

Strategy Research Project

Educational Objectives: The Why Matters

by

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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Abstract

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The combined pressures resulting from fiscal austerity and evidence of a lack of intellectual depth among U.S. military strategic art practitioners provides an impetus to examine the senior level colleges' role in educating the nation's military leaders. This paper argues for changes to the Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP) that will effectively guide the services and the senior level colleges to tailor their professional military education systems to better meet the Department of Defense's human capital requirements. Of these changes, the most significant is to explicitly scope the Joint Learning Objectives and subordinate Learning Objectives thereby linking the educational experience to the force's requirements. A second recommendation is for the OPMEP to mandate each service implement a periodic roles based requirement analysis to support development of scoped educational objectives.

Educational Objectives: The Why Matters

For if we remove from history the analysis of why, how and for what purpose each thing was done and whether the result was what we should reasonably have expected, what is left is a mere display of descriptive virtuosity, but not a lesson, and this, though it may please for the moment, is of no enduring value for the future.

—Polybus¹

In the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Joint Education White Letter, General Dempsey states now is a critical time to ensure our Professional Military Education (PME) system has a recognized value to the Joint enterprise and initiates a review of the Joint Educational objectives and institutions to ensure they set the conditions to keep pace with the changing strategic environment.² While significant, this is neither a unique nor a dramatic scenario as the PME system and its institutions are no stranger to exhaustive examination and the resultant criticisms. Over the past nine years, there have been formal and informal congressional inquiries, multiple think tank projects, books, internal reviews and individual efforts to strategically align the education system to meet the requirements of the force.³ Yet, despite these best efforts, questions concerning the education system remain.⁴

Many of these studies have conflicting perspectives on various elements of the PME system, but in principle they overwhelmingly agree on the necessity of educating senior military leaders. This agreement is reflected in the current Department of Defense (DoD) Training Transformation policy which is to train individuals completely to the requirement prior to assuming joint duty.⁵ The DoD guidance specifies the term train is inclusive of education requirements. At the Joint Staff level of policy guidance, the Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP) states that PME provides the

education needed produce the most professionally competent (strategic-minded, critical-thinking) individual possible, but does not associate that endstate to any specific requirement.⁶ The OPMEP does not treat PME as the only vehicle to achieve the department's policy end; it states that education compliments the individual's experience, training and self-improvement.

The educational experience at top level schools is an output of three major sub-systems: the students, the faculty and the curriculum. Any re-examination of top level school's role in aligning senior leader development to the needs of the force will look to optimize processes in these three areas. A survey of these systems will show that attention in any of these three areas will produce results. However, attention to how the curriculum is defined has the potential to ensure the educational investment in our senior officers is aligned to those areas the Joint enterprise values. This can be done within the current resource constraints and is within the appropriate stakeholders' authority.

The lack of a specified relationship in the OPMEP between PME's role in developing senior officers and satisfying joint force requirements is notable. There is no documented universal understanding of the requirement for or specific utility of that education for the various roles senior officers fulfill across the Joint Force enterprise. A policy level forcing function is needed to better align the role of PME to the needs of the Joint Force. In application, these changes to policy will assist leaders within the PME system to design a top level school educational experience that satisfies the greatest needs of the force. As stakeholders in senior level professional military education re-

examine Joint Education, they should mandate the use of purpose statements when crafting educational objectives to ensure learning is aligned to requirements.

Finding the Right Lever

Students arrive at top level school⁷ as products of their service's assignment and selection processes, shaped by policy guidance.⁸ Individual schools have no control over the cognitive ability, cultural identity, education, and experience that comes with the student arriving at their door. While they must trust the services to select qualified students, they mitigate flaws within the system by crafting education plans to accept wide variance of students. Some experts have advocated improving this element of the PME system by requiring proof of a student's cognitive ability prior to the assignment. Theoretically this requirement has potential, however it places the interests of the schools ahead of the interest of the service and would therefore be difficult to implement.⁹ From the programmatic perspective, there are arguments on either side of the numbers as to who should be attending top level school, but the general consensus is to provide the educational experience to as many as possible as long as the means exists.¹⁰ Ultimately, it is the student's professionalism that impacts their educational experience; what the student puts into their experience at top level school is indicative of their drive for personal and professional self-improvement.¹¹

From a policy and school's leadership perspective, changing the faculty is a more challenging dynamic to unpack than that of the student or curriculum. The additional complexity is due to various interests that impact the educational professional's decision to serve in the unique PME environment and the interdependent relationships between the faculty, students and the curriculum to produce an optimal educational experience.

