in a prepared/fixed way. Opportunities to refer to the supporting material will present itself; and each instructor team will modify the amount and content of this supporting material over time in its own specific way.

Another part of the preparation deals with the roles of the trainees. A simple method to help the players identify with their assigned role within their team is to provide a simple ID card reflecting their role (e.g. trainee X is a member of the blue team and is the chief of the intel cell). In case of specific historical events, the trainees may even be assigned the names of historical personalities (e.g. if the CoSim is providing a simulation of the battle of Gettysburg, assign the players the actual Army, Corps, Division, Brigade, etc. commanders' names). This enhances the involvement of the trainees and ensures the spin-off of sustained learning.

The “ID card” device does not require having all trainee roles designed in advance. If this is left to the players, they simply must have the tools present to equip themselves with the ID cards reflecting the roles they have defined for themselves.

The entire setup phase should be completed with a final “walk through” involving all instructor team members, ensuring everything is in place, the available rooms are in shape, the arrangements within each location are as planned, and the game components are all in place and ready for use as intended. The devil is in the detail here. Whatever is missing will strike during the execution phase and might then impact the flow of activities.

2.2. Processing the Agenda

2.2.1. Part 1 – Introduction and Part 2 – The topic of the CoSim

Parts 1 and 2 of the agenda place the trainees clearly at the receiving side (there might be some short phases of constructivism included). Therefore each part should be as short as possible and still effectively prepare the trainees. The main intent of part 1 is to pique the trainees’ curiosity (“What’s going to happen next?” “Let’s start playing!”), the value and potential of the E&T model as such cannot be sold solely by presenting its theory, the model must be actively experienced in order to truly understand it. Part 2 shifts the trainees from their contemporary environment into the selected historical (or otherwise defined) scenario. The instructor team should always remember this shift will take some time, e.g. the trainees will transfer today’s conditions and options back into this different environment. Incomprehension about the simulation system’s parameters and elements that deny the application of incompatible avenues brought forward by the trainees will initially generate significant frustration, leading to outbursts such as “I don’t understand”, “That’s unrealistic”, and so on. It is part of the observers’ job to react to this, redirecting and refocusing the trainees to mentally adapt to the content and background of the CoSim.

2.2.2. Part 3 – Introduction of the CoSim as a game system

The instructor team should monitor part 3 closely because it can turn into a time-consuming episode. The trainees must be periodically reminded the E&T effort is not to turn them into masters of the simulation system at hand. Even the playing as such is not the true objective. It is all about the application of the trainees’ command & control / leadership competence. A complete knowledge of the game system’s rules is NOT required. The players are dealing with a simulation, therefore thinking within the simulated factors, processes and events is required, nothing more, nothing less¹⁶. The umpire(s) must fully comprehend the simulation system and they must gain the trust of the players.

A proven supporting element for this step and the next ones are short rules summaries (not longer than 4 pages) now made available for the trainees.

Experience tells this phase is mandatory to get steps 4 and 5 moving quickly. In many cases, the trainees claim later they needed an experience playing the simulation first. Once the basics were understood, the perception of the whole system improves dramatically.

2.2.3. Part 4 – The game is afoot

Part 4 places the initiative into the hands of the trainees. The instructor team now focuses on just two activities: running the simulation (based on the players’ decisions) and observing the players, i.e. interacting with the trainees via continuous feedback and follow-on discussions. The initial phase of the teams setup (forming – storming – norming – performing) takes time (45 to 60 minutes should be provided for the trainees).

¹⁶ Here is the core reason why this E&T model does not work with abstract games; for this case, all players must know ALL rules, as the game play may be interpreted but this interpretation itself does not allow to play the game as intended. For example, chess is an abstract game. The figures of this game have no rational link to their move options.

There are two basic strategies for the instructor team regarding this part: either provide the trainees a complete organizational structure down to single roles for each player, or leave all this completely optional for the players. In most cases, the trainees prefer option 1. Accepting and applying the other option is indeed already an obvious improvement of competence.

2.2.4. Part 5 – Action

Once part 4 is completed, the game gets really rolling. The speed is always set by the instructor team and should vary depending on the actual developments¹⁷. The trainees should develop and drive their own battle rhythms (actually each team will develop its individual one). The overarching specifications are provided by the game system. This is summarized in the so-called Sequence of Play (SoP). All must adhere to this process and its compliance is controlled and actively pursued by the umpire(s). No part of this SoP must be withheld from the players.

The most demanding part of the applied SoP (as different they might be for each CoSim used) is the step where the planning/intention is turned into concrete action¹⁸. Experience tells this step must be strictly enforced by applying a specific process or procedure. Some examples.

- ⌘ Each team of trainees must send exactly one member to the “game room” to execute the plans developed during the planning and decision phases.
- ⌘ Have the team write the execution order for each game turn and this order is handed over (without any further communication) to a team member who was completely excluded from the team’s planning and decision phases.
- ⌘ Apply the given command & control structure until the point in time when the execution is at hand. Determine the team member randomly or by selection of the observers of the team.

This portal from theory to practice (within the SoP of the simulation system) is rarely the sole occasion during a single game turn. In many cases, on the spot decisions have to be made and instantly turned into action several times within a single game turn. It will take some time for the trainees to become aware of this and to prepare their members to fulfil this role effectively.

Getting the trainees used to the fact that they have to cover the complete OODA-Loop time and again and even its different phases in parallel is one of the most important insights the players may gain by their own perception. This will happen individually and at different paces. The instructor team must carefully react to this and support this process as deemed necessary and helpful for all participants. However long it takes, there will always be the moment when a team establishes its own comfort zone, i.e. all its members are content (“We got it! We have everything under control.”) and start to turn patterns into routine, losing the edge. The observers must react to this development and simply force the affected teams out of their comfort zone.

¹⁷ The standard design regarding the game speed follows the pattern: start slowly for turn 1, if changing speed, increase it as the game turns proceed. But again, the instructor team should exercise a high degree of flexibility. Do not plan everything in advance and fixed, but remain adaptable.

¹⁸ One reason for this is rooted in the design of so many military staff exercises where only parts of the OODA-Loop are brought to bear. The exercising personnel have to plan, to present and finally somebody accepts the work. Then either a new situation is presented (regardless of the just accepted way ahead), or the plan disappears in an obscure black box producing some results.

Examples.

- ⌘ Reduce the amount of time available for specified phases of the OODA-Loop.
- ⌘ Remove the most effective member(s) of a team for some time.
- ⌘ Change some communication rules.
- ⌘ Inject some on-the-spot event, e.g. “Brief your overall commander¹⁹ in 15 minutes.”

Whatever is added to the flow of activities, never change the rules of the game system!

Note: Regarding the rules and the perception of them by the trainees: there will always be some critics or comments about their applicability, their rationale (or lack of it), the fact the umpire always adds or discloses new rules at his/her desire, and so on.

Simple advice: Never start to discuss the rules. This does not mean to refuse any conversation about them. On the contrary! The umpire(s) should always be ready and capable to explain and elaborate on them (the art of model building: abstraction, reduction, substitution). But this reasoning must not lead to an “Okay, let’s change this and that rule”. This inevitably destroys the trust of the trainees into the competence and neutrality of the umpire(s).

This does not mean umpire(s) accepting mistakes conducted by the umpire(s) and discovered and addressed by the players. This indicates a high degree of involvement by the players and fosters the mutual trust between all regarding the game play.

In case an umpire discovers an unnoticed mistake was made during game play, they should silently check the impact of that “blunder”. If found to be negligible (maybe a modifier to a die roll was not applied, but the noted result was possible anyway), this occurrence should not be mentioned at all. Otherwise the umpire should apply an appropriate simple procedure to stop game play and adjust whatever is necessary to remedy the discovered mistake.

This leads to the final point regarding the execution step.

The instructor team must remain flexible in the application of the SoP at all times. This is not to be misunderstood as amending this SoP time and again. The key is to allow interrupting the game flow whenever deemed necessary by any instructor team member. This could be used in order to highlight an insight brought forward by a player, a point of interest resulting from a discussion triggered by some feedback, or an observation judged as quite important for all participants. All this requires an instructor team that share a common and thorough understanding of the applied E&T model.

The golden rule for instructor team feedback:

Never ask “Why did you make this mistake?”

Instead ask “Why did you do that?”

¹⁹ Such an extra is to be provided either by a member of the instructor team, or even better, from an outsider, e.g. the commandant of the E&T facility where the event takes place.

CHAPTER 3 – POST-PROCESSING

3.1. Achievements

Beginning in part 5 of the E&T event, the trainees start to deliver first judgements about the whole endeavour. A natural focus lies on the simulation system (although such systems are totally new for the vast majority of the trainees, many of them might address weaknesses and flaws derived from their perception; but the opposite is also true: quite a few pay tribute to such game systems and even openly declare that they will get some for their own). The instructor team's reaction should be in line with all other responses to feedback, comments and discussions brought forward by the trainees: nothing is right or wrong, i.e. all submitted positions have to be accepted as such for a start. A debate on such topics between any combinations of participants is not just accepted but actually the core of the matter.

