HUMAN RESOURCES
ADVANCED / SENIOR LEADERS
COURSE
42A

FACILITATED ARTICLE #1

Theater Gateway Operations

January 2013

Reprinted with permission from 1775 Summer 2010
Facilitating the Discussion

Facilitators can orchestrate discussions using the following questions to help choreograph group discussion/class participation. The sequence of the questions builds logically from a taxonomy point of view, i.e., a lower level of learning/thinking to a higher level of learning/thinking, by moving from comprehension of the material to a synthetic or evaluative discussion of the material. Facilitators should ask open-ended questions and allow the students to respond. Facilitators should also ask questions that cause students to interact. A facilitator’s goal should be ensuring that students do not participate in synthetic or evaluative discussion until confirming that the basic concepts and key points of the article are clarified and fully understood. Don’t forget to be patient after posing a question and use silence to your advantage. Lastly, remember it’s the facilitator’s job to include everyone in the discussion. Adapted from The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools, Richard Paul and Linda Elder, Foundation of Critical Thinking, 2001.

1. The main purpose of this article is _______________________________________.
   (State as clearly as possible the author’s purpose for writing the article.)

2. The Key question that the author is addressing is _____________________________.
   (Figure out the key question in the mind of the author when s/he wrote the article.)

3. The most important information in this article is ________________________________.
   (Figure out the facts, experiences, data the author is using to support his/her conclusions.)

4. The main inferences/conclusions in this article are _____________________________.
   (Identify the key conclusions the author comes to and presents in the article.)

5. The key concept(s) we need to understand in this articles is (are) _______________.
   By these concepts the author means _______________________________________.
   (Figure out the most important ideas you would have to understand in order to understand
   the author’s line of reasoning.)

6. The main assumptions(s) underlying the author’s thinking is (are) _______________.
   (Figure out what the author is taking for granted [that might be questioned].)

7. a) If we take this line of reasoning seriously, the implications are ___________________.
   (What consequences are likely to follow if people take the author’s line of reasoning
   seriously?)

   b) If we fail to take this line of reasoning seriously, the implications are_______________.
   (What consequences are likely to follow if people ignore the author’s reasoning?)

8. The main point(s) of view presented in this article is (are)___________________________.
   (What is the author looking at, and how is s/he seeing it?)

9. Last and certainly not least, what’s the point of reading this article and how can it be applied
   to our profession and for improving critical thinking?
Overview. Under the leadership of AG officers, the Theater Gateway at Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait is currently tasked with receiving, accounting for, billeting, manifesting, and facilitating follow on movement of individual military and civilian personnel entering and exiting Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan in support of OEF and OND. This task is a 24/7 operation and accomplished by Soldiers and Airmen from active, reserve and guard components consisting of teams from more than 25 different UICs. The Theater Gateway is augmented with Air Force-DynCorp, Navy Customs, Movement Control Battalion, Kuwait Ministry of the Interior, SATO Travel and Theater LNO elements for additional support. These support elements do not fall under Theater Gateway control but are essential partners in accomplishing the daily mission. On average, this multi-faceted team facilitates the movement of over 1,100 passengers in and out of theater daily.

Operations. Three divisions within the Theater Gateway are critical to the movement of personnel. The first division is the Combined Operations and Information Center (COIC) and it is comprised of four distinct sections and is responsible for coordinating ground movement, monitoring air and ground movement, and data collection.

Within the COIC, The Intra-Theater section tracks and monitors all military flights heading into the theater of operations and arriving at Theater Gateway. It also coordinates with the Air Mobility Division (AMD) to determine seat allocations for R&R passengers and Space-R passengers heading to theater. This information is provided to Inbound Operations for processing.

The COIC Inter-Theater section monitors and tracks contracted R&R, CRC and rotator flights departing to or arriving from the states. This information is provided to Inbound and Outbound Operations for processing.