One such relationship is the impact the faculty has on curriculum development. As a learning organization, faculty members participate in the curriculum development process, working to enhance the experience and to ensure relevance.¹² It goes without saying that a superior faculty has the potential to create a superior curriculum as well as to mitigate a suboptimal one. But another relationship is feasible as well, in that a suboptimal faculty could degrade an optimal curriculum.¹³ Addressing improvement to the overall system from this perspective is dependent on unique and contextual variables that are different for each school. Therefore, other than to note that a better faculty will create a better educational experience, it is outside of the scope of this paper to discuss recommend policy or procedural changes for faculty hiring, assignment and development.

Despite their importance, the attention levied on the two previous areas within the top level school education system pales in comparison to that paid to the curriculum. For a variety of reasons, it is the most assessable aspect of the educational experience and what gets taught at PME arguably receives more attention than it requires. The curriculum is initially defined in law, subjected to interpretation and policy guidance at the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Staff levels, further refined in high level Military Education Coordination Counsel working groups and principles meetings, then debated and synchronized at the individual school, course, and class levels through a variety of consensus based processes.¹⁴ Along the way, it is influenced and buffeted, for better and worse, by every stakeholder imaginable. Congress conducts hearings and at times executes a heavy handed approach to their oversight role on this subject. The services, think tanks and the schools themselves conduct studies and

publish reports. External to the government sphere, academics and defense journalists write articles and books on the subject. Finally, students and the employers of graduates answer institutional effectiveness surveys.¹⁵

One cannot examine this body of material and come to a discrete conclusion concerning the optimal scope of subject material that defines a top level school curriculum. Much like discussions about other elements of the PME system, there are competing perspectives on the best curriculum. Some argue that the current curriculum is too broad, that the “Pecos River” approach of teaching a mile wide and an inch deep isn’t correct.¹⁶ These experts argue that the curriculum needs depth of focus and to provide the students a greater opportunity to explore and reflect.¹⁷ Other experts argue that the curriculum needs to be more inclusive and responsive to the current environment.¹⁸ For a variety of reasons, the current policy has settled on a curriculum that is broad and responsive.¹⁹ While these differences may have been reconciled and prioritized through policy guidance, the fact that this type of curriculum discussion is pervasive leads to a conclusion that the right question has not yet been asked.²⁰

A common thread present throughout the curriculum development process is that each stakeholder articulates a need for higher education based on their environmental scan and specific interests. They influence the process to define educational objectives representing the knowledge or change in behavior necessary from their perspective of the current and future environment. Comparing factors that drive requirements identified at the strategic level to those generated by senior officers filling joint staff billets, their seniors or journalists questioning developments in the national security arena highlights the results of these different perspectives.²¹

Ultimately, due to the hierarchal nature of the military, it is the strategic leader's scan of the environment and subsequent vision which set the competencies that guide education within the context of statutory requirements.²² These educational objectives are then codified along the way by statements that vary in labels such as Joint Learning Area, Institutional Learning Outcome, and Course Objectives. The labels and scope vary in accordance with their position in the hierarchy of guidance; however, this paper uses the term educational objective to refer to all learning areas, goals, outcomes, and objectives. Additionally, for the purposes of this paper, this curriculum development method described previously is labeled a top-down process. Between codification and curriculum execution, a significant number of interested parties have influence over these objectives which could introduce discrepancies. However, there are developmental, oversight and accreditation processes in place to ensure all educational objectives throughout the system are aligned to the initial vision set at the strategic level.²³

Inconsistencies Disrupt the Benefits of Guidance

A review of the Chairman's White Paper for purpose statements tied to specific educational objectives reveals two trends. First, most stated educational objectives, educational outcomes and/or leader attributes in the structure of the letter, are not explicitly linked to a purpose. However within the letter, there is a convincing argument detailing the current and future environment which add context to and carries implications for the attributes that follow. For example, by piecing together statements from the same context, General Dempsey states that the military must develop agile and adaptive leaders to keep pace with the changing environment and because the United States no longer has a clear operational and technological advantage.²⁴

Further in the letter he lists educational outcomes which were preceded with comments about developing understanding in an uncertain security environment, to lead adaptation and to ensure readiness. Also prior to these educational outcomes, he states additional purposes in that warfare is changing within the traditional domains, additional domains have materialized and that fiscal reality will increase the importance of resource allocation decisions.²⁵

The second trend is the one area where educational objectives are explicitly tied to a purpose. He states that joint education efforts must instill the cognitive capability to understand, receive and clearly express intent, to take decisive initiative within intent, accept prudent risk and build trust within the force in order to fully realize the potential of mission command.²⁶ This analysis shows the potential ability to use strategic leader guidance to link purpose statements to educational outcomes. One can imagine an educational objective within the top level school's curriculum that links the topic of critical thought to decision making or communication as it relates to resource allocation.

Stepping down one level in the guidance hierarchy, there is less specificity in the educational objectives when there should be more. The OPMEP does not provide nor does it define a process to define the requirements for education based on a bottom up review to define the needs of the Joint Force. The Senior Service Joint Learning Areas and Objectives heavily rely on the reader's understanding of an implied purpose to support their educational value to the Joint Force. Under JPME Phase 1 and 2, only ten of the fifty-three educational objectives have a purpose directly or indirectly associated with the objective. Where stated, their lack of resolution does not facilitate common

understanding. Examples include; “to the formulation and evaluation of strategy,” “to support national objectives,” and “to attain national security objectives.”²⁷

However, this trend is reversed when analyzing the JPME Special Areas of Emphasis (SAE). SAEs are the result of a process that proposes topics and areas that the Office of the Secretary of Defense, services, combatant command, defense agencies and the Joint Staff desire to see addressed in JPME. In application, the process supports relevance and currency of the JPME curriculum.²⁸ Each of the nine topics approved in 2011 are structured with a description, background and justification of the topic culminating with educational objectives.²⁹ Like the majority of educational objectives pulled from the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) White Letter, these do not have specific purposes embedded within the objectives themselves; but it is not difficult for a student or faculty to examine and understand the link between the objectives and the previously stated justification.

JPME SAE topic areas represent a variety of institutional interests, some specific and transient, others more universal and enduring. They are the result of a different process when compared to the Joint Learning Areas. SAEs fall under the responsibility of the Military Education Coordination Council (MECC) to help ensure the currency and relevance of JPME’s curriculum.³⁰ Stakeholders nominate SAEs which then undergo a tiered staffing process before the list is approved by the CJCS. Schools are encouraged to adopt these SAEs for inclusion into their curriculum, but this is optional. The different process and the nature of the material account for the difference between SAEs and the Joint Learning Areas’ educational objectives.

An analysis of the Institutional Learning Objectives (ILO) that begins the hierarchy of educational objectives at the US Army War College reveals a trend similar to the OPMEP. Two of the nine ILOs have embedded purpose statements articulating the why behind the objective. These ILOs, “Use strategic thought processes to evaluate the national security challenges and opportunities facing the United States in the 21st Century” and “Study and confer on the American military profession and guide its future direction” are structured differently than the remaining seven. They do not follow the typical construction where an action verb, pulled from the high level on Bloom’s taxonomy is paired to the intended behavior desired. A few examples from the remaining seven ILOs are “Evaluate the theory of war and strategy” and “Synthesize critical elements, enablers, and processes that define the strategic environment in peace and war.”³¹

At the execution level of educational objective hierarchy, an analysis of the course objectives follows the previously established trend at the ILO and OPMEP levels that does not associate purpose statements to educational objectives. Surprisingly, the application of SAE educational objectives at this level follows this general trend as well, reversing the trend established in the original document.³² As a result, students and faculty at this level where the learning process is expected to occur are forced to imply through experience or context how they are to orient themselves to the educational objective.

The point of this analysis is to demonstrate that the hierarchy of educational objectives defining the curriculum at top level school is inconsistent in identifying the requirement for and providing the purpose behind the learning. Where there is no

defined purpose, the adult learner's craving to understand "why," could create a reaction to force a justification from their personal perspective or induce frustration because their needs are not being met.³³ This opportunity for individuals, both faculty and student, to develop their own understanding of why something is being taught introduces unnecessary subjectivity to the academic experience which is unproductive.

The Nature and Use of Educational Objectives

The professional military education communities' perspective on educational objectives is heavily based around Bloom's taxonomy for the cognitive domain. This taxonomy is a classification system of intended behavioral changes relating to the mental skills of an individual as a result of programmed learning experiences.³⁴ There are separate taxonomies for the affective, or emotional domain, and psychomotor, or the physical skill domain. While in certain contexts, educational objectives in the affective are relevant to senior leader development, PME is focused by the cognitive domain taxonomy. Educational objectives designed with this taxonomy are more than proscriptive endstates useful in defining the curriculum. They are evaluative in nature, in that they provide a common reference for the instructor's ability to judge if the student has demonstrated the desired behavioral change.

Methods of writing educational objectives vary in relationship to their level in the education system's hierarchy and intent. They range from very general, designed to support the freedom to learn as an end, to very specific that define the intended audience, behavior, conditions and degree of performance which is acceptable. Malcolm Knowles acknowledges that there are situations which call for both types before stating, "the important thing is that the objectives have meaning to both the learners and provide them directional guidance in their learning."³⁵ Similarly, Ralph

Tyler, in *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*, states, “the most useful form for stating objectives is to express them in terms that identify both the kind of behavior to be developed and the content or area of life in which this behavior is to operate.”³⁶

Finally, in *Principles of Instructional Design*, the authors’ state, “To design instruction, one must seek a means of identifying the human capabilities that lead to the outcomes called educational goal.” In their view, human capabilities are a reflection of the needs that drive the kinds of activities expressed in educational objectives.³⁷

In *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, Benjamin Bloom is focused on the evaluative role of educational objectives and their role to define the attainment of knowledge.³⁸ However, in discussing justification for the teaching of knowledge, he writes that problem solving and thinking cannot happen in a vacuum and states, “It is clear that justification for knowledge for all these uses will usually involve knowledge in relation to other objectives, rather than knowledge for its own sake.”³⁹ Unlike Knowles and Tyler, Bloom does not develop this statement further to discuss developing educational objectives in context. Based on the existing PME educational objectives, one can conclude that they have been influenced by Bloom’s evaluative focus as their typical use does not include context or purpose.

In her treatise on the history of educational objectives, Suzana Cismas articulated various arguments concerning the utility of educational objectives in higher learning, specifically with regards to the absence of easily observable changes while educating at the higher levels of the cognitive domain.⁴⁰ Applying her analysis to instructional design methodology, she states, “to conduct Instructional design for programs based on mastery level (theoretical and practical) highly specific objectives

are needed.”⁴¹ Concluding a discussion on the uses of educational objectives, she writes, “given the problems of justifying objectives, it is safer if in the context of the educational system as a whole, objectives were regarded as means rather than ends.”⁴² To effectively treat educational objectives as means, they would need to be scoped by a specific purpose that defines the necessity for the behavioral change. An educational objective written from this perspective would be able to answer both what and why the student is learning. For military officers familiar with tasking statements, which provide both what is to be done and why, educational objectives with purpose statements will provide appropriate context if the desired behavior is not initially understood.

Noreen Clark, in *Examining Controversies in Adult Education*, answers one criticism against detailed educational objectives raised by educators with the humanistic versus behavioral perspective of education.⁴³ She argues that competency based learning is not in competition with the view that knowledge is a value and an end to itself. She augments the humanist based education axiom, “The truth will set you free” to “The truth will set you free if translated into action.”⁴⁴ She concludes, “The major criterion for determining the level of specificity for learning objectives is the whether or not the objective enables a learner to acquire a skill or apply a concept.”⁴⁵

Many of the educational objectives at the higher cognitive levels seek outcomes that are in the form of an original response from mental processes that are difficult to observe. These, sub-classified as expressive objectives, are often found in areas where students are encouraged to develop and express personal perspectives and insights.⁴⁶ Since original responses cannot be predicted, the evaluation of these responses is highly subjective even when a rubric is applied. However, if an expressive objective is

scoped by a purpose statement, then the desired original response can be evaluated against its intended application. While an evaluation will remain appropriately subjective, faculty feedback to the student creates an opportunity for continued discussion as to why this particular response excelled or fell short of the intended purpose. Without purpose statements, there is no common point of departure for this evaluative dialogue.

Faculty Benefits

One would expect that a faculty would desire unified perspective on the purposeful application of the material they are teaching and therefore drive for a common understanding of “why.” Since the institutional and course level educational objectives lack purposes, this is not occurring to the level where they would be codified in writing. A potential reason for this is that the top down approach defines the course educational objectives that the faculty executes. This process is opposite to a faculty experience teaching a civilian graduate level course where the faculty develops the course objectives and the related class material.⁴⁷ In PME curriculums, the top down approach not only generates core educational objectives, it also heavily influences down to the course level.

In PME core curriculums, faculty subject matter experts, who are working in a recognized teaching tradition, generate course and class educational objectives and ensure they relate as necessary to OPMEP objectives. Their depth of knowledge on the subject, and the lack of purpose statement at the OPMEP level, tends to de-emphasize the use of detailed educational objectives.⁴⁸ This potentially explains the difference between core and SAE educational objectives. By definition, an SAE represents an area

without a recognized teaching tradition which, results in a faculty driven requirement for topic justification and additional specificity in the educational objectives.

The use of broad endstates does not benefit faculty who are less familiar with the subject material. The original purpose behind JPME, as stated in the CJCS White Paper, is to develop leaders by conveying a broad body of professional knowledge and developing the habits of mind essential to the profession.⁴⁹ With such a broad base of professional knowledge as principle guidance for the experience at top level school, it is difficult see how a faculty team, composed of a mix of civilian and military professors, would have the depth of knowledge in every subject taught to constitute a recognized teaching tradition capable of relating implied purposes to future requirements. To mitigate this, schools have subject matter experts build standardized presentation packages for use across the faculty.⁵⁰ While the subject's relevance may be passed between faculty during class development and in preparation for execution, the written objectives remain broad and generally scoped which does not support faculty learning.

More specific educational objectives provide additional utility for the faculty's evaluation of the student's progress and the effectiveness of the educational experience. Student's changes produced by the educational experience are judged in relation to the educational objective. A second judgment, also based on the educational objective, is made concerning the structure of class or course as it supports student learning. Objectives with sufficient specificity, combined with an assessment methodology and feedback loop to the institution, help the faculty improve the course through the analysis of student attainment.⁵¹

There is an additional benefit from the use of purpose statements for the faculty leadership. They provide an opportunity for stakeholders to justify the alignment of resources, time, faculty and money, towards specific educational objectives. Traditional educational objectives that only contain the action verb on Bloom's taxonomy do not provide sufficient detail to support resource decision making because the desired endstate of that task is not articulated. For example, a comparison of two different purposes associated with the same educational objective demonstrates the potential that one purpose requires more resources than the other.

- Analyze the nature and theory of strategy in order to relate strategic guidance to current national priorities.
- Analyze the nature and theory of strategy in order to draft Combatant Commander Theater Strategy.

Not only do these educational objectives indicate potentially different levels of necessary resources to the school, but also signal to the student distinct investment requirements. If accurate to the requirements of the Joint Force, an adult student is more likely to invest more when they can visualize themselves using this educational experience in the near future. The purpose statements in the previous example are written only to illustrate a potentially different resource requirement for the same educational objective. In this case, there is a third option that would associate both purposes to the same educational objective if that is what is necessary to satisfy the requirement generated by an assessment of the Joint Force's needs and expectations.

Beyond making resource based decisions that impact the curriculum, the school's leadership is able to use purpose statements to manage the faculty's talent

pool and set expectations of the faculty beyond the individual's subject matter expertise and experience. Understanding the genesis of these purpose statements would enhance any faculty development program and provide relevance to the school's mission. It goes without saying that the faculty members are active learners and would benefit in many of the same ways as the students from these types of educational objectives. This is particularly true when faculty members are asked to lead the student's educational experience that is distant from their own areas of study, experience or teaching tradition.

Augmenting the Student's Experience

Student learners also benefit from the use of purposefully scoped education objectives. More specific educational objectives increase the clarity and understanding of the learning experience and have been shown to be congruent with the psychological preferences of adult learners. Malcolm Knowles's research into how adults learn led him to conclude that adults develop and achieve their full potential through self-actualization.⁵² His learning theory centered around four assumptions that defined characteristics typical of adult learners. While labeled as assumptions, they are generally accepted as central to adult learning theory. They are:

- Adults tend to be more self directed.
- Adults possess personal histories which define their identities and serves as a resource of experiential learning upon which new learnings can be applied.
- Motivation in adults is directed to more socially relevant learnings.
- Adult learners have interest in immediate application for problem solving.⁵³

These characteristics of adult learners support using more specific educational objectives that demonstrate a link between the curriculum and the student's future. Educational objectives based in the philosophy of learning for learning sake or with implicit purpose statements do not.

When adults discover a need to learn that is important to them, they often use a natural learning model.⁵⁴ Scott Armstrong states that adults using this process, "set objectives and manage this process by seeking resources and help from others, engaging in active learning tasks, getting feedback from others, and practicing applications. The motivation is intrinsic."⁵⁵ To reinforce this motivation, Armstrong makes a case to move responsibility for learning from a teacher directed to a learner responsible model. In addition to using innovative methods to support the students' quest for understanding, Armstrong recommends setting clear and well stated objectives.⁵⁶ Noreen Clark also writes that sharing responsibility for educational objectives between teacher and students has been shown to have motivational effects on the students and that studies have shown that adults perform better when they have a clear idea of what is expected.⁵⁷ Suzana Cimas concludes her brief on the History of Educational Objectives stating,

From the student's point of view, what probably matters most is the position of an objective on the immediacy – remoteness scale. Many objectives will appear to students both as conceptually remote (because they are far from what seems to be relevant in the community outside school) and as temporally remote (because their utility lies far in the future). Perceiving links between their immediate objectives and possible ultimate goals can be crucial for some students' motivation. The suggestion is that objectives being communicated to students should be accompanied by individual rationales or justifications which relate them to more distant and more valued goals.⁵⁸

Self actualizing of adult students to improve themselves and develop habits of mind is directly related to their ability to identify their educational needs and remain motivated to learn. This goal figures prominently in CJCS White Letter and the OPMEP. Adding detail to educational objectives through the use of purpose statements supports the intrinsic motivation and natural learning in adult students.

Arguments Against Detailed Educational Objectives

Some will argue that specific educational objectives constrain the instructor and the educational experience which conflicts with the goal of providing a broad educational foundation to senior leaders. They say it is more important to have the academic freedom of unconstrained and implicit educational objectives than to generate unique but focused products.⁵⁹ They also note that there is no institutional practice of embedding purpose statements. And further, that since they cannot predict what the graduates will be doing after they graduate, any specific purposes assigned to educational objectives would be irrelevant.⁶⁰

Analyzing competency-based adult education, Herschel Hadley challenges the argument that using behavioral objectives and achievement of competence to structure a curriculum assures accountability, personalization and application of learning. He specifically challenges the idea of closure in a learning experience. While noting that there is evidence that adults desire and react positively to closure in education, he raises the concern that the structure of a closed experience can work against growth and learning.⁶¹ Hadley concludes his analysis of competency-base education by stating that more empirical evidence is needed before the claim that this structure is as successful as others have stated.⁶²

These are arguments in support of the status quo. It is important to note there is a distinct difference between understanding and stating the purpose behind a subject and the academic freedom to examine it from different perspectives. Purpose statements do not limit the faculty's ability to use a dialectic approach to any subject, they provide context. A lack of institutional practice should not inhibit the use of purpose statements, as there are few opportunities to compare civilian development processes and institutions of higher learning to the PME system and top level schools. Additionally, it is not necessary to predict where the student will be assigned after top level school. A bottom up requirements development process, combined with the existing top down process will identify the requirements the Joint Force will most likely demand of graduates. These purpose statements do not need to be tailored to individuals, only specific enough so that a typical student can envision themselves using the education in context.

Hadley's concern is valid; it is unreasonable to assert that a competency based curriculum assures success. His specific concern regarding terminal learning is reflected by those in the PME system when discussing the difference between training and education. The structure of training objectives, most often in the psychomotor domain, is structured by enabling and terminal learning objectives that articulate task, condition and standard. There is a deliberate effort in PME to distance and differentiate education from training and Hadley's concern resonates. However, within PME, there are embedded and reinforcing mechanisms within the military culture to support self-improvement and to develop habits of the mind.⁶³ Any potential for purpose statements

to work against growth and learning can be mitigated by further reinforcing this aspect of military culture.

This paper is not been concerned with examining or changing what is taught or how the top level school's educational experience is structured. It does not argue for any particular objective over another at any level throughout the hierarchy. In fact, there is a good argument that the existing educational objectives define a strong and relevant curriculum. However, it is not difficult to find an educational objective and make a case that it should be included in the curriculum. The OPMEP's SAE process does just that, even if inclusion into the school's curriculum is optional. Research does suggest is that there is a lack of consensus as to the purpose behind these objectives. If there is not clarity in their purpose, then by extension the drivers of purpose, requirements could be misunderstood resulting in a misalignment of curriculum resources. For example, consider how one would find the answer to why the strategic leadership course at the US Army War College is three weeks long and not four or five?

Building Purpose Statements: An Integrated Approach

The top down approach, as codified in policy and procedures, to defining educational objectives is essential to the PME system. At every level in the educational objective hierarchy the process is overseen and executed by stakeholders who have the expertise and authority to identify requirements, craft associated purpose statements. The faculty also has the knowledge to define the resources needed to achieve the objective as scoped by its purpose. The current process satisfies three of four Malcolm Knowles' recommendations for diagnosing needs that drive curriculums based on learning and developing competency models.⁶⁴ The three in use are: using the judgment of experts, conducting research and group participation.

The PME system's use of two of these methodologies, how experts and research are used to define educational objectives, has been described previously. Group participation, as executed within the PME curriculum development process, is not specifically in line with Knowles' and Noreen Clark's perspectives, as they focus on direct faculty-student interaction to influence outcomes.⁶⁵ However, as the OPMEP mandates the use of various surveys and MECC working groups, this avenue is addressed appropriately.

The fourth process recommend by Knowles that is not mandated by policy is a thorough task analysis centered on the roles the individual fulfills. He writes,

By means of more or less elaborate observations, time study, and record-keeping of several people actually performing a given role, it is possible to construct a model of the competencies possessed by the most effective performers. A good task analysis consists of a categorization of the situations encountered in a role and descriptions of action and related competencies required to cope with those situations successfully.⁶⁶

Where the OPMEP mandates and supports the first three processes, it does not mandate the use of a task analysis process advocated by Knowles. This type of periodic review, based on roles fulfilled by senior officers across all billets, should be used by stakeholders to identify requirements and craft associated purpose statements.

The Joint Officer Project, completed in 2008, is an example of this type of review of requirements. This study, scoped to the action officer level across joint billets, generated a significant list of requirements that would be useful when defining purpose statements.⁶⁷ However, the study was conducted with a limited perspective in that it only examined joint billets and it was attempting to define requirements to minimize the learning curve for new officers and improve accuracy, quality and competency of job performance.⁶⁸ Viewed with this perspective, this study only partially satisfies the roles

based task analysis as articulated by Knowles. The most important step in developing any curriculum as well as to take full benefits from crafting purpose statements; one must first completely understand the need.⁶⁹ An over reliance on requirements from just one perspective will not support the creation of a balanced curriculum. The Joint Officer Project was a beginning, but suffered in utility because of its limited scope.

