HUMAN RESOURCES
ADVANCED / SENIOR LEADERS COURSE
42A

FACILITATED ARTICLE #8

In Front - A Fitter Army With Your Help

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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 31 students of the Master Fitness Trainer pilot program at Fort Jackson, S.C., were told at their graduation Sept. 21 that they would “play a pivotal role in influencing Soldier fitness and health throughout their lifespace.”

“We’re looking for great outcomes and we’re going to have a fitter Army with your help,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Donna Brock, senior enlisted adviser to the Army surgeon general.

Brock, a Master Fitness Trainer herself before the program was discontinued in 2001, defined “lifespace” as the amount of time Soldiers are not in contact with a healthcare provider, which is the majority of the time. “If you see a doctor twice a year for 20 minutes a visit, the rest of the year you’re on your own,” she said. “Master Fitness Trainers will decrease the time Soldiers are on their own by providing them with proper physical fitness training, advice on nutrition and sleep management and overall wellness.”

The goal of the program is to train about 4,000 MFT Soldiers over the next two years and about 2,000 per year thereafter, according to Maj. David Feltwell, an MFT instructor. He said the trainers will first advise battalion commanders, and as their numbers grow, they will fan out to the company level. “The benefits Master Fitness Trainers can bring to their units is enormous,” Feltwell said. “[They] will consult with their commanders, sergeants major and first sergeants to plan training programs customized to the needs of their unit and mission.”

Brock said the month-long MFT program was brought back because it will increase unit readiness and it dovetails with “the Army’s strategic imperative: ‘prevent, shape, win.’” She said the trainers will consult and advise their commanders on creating a sound physical fitness program, tailored to mission outcomes, that will “increase stamina, resilience and endurance, as well as reduce injuries.”

Sgt. 1st Class Fliston Arthur and Staff Sgt. Jamie Wall get some hands-on training with skeleton models Sept. 21 during the Master Fitness Trainer pilot at Fort Jackson, S.C. PHOTO BY DAVID VERGUN
The medical community will be a huge supporter of the MFT program, said Brock, herself a 26-year medic.

“Master Fitness Trainers will consult with health care providers, nutritionists and dieticians on an ongoing basis and will closely monitor their Soldiers, who may need medical advice beyond their capabilities.”

“Master Fitness Trainers know what to look for to prevent injuries as well as correct body positioning during exercises, posture, balance, the right number of repetitions,” said Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Bentley, an MFT instructor. He predicted a noticeable increase in physical fitness test scores as a byproduct of the program.

“The purpose of the program is not to raise physical fitness scores,” Feltwell said.

“But higher scores will be one of the expected outcomes. And we predict that with fewer injuries, more Soldiers will be able to take the [Army Physical Fitness Test], raising individual and unit average scores.”

During their month of training at Fort Jackson, MFT students studied physiology, nutrition and kinesiology; learned hundreds of exercises; and even studied behavioral psychology and how it all relates to measurable fitness outcomes, Feltwell said.

Bentley said though there may be skeptics, he believes the program really works.

“My own run time has improved since being here (in training) and my abs are back,” said Bentley, who is 45 years old. “The [Army Physical Readiness Training] program has gotten me back to the shape I want to be in.”

“There are two questions people have been asking me about the program,” said MFT graduate Sgt. Rachel Cunningham. “What have you learned? And ‘Do you really believe in it?’ I really believe in it, and I believe the instructors do. You’ve got to really believe in it to sell it to your command. I have the knowledge now to back the program 100 percent.”

“Reading and understanding the training circular on your own can be difficult,” said MFT graduate Staff Sgt. Samad Green, referring to TC 3-22.20, Army Physical Readiness Training, the physical fitness guide used by Soldiers and the program.

“The exercise doctrine takes away the guesswork. I believe I can help make it more understandable when I get to a [Forces Command] unit.”

Green said he’s seen plenty of examples where proper training could have helped reduce injuries.

“I’ve been to units where they don’t understand how the human body works; where they just make stuff up, leading to overtraining and Soldiers who get hurt,” Green said.

“PRT is linked to warrior tasks and battle drills,” said MFT instructor Sgt. 1st Class Melissa Solomon. “Soldiers will perform their missions better with proper training. I believe Master Fitness Trainers will be able to go out and articulate this to their commanders and Soldiers and sell the program.”

Brock imparted final words of advice to the graduates.

“Your leaders will look to you for expertise,” she said. “You’ll have successes and perhaps some failures too. But if you work hard and strive to take care of your Soldiers, they will have higher stamina, resilience and endurance.

“You’re not alone in this endeavor. Your leaders want this. Your Soldiers need this.”

VERBATIM

“To march long distances in fighting load through rugged country and to fight effectively upon arriving at the area of combat; to drive fast-moving tanks and motor vehicles over rough terrain; to assault; to run and crawl for long distances; to jump in and out of craters and trenches; and to jump over obstacles; to lift and carry heavy objects; to keep going for many hours without sleep or rest — all these activities of warfare and many others require superb physical conditioning.”

— TRAINING CIRCULAR 3-22.20, Army Physical Readiness Training, Chapter 1

Army designing tastier meats for field rations

The Army is teaming up with industry to develop a tastier, healthier meat product that uses an innovative dehydrating process. The meat is ground, then dehydrated, or cured, in a “continuous osmotic dehydration” process that is less expensive than producing beef jerky and that has more health benefits. The U.S. Army Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center, along with the Department of Defense Combat Feeding Directorate, is working with a commercial industry partner to develop the product. Tom Yang, a senior food scientist at the Combat Feeding Directorate, said the meat “tastes very good and will be available in a variety of flavors.”

Patients advised about ban on meds-by-mail

A German law that prohibits importing medications into the country is changing the way the TRICARE mail-order pharmacy does business, said a TRICARE Management Activity official today. TRICARE officials said the change is expected to take effect Jan. 1. On that date, the U.S. Postal Service must stop delivery to FPO and APO addresses of imported pharmaceuticals and other prohibited items into Germany and the European Union. The German government passed the importation ruling in 2006, but it is just now enforcing the legal restrictions that are expected to affect more than 2,000 prescriptions.

Chemical battalion returns to 2ID in Korea

The Army announced Sept. 4 the relocation of the 23rd Chemical Battalion from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., to Camp Stanley in Uijeongbