HUMAN RESOURCES ADVANCED / SENIOR LEADERS COURSE 42A

FACILITATED ARTICLE #6

Lesson Learned from the 310th HRSC Deployment

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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?
Lessons Learned from the 310th Human Resources Sustainment Center (HRSC) Deployment

By CW5 Raymond M. Lutz, 310th HRSC

The 310th HRSC was the first Army Reserve HRSC to deploy. Arriving at Fort Sill, Oklahoma for mobilization station training and validation on 18 July 2009, the 310th HRSC departed Fort Sill for Kuwait on 18 August. The 310th HRSC remained in theater until 8 July 2010 when it redeployed to Fort Dix, NJ for demobilization. The mission ended with arrival at home station at Fort Jackson, SC on 14 July 2010.

As one of only five HRSC organizations in the Army inventory and one of only two in the Army Reserve (none are in the National Guard), an in-depth look at their ability to perform their CMETL and DMETL tasks is appropriate. As the Army continues to grow and learn, it is necessary to maintain doctrinal currency and relevancy, and it is critical that an effective, mission-focused, standards-based assessment of the HRSC to perform its wartime mission be presented.

Background. A key component of Army HR Transformation included Personnel Services Delivery Redesign (PSDR). PSDR migrated the core of HR support for essential personnel services to professionalized Brigade and Battalion S1 Sections (e.g. Bde S1 will be an AG officer vice an Infantry officer in an infantry BCT). Command and control of all HR organizations (referred to as Standard Requirements Code (SRC) 12) is METT-TC driven and now resides primarily within theater-level sustainment organizations (SRC 63 series organizations). HR leaders provide C2 of SRC 12 organizations at Company level and below. At higher levels, HR organizations are aligned under sustainment units with a HRSC being allocated to a Theater Sustainment Command (TSC) as a special staff element.

While the 8th and 14th HRSCs (Active Component (AC)) were the first two HRSCs to deploy under the ongoing implementation of PSDR between 2007-2009, the 310th HRSC was the first USAR HRSC to deploy under post-PSDR completion. While PSDR is proving to be a sound concept, some HR practitioners believe that the PSDR initiative combined with the Army’s modular redesign, selective rebalancing, stabilizing, and cyclical readiness initiatives are all prudent actions that combined should provide the Army with additional deployable units and also eventually bring increased stability to Soldiers and their families. Most of the ideas that underpinned the creation of an HRSC as a TSC staff element were once new and untested concepts, but in this third HRSC deployment, the 310th HRSC continued to validate the organizational design.

This included validating key functional areas where operational constraints needed to be applied in order for the HRSC to stay within original design parameters as well as provide the HRSC the capability to provide theater-wide technical guidance and training assistance for personnel accountability (PA), casualty and postal functions performed by Theater Gateway Personnel Accountability Teams, Military Mail Terminal Teams, HR companies / platoons, and the Human Resources Operations Branch organizations within the Expeditionary Sustainment Command and Sustainment Brigade structures.

In its simplest terms, the HRSC structure, manning and equipping was developed to provide an HRSC the minimum mission essential capabilities necessary to operate across a broad spectrum of conflict in peacetime, crisis and war; to perform effectively throughout the full range of military operations; and perform successfully at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war. How well the 310th HRSC fit those parameters follows.

Some challenges exist between AC and USAR HRSC deployments that directly impacted the 310th HRSC’s capability to readily and, when necessary, rapidly deploy as an expeditionary capable force in direct support of operating forces in a theater of operations. In addition to the differences between AC and USAR capabilities based on that status alone, the mission, location, dependencies, and authorities of a USAR HRSC also highlight some noteworthy execution-critical limitations.

Based on pre-mobilization and post-mobilization employment experience, although some challenges limited the capability of the 310th HRSC to meet their intended objectives immediately, none were execution critical and did not prevent the HRSC from rapidly achieving a high state of operational readiness. Some of the more challenging lessons learned on these execution critical limitations follow:

310th HRSC Human Resources Assistance Team (HRAT) staff assistance visit with the 90th Sustainment Brigade (SB) in Iraq 2009. Far left – MAJ Don Elliott, HRAT OIC and CW5 Ray Lutz, HR Technical Advisor, along with members of the 90th SB S-1 Section.
Integration. The HRSC was never fully integrated within the 1st TSC. Trying to accomplish the USAR HRSC mission as OPCON to the 1st TSC while sharing the same mission with an assigned AC HRSC with an enduring theater mission was initially challenging. Eventually, roles were determined and an effective HRSC and 1st TSC battle-rhythm was developed, which highlights the fact that in today’s force projection Army, planning and executing major operations to support a theater campaign remain formidable tasks and HRSC leaders must develop an on-going deployment "expeditionary mindset" with emphasis on flexibility to be successful.