This leads to another policy level recommendation for the stakeholders examining the value of PME to the Joint Force. The OPMEP should mandate that the joint and individual services support the JPME curriculum development process by generating educational requirements based on a periodic bottom up analysis of billet roles. This method, labeled in this paper as a bottom up process, is needed to augment the top down approach when defining the purpose of educational objectives. This bottom up analysis should use a framework that defines roles that senior officers fulfill for the force, not by required attributes which are addressed in the top down process, but by the environmental demands/conditions made upon these individuals based on their assigned billets over a timeframe of five to seven years. The results of this analysis should encompass how all senior officers are spending their time, energy and expertise taking action. Since this is inherent to the main topic of this paper, it is suitable to examine and develop a potential framework for this study. However, operationalizing any framework to execute a roles based analysis will require further reflection and development.

Framing the Bottom Up Study

There are multiple frameworks available to use as a starting point when conducting a bottom up roles based study. One of the lenses that has been used to examine this topic range are behavioral, what senior leaders actually do. Another lens

has focused on an individual's preferences and focused on the best role for that individual in an organizational setting. Both lenses can be used to guide senior leaders in creating a high performing organization. Examples of the behavioral role frameworks are Minzberg's, Kets De Vries and Hart and Quinn's.⁷⁰ Examples of preferential role frameworks are Belbin, Keirse, and Van Oech.⁷¹ For illustrative purposes Table 1 lists the labels each framework uses.

Table 1. Labels from select Roles based frameworks

Minzburg	Kets de Vries	Hart & Quinn	Belbin	Keirsey	Von Oech
Figurehead	Strategist	Vision Setter	Plant	Rational	Explorer
Leader	Change-catalyst	Motivator	Resource Investigator	Artist	Artist
Liaison	Transactor	Analyzer	Co-ordinator	Idealist	Judge
Monitor	Builder	Task Master	Shaper	Guardian	Warrior
Disseminator	Innovator		Monitor Evaluator		
Spokesperson	Processor		Teamworker		
Entrepreneur	Coach		Implementer		
Disturbance Handler	Communicator		Completer Finisher		
Resource Allocator			Specialist		
Negotiator					

Frameworks from both lenses are relevant as senior leaders are assigned to billets either through a request by name or a vacancy fill process. The request by name process has the potential to match an individual, with their strengths and weaknesses, to a specific billet or environment. A vacancy fill process meets the needs of the force with any qualified individual without a conscious design for strengths or weaknesses. Because it is more common for the vacancy fill process, this paper focuses on behavioral role frameworks for the purpose of developing a bottom up requirements study.

Mintzberg's study was designed to be informational in nature to examine and categorize the various actions managers performed within an organization. He

concluded that managers who further develop these competencies or have access to systems to support them will increase in effectiveness.⁷² Kets de Vries' study was conducted a similar study over a larger sample, but conducted further research to identify situations where one particular role is more effective than another.⁷³

Hart and Quinn's study's was fundamentally different than the previous two. They looked to holistically integrate several areas of research into a more complete understanding of the executive role. They were particularly interested in applying the research that defined effective leaders as those who balanced seemingly paradoxical attributes and competencies.⁷⁴ Using a competing values framework of flexibility and predictability versus internal and external focus, they associated existing models of the executive's role and a general theory of social action to the resultant quadrants. The result of their application follows in Figure 1.⁷⁵

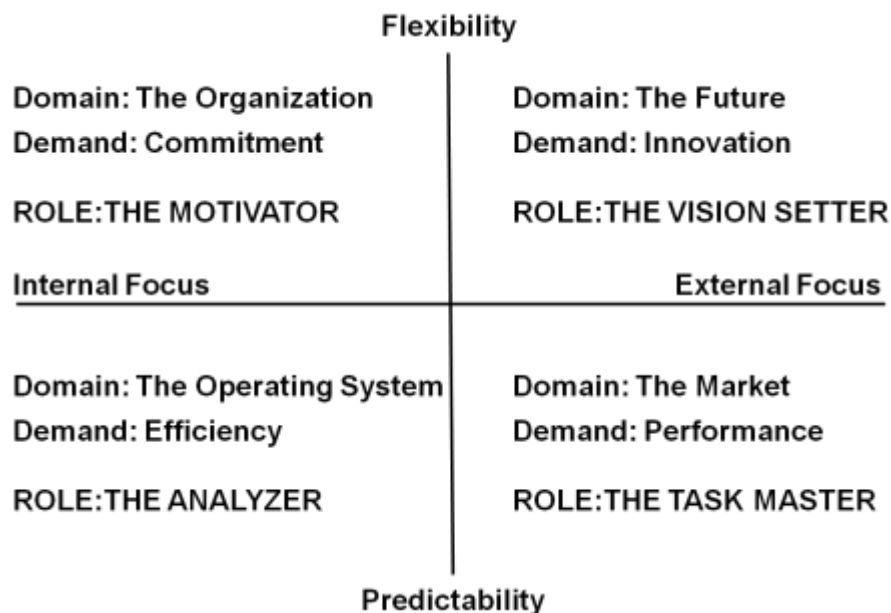


Figure 1. Executive Leadership – A model of competing roles

From the result of their analysis, Hart and Quinn propose four roles: 1) The Vision Setter role creates a sense of identity and mission - the definition and articulation