The COIC Movement Control Cell is responsible for coordinating ground transportation to and from flight line. And the COIC Data Integration section collects passenger arrival and departure data from both Inbound and Outbound Operations, and converts the data into usable information for internal and external agencies analysis and future planning. Overall, the COIC is a fluid environment and operators require critical thinking skills and the ability to make sound decisions on the spot that impact operations.

Inbound Operations Platoon. The Inbound Operations Platoon is comprised of two distinct teams and responsible for welcoming all passengers to Kuwait, maintaining accountability, and manifesting personnel for deployment into theater. The Arrivals Team, similar to the check-in counter at an airport, accounts for every passenger that arrives at the Theater Gateway. This is accomplished by quickly and accurately scanning CAC cards. Once complete, the team disseminates guidance to all passengers to facilitate follow-on travel. The Departures Team works to return R&R passengers from leave back into theater. The team maintains daily accountability of each passenger and manifests on average 600 passengers a day on 15 different flights servicing all the major hubs in theater. Intra-theater movement can be complex and confusing due to frequent schedule changes in military flights.

Outbound Operations Platoon. The Outbound Operations Platoon is responsible for processing passengers departing to the states, primarily R&R passengers. On average, the Platoon briefs and manifests 330-570 passengers daily. The Platoon works alongside Navy Customs, SATO Travel, and the Movement Control Team to ensure all passengers are transported to the Aerial Port of Debarkation in a timely and efficient manner while following regulatory requirements and accurately accounting for each individual. The synergism shared among these agencies greatly enhances outbound operations and ensures a fluid process.

Challenges. Integration & Training. Integrating teams from 25 different UICs including Active, Guard, Reserve, Air Force and Air Force reserve is a constant challenge. Twenty-five teams are on different rotation cycles resulting in approximately 50% turn-over of Gateway personnel every 4-6 months. Even within the teams, there are different training standards which must inevitably be standardized upon arrival at the Gateway. Customer service training would be the most value added training requirement, as Soldiers and Airmen are not necessarily trained in the customer service business, but is the heart and soul of an efficient Gateway operation. The AG
schoolhouse cannot prepare Soldiers for the daily onslaught of challenges brought on by tired, frustrated passengers due to flight cancellations, skewed projections provided from theater, faulty equipment, limited resources and sandstorms. Treating all people with dignity and respect has paid great dividends.

*Expectation Management.* Managing the expectations of the leadership in theater as well as each individual passing through the Gateway is a critical element for success. Commanders in theater must be able to accurately manage their fighting force, taking into account R&R absences at a rate of not more than 10% at any given time. The 3rd HRSC RSO team analyzed surveys collected at the Gateway that presented an average of time spent in Kuwait at 30 hours. Some of the remote locations in theater cause folks several days of travel to get to Kuwait, but once here they are quickly loaded into the cue and moved out expeditiously.

*Task Organization.* Modularity in the AG Corps has provided flexibility and multi-function HR teams, but deploying the teams away from their organic unit structure diminishes the HR Commander’s ability to develop junior Soldiers and officers. In comments recently released in an Army Times interview, Army Chief of Staff General Dempsey said modularity gives a measure of versatility, “but there are leader development issues, human dimension issues that accrue,” adding that it “injects a degree of friction into the relationship.” Likewise, the HR community needs a structure that will grow HR leaders with HR experience, who can train and mentor junior Soldiers for periods beyond the twelve month deployments where we patch teams together.

*Closing.* The Theater Gateway is a demanding but rewarding mission. The Theater Gateway team succeeds by recognizing the challenges faced by our customers and the complexity of their journey in and out of theater. Our team, led by the 52nd Theater Gateway, has worked hard to establish a customer centric focus, improve processes, and most of all ensure passengers are treated with dignity and respect. It is an honor to provide HR support to the theater of operations and contribute to the health and welfare of the force on a daily basis.

**Defend and Serve!**

---

The Kuwait Theater Gateway Team consists of (left to right): 1LT Andrene Alexander, MAJ Mickey Turner, LTC Maureen Bessingpas, 1LT Robert Lindsey, and 1LT Lauryn Wierda