HUMAN RESOURCES
ADVANCED / SENIOR LEADERS
COURSE
42A

FACILITATED ARTICLE #4

HR NCO Relevant Career Choices

January 2013

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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?
The Human Resources (HR) NCO Corps is challenged to meet the demands of the rapidly changing mission requirements initiated by procedural and structural changes such as Personnel Services Delivery Redesign (PSDR) and theater Human Resources Sustainment Center operations. Therefore, the HR community must select the brightest and most motivated NCOs who are multi-functional, flexible, adaptive, and able to meet these demands, rewarding the organizations for which they serve with stellar customer service.

Core competencies are what an organization does best (technical expertise, subject matter expert) in providing the most benefit to its customers (Commanders and Soldiers). HR leaders must train, lead, and mentor Soldiers to encompass a vast depth of skills pertinent to performing Brigade/Battalion S1 functions (awards, evaluations, finance, manifests, Deployed Theater Accounting System, eMILPO, personnel actions, etc.) and other assignments such as G1 and HRSC functions, which directly correlate with the HR core competencies of Postal Operations, Casualty Operations, Personnel Accountability and Strength Reporting, Personnel Readiness Management, Personnel Information Management, R5 operations (rest and recuperation, reception, replacement, return to duty, redeployment), Essential Personnel Services, HR Planning and Staff Operations, and Morale Welfare Recreation activities. These functions are relevant skills which all HR professionals must learn, embrace, and employ to successfully support the organizational commanders in both garrison and a deployed theater. Soldiers who are successful in HR core competency assignments are the most relevant choice to promote and will translate to an advantage over their contemporaries deficient in this experience.

The Adjutant General (AG) School Proponent Office has the responsibility of leader development (Officer, Warrant officer, Enlisted) and therefore publishes the Professional Development Model (PDM)/career map for enlisted (focal point of this article) Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) 42A, Human Resources Specialist, and MOS 42F, Human Resource Information System Management Specialist, to assist in improving the quality of HR NCOs. The career map is a highly recommended tool to assist leaders in managing the careers of their Soldiers. A caring leader concerned with the professional growth of their subordinates will access the career.
The career map enlisted skill levels provide a variety of assignments listed in The Army Authorization Document System and are separated between Operating Force (Modified Table of Organization and Equipment [MTOE]) and Generating Force (Table of Distribution and Allowances [TDA], Institution). The objective is to list several pertinent job positions prioritized by relevancy, although positional precedence is not always feasible with some positions being equivalent. A balance between Operating Force (priority) and Generating Force assignments throughout a Soldier’s career is the recommended formula for creating the multi-faceted HR NCO capable of performing and leading the tasks required for present and future transformational initiatives (Figure 1).

A plethora of assignments between the Operating and Generating force also better prepares leaders to perform strategic level assignments at the Sergeant Major (SGM) and Command Sergeant Major (CSM) level. Possessing a vast depth and variety of HR experience affords these senior NCOs the ability to make unbiased enlisted recommendations, including promotion boards, while preserving the integrity of the Commander’s intent.

Senior NCO leaders must thwart the conceptual notion to promote only Soldiers who mirror their personal careers. Other Soldiers with differing backgrounds may also be just as germane and very capable of performing the skills at the next level of responsibility. The thought process must articulate the ability to support the HR mission in tomorrow’s Army (forecasting requirements), not today’s. For example, a legacy MOS 42L, Administrative Assistant, does not possess the necessary skills required to support the current HR core competencies. Therefore they must first acquire and successfully demonstrate these skills prior to selection to the next skill level of responsibility.

The most relevant occupational choice for all skill levels is the basic MOS requirements of Human Resources Specialist (PVT – SGT), Human Resources SGT (SSG), Senior Human Resources SGT (SFC), and Chief Human Resources SGT (MSG – SGM). It is imperative for all HR enlisted members to first establish and demonstrate the necessary technical skills required to perform the aforementioned MOS duties (minimum 12 months; 24 months at present grade preferred) prior to performing special assignments such as Recruiter, Inspector General, Equal Opportunity, Inspector General or Drill Sergeant as these assignments do not correspond to HR core competencies. Future initiatives to rotate CSMs back to HR MOS duties after a three year tour deems the thought to require initial service in a Chief Human Resources SGT position at the SGM level for at least 12 months prior to CSM eligibility. This will ensure the CSM has the requisite skills to perform the MOS technical tasks after their leadership tour.