of the organization's basic purpose and direction. This role bases the future direction of the organization on a mix of disciplined analysis and intuition. 2) The Motivator role is fundamentally one of the management of meaning. It involves translating the vision of the organization into a core set of concepts and priorities which infuse and mobilize the entire organization. 3) The Analyzer role focuses on the efficient management of the internal operating system in the interest of serving existing product-markets. The role integrates conflicting functional perspectives in the interest of the total organization. 4) Task Master role is concerned about firm performance and results. In the broader sense, this translates into social performance – serving the full range of external stakeholders. This role is “hands on” with a strong focus of getting the job done today.⁷⁶

These four roles resonate within the military organization just as strongly as the companies Hart and Quinn analyzed. There are strategic leaders within the military fulfilling the Vision Setter role. As the vision is formed and articulated, senior officers on various staffs fulfill the role of a Motivator, translating the vision into meaningful implementation of change and action. This is the initial operationalizing of the strategic vision across the enterprise. In turn, there are senior officers fulfilling the role of Analyzer, ensuring that the enterprise is trained, manned and equipped. Finally, the Task Master role is fulfilled by those commanding.

To define roles fulfilled by senior military officers as opposed to executives, the bottom up study should identify unique variables which frame the most dyadic environmental pressures that drive the situations senior officers encounter.⁷⁷ It is important to identify variables which encompass the breadth of the senior officer's experience in their various billets. They need to have a joint definition that creates a

common understanding and makes comparison across the services relevant. A study with the correct variables will populate Hart and Quinn's competing framework model with billet densities associated with the military's version of Vision Setter, Motivator, Analyzer and Task Master.

It is not within the scope of this paper to speculate about the results of this bottom up study, but one can expect the findings to identify the billet density across the Joint Force of various roles senior officers fulfill. This population and their roles then provide additional focus to stakeholders as they craft educational objectives with purpose statements. If this study shows significantly different populations with large variances in educational requirements, then the PME system should respond accordingly to meet this secondary population's requirement. This could generate a more specific electives program, embedded courses separate from the core course or possibly re-aligning a specific top level school to meet this Joint Force requirement. Regardless of the process that identifies the requirements for purpose statements, mandating more specific educational objectives in the OPMEP will support the needs of the students, the faculty, school's administration and leadership.

Conclusion

It is appropriate to revisit the question posited earlier in the paper concerning the source of continual dissatisfaction surrounding the PME system. Perhaps the right question is one of committal. The humanist's are correct, there is good in knowledge for knowledge's sake. However, the behaviorists are also correct because translating knowledge into action is also a viable perspective. The current PME system is affected at every level by the unguided application of and the competition between these two schools of thought. Now is the time for the stakeholders within the system to gain a

holistic understanding of the Joint Force requirements and purposefully resolve this through a commitment to using these schools of thought on purpose. Towards that end, PME leaders should craft an additional common educational standard for JPME that mandates the use of purpose statements across all levels of the curriculum hierarchy. This effort should be augmented with an additional update mechanism initiated under the PME review process and reflected in tasks to the services and Joint Staff. This commitment will create a coherent educational experience for the students and environment for the faculty while supporting the needs of the Joint Force. Perhaps Eli Root, the founder of the Army's War College, gave us his perspective when he stated an educational objective, "To study and confer on the great problems of national defense, or military science, and of responsible command" and a purpose, "Not to promote war, but to preserve peace by intelligent and adequate preparation to repel aggression."⁷⁸ It takes men and women of action to preserve the peace.

Endnotes

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¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 11,21.

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²⁶ Ibid., 4.

²⁷ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *OPMEP*, E-E-1.

²⁸ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *OPMEP*, C-3.

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⁷⁷ Examples of variables that frame the dichotomous nature of senior military officer roles for the Joint Force. 1) What kind of problem sets does the billet face? Are they wicked (ill-structured) or structurally complex? 2) What kind of oversight is present for the billet? Is it up to history will judge whether or congressional? Or is the billet subject to compliance checklists vis-a-vie the Inspector General? 3) What is the knowledge environment in which the billet operates? Is it a potential or complete boundary condition full of unknowable unknowns? Or is it knowable with well defined parameters and explicit roles for self, organization and stakeholders? 4) How does the billet influence stakeholders to achieve the outcome? Is it highly dependent on alignments of interests and community will? Is achievement subject to external organizations deciding if you are going to lead them? Or does the billet have bureaucratic control over the stakeholders? 5) What is the risk associated with the role of the billet? Is it always present and institutional? Is it transferred across large organizations over a long period of time? Or Is it strictly personal in terms of choosing to comply or not to comply.

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