Manning. Congress passed the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense (DoD) Reorganization Act of 1986 (GNA) which directed development of joint doctrine for the integration of air, land and sea forces under a Joint Forces Commander. The strategic and operational focus of GNA also placed heavy emphasis on joint officer training, education and service. To that extent, DoD has utilized a robust system of schools, joint headquarters billets and assignment to combatant command staffs in an effort to better integrate the services. However, GNA does not address a core issue of joint integration, which is Manning. To maximize the full benefits of joint synergy, joint integration must start before joint employment in the battle space; it must start at the tactical level with joint Manning. The same emphasis on training, education and Manning should be applied to the HRSC, particularly since it is a theater-level asset. There is precious little time for HRSC professionals to “learn the integration ropes” in theater; thus placing the right Soldier in the right slot with the right skill set is an execution critical task.

OPCON and TACON. At the Army level and, more specifically, at the TSC level, integration of the myriad OPCON and TACON units and elements is exacerbated by the vast array of multi-compo unit assignments, individual augmentee assignments, and the challenge of synchronizing force flow latest arrival dates (LAD) with boots on ground (BOG) dates among the services. While dictating rigid line and staff task organizations would be as detrimental as allowing task organizations without boundaries, it is here that a clear “ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other” is called for; particularly if the mission of any HR element is to “maximize operational effectiveness of the total force by anticipating, manning, and sustaining military operations across the full spectrum of conflict. HR support operations accomplishes this by building, generating, and sustaining the force providing combatant commanders the required forces for missions and supporting leaders and Soldiers at all levels.” (FM 1-0, paragraph 1-1).

While the above summarizes the answer to “how well did the HRSC concept work,” the following are specific recommendations for improving the use of an HRSC.

Recommend positioning the HRSC Plans and Operations Division staff (13 personnel) with the Distribution Management Center (DMC) to enhance the management of current HR operational requirements and planning for both long and short range HR and related sustainment operations. As noted in FM 3-0, paragraph F-2, “Establishing clear command and support relationships is fundamental to organizing for any operation. These relationships establish clear responsibilities and authorities between subordinate and supporting units.”

This close working relationship would not only enhance the operational adaptability of the TSC, but would also set the conditions to integrate assets, develop the situation through combined and synchronized action, and facilitate applying the rapid decision making and synchronization process required when operating under conditions of uncertainty and complexity. This would also provide a level of stability, flexibility, control, and discipline to the HRSC as well as a measured degree of freedom and autonomy during periods of hasty as well as deliberate operations conducted by theater forces. The supporting doctrinal reference for this recommendation follows.

FM 1-0, paragraph 2-56 states: “The HRSC is a multifunctional, modular organization (staff element) assigned to a TSC that integrates and executes PA, casualty, and postal functions throughout the theater and as defined by the policies and priorities established by the ASCC G-1/AG. The HRSC provides planning and operations technical support to the TSC DMC. The HRSC’s flexible, modular, and scalable design increases the director’s ability to recommend HR support requirements based upon the number of units and Soldiers supported and METT-TC.”

Recommend an employment FRAGO be issued to clearly define how the HRSC will be utilized, where it will operate, its relationship to higher, subordinate, internal, and external organizations and the type of support the HRSC will receive. The effective use of a staff element in any environment, but particularly at the theater staff level, requires an unprecedented unity of effort in the direction and operation of the complex, interconnected, and increasingly global operational environment a TSC operates within. It also requires close coordination among the myriad collection of 175+ OPCON and TACON units and the departments, agencies, non-governmental organizations and nations in the operational battlespace. In addition to the clear OPCON relationship with the TSC, a clear employment FRAGO (if issued) would eliminate vague or ambiguous roles, responsibilities, or capability expectations.

This article is intended to spur thought for the holistic improvement of HRSC employment. The HRSC practitioner must be capable of executing the human dimension from humanitarian assistance to major combat. The HRSC should be refined and updated as HRSC lessons learned are continuously studied.