In order to avoid the trap of direct comparisons between the “real world” experiences of the trainees and the simulation system they have to play, the instructor team is well advised to not select a CoSim dealing with a topic where most of the trainees have a direct reference. For example: using a CoSim that simulates contemporary dogfight involving common aircraft types and many of the trainees are real life pilots of such aircraft, is inviting hard times if not disaster. The aficionadas will quickly start to challenge each and every element of the simulation system²⁰.

The easiest strategy to avoid this conflict: the instructor team selects a CoSim dealing with a historical conflict where there is a high probability that none of the trainees have any deeper insight into (e.g. the Hundred Years War; battle of the American Revolution; a campaign of the Korean War).

Apart from those judgements addressing the CoSim, the key element to have the trainees develop their own grasp of the event’s intentions is the constant feedback provided to them by the observers. This active monitoring not only keeps them at a high level of concentration, attention and thoughtfulness²¹, but also releases the intended effect of each individual’s self-reflection. Making the trainees aware for themselves about what they are doing (or not doing) is aiming precisely towards their competence improvement.

The approach of using the CoSim as the tool to build up and maintain an ever growing challenge is new (not to say “perceived as alien”) to the trainees. They will struggle to formulate the effects and gains they took from the whole event. Still ask this question in part 6 – the final feedback session. In many cases, an individual’s statement about her/his take away might find its expression in a statement like: “I do not really know yet, but there is something that has changed for me.”

²⁰ Actually this situation is also quite illustrative; as such critiques are mainly uttered by trainees more or less overwhelmed by the command & control / leadership challenge offered to them. Equanimous characters, more composed experts easily accept the simulation system and focus on the tasks that develop during the event.

²¹ Arbitrary and/or random behaviour, decision making, etc. are instantly discovered and addressed. The trainees are quickly aware that whatever they do could provoke an instant reaction (a probing question) from the side of the observers.

It cannot be stated enough: the active role of the observers is crucial to the success of the E&T event. Only through this are the trainees “sucked” into the simulated cosmos. The quality and attractiveness of the CoSim, in the first place communicated by its visible components, followed by the effectiveness and intelligence of the game system flows, support this process. Once the trainees are on this path, the whole E&T event turns into a self-selling item, i.e. the instructor team’s primary role is no longer to motivate, being replaced by the task to orchestrate.

The faster this critical turning point is achieved, the more thorough and effective the achievements recognized by each trainee individually become.

A stubborn attitude like “I don’t get it at all” can never be excluded and has to be accepted, of course. Experience tells that such a bolter quickly finds herself/himself exposed to rather harsh reactions from the other trainees! Again, it is the observers’ task to deal with such a situation and focus any such conflict on the competence realm.

3.2. Flaws and Being Better next Time

Each time this E&T model is applied, mistakes, blunders and failures will happen. The E&T event by itself is actually offering all members of the instructor team to improve their competence. The team has to continuously work together to effectively react to recognized flaws (either for a quick remedy or for entering the insights into the ominous Lessons Identified – Lessons Learned folder).

There is no problem to admit such flaws during and/or at the end of the event to the trainees. They will take this as practical examples that everything said to them about competence, the lack of the “one and only” truth also applies for the instructor team and its activities. This way, all individuals involved have a chance to foster the perceived potential and value of the experienced E&T.

Once step 6 of the event has been concluded, the next one actually starts. The instructor team members must transfer all LI-LL, their experiences, their perceptions, etc. actively into the preparations into the upcoming E&T event. It is also important to recognize any slip into a comfort zone (e.g. always using the same CoSim, or scenario, trainee team set-up, game and HQ material, etc.). This must be deliberately brought to an end, i.e. the instructor team changes the setup (in parts or even completely) for the next time. A simple way of ensuring this is by selecting and using a CoSim totally new for the team. This automatically requires a complete and thorough run through the whole processes as delineated in chapters 1 and 2 of this handbook.

Another simple, but effective way to keep everybody of the team keen and bright is to swap the roles and tasks. Have a former observer prepare and conduct steps 1 and 2 of the event’s agenda. Have another observer take over the task of an umpire. This enhances the competence of each team member and ensures the continuous consideration and application of different perspectives when it comes to the preparation and execution of each concrete E&T event.

There is no silver bullet. Not even for the instructor team.