Senior NCO leaders must ensure all Soldiers and junior NCO leaders are properly trained in HR MOS proficiency prior to recommending the candidate for promotion. Board members of DA centralized promotion boards should only promote candidates who have established a strong foundation of HR MOS proficiency and other qualifications established in the promotion proponent packets. Soldiers who are most competitive in the contemporary Army will have demonstrated a vast knowledge of experience in a multitude of assignments. Operational experience acquired in combat is a very strong indicator of promotion potential when the tour of duty is performed successfully in an exemplary manner. Are Soldiers who have not served in Global War On Terrorism (GWOT) operations at a disadvantage? GWOT is approaching the eighth year (40% of a 20 year career); therefore, the AG Proponent centralized promotion board packets will no longer address Soldiers who have not participated.

Leaders must coordinate with the Human Resource Command (HRC) Soldier Support Branch to ensure HR Soldiers are afforded the proper mix of assignments, which will better prepare the AG Corps to achieve mission objectives as well as prepare their Soldiers for career success. The dominate feature in a Soldier’s career should be stellar HR MOS specific service in a variety of assignments. Although relevant and career enhancing after establishing HR MOS proficiency, serving tours in special assignments outside the MOS (Drill Sergeant, Recruiter, Inspector General, Equal Opportunity) for period longer than three years before returning to HR MOS duty will prove disadvantageous because of the potential loss of technical proficiency. However, some special assignments such as Special Mission Units (SMU), Active Component/Reserve Component (AC/RC), and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) Instructor will afford leaders the opportunity to sustain technical proficiency while simultaneously performing the special assignment. However, be advised it is never a good career choice to have consecutive Generating Force assignments for PVT – MSG. The exceptions are 1SG through CSM, with all CSM positions being TDA, and the skew of predominately TDA assignments at 1SG and SGM.

Due to limited positions in inventory, a successful 1SG tour for MOS 42A is a minimum of 12 months instead of the traditional
24 months. A MSG serving a tour as the Chief Human Resources SGT in a Brigade Combat Team (BCT) or equivalent will be equally competitive as the 1SG tour. Another significant recipe for success, although very limited, is to seek opportunities to serve successfully at the next higher rank while in present grade.

There is an abundant supply of quality HR NCOs in the MOS 42A/F inventory competing for limited spaces throughout the enlisted ranks. The FY 09 authorizations for the Active Component delineates a progression pyramid with 4,596 of 12,211 (37.64%) PVT - SPC at the base and declines to 139 of 12,211 (1.14%) SGM towards the top of the pyramid. This clearly indicates a model which restricts career progression for the entire inventory of Skill Level One Soldiers to the rank of SGM (fig. 2). Therefore, preparation of the very best candidates must start now to fulfill the requirements of SGM twenty years in the future. MOS 42A background CSM positions are restricted primarily to the battalion level (Reception Battalions) with the AG School Regimental CSM position (COL billet) being the exception. Nominative CSM positions are MOS background immaterial and are dependent upon the Commanding General's requirements. Although some are serving in Garrison and other non-traditional CSM assignments, there is no guarantee this practice will continue in the future. There are currently initiatives in progress to procure more MOS 42A specific Garrison CSM and Special Troops Battalion (STB) CSM positions. If successfully acquired, the MOS 42A population could potentially gain upwards of 100 plus CSM authorizations.

There are several recipes for success; however, some may satisfy the palate of centralized board members and the proponent more so than others. Soldiers who follow the recommendations prescribed in this article, promotion board proponent packets, PDM/career maps, centralized board review and analysis, and advice administered by caring supervisors will greatly increase their changes to serve admirably in all grades of the MOS 42A enlisted rank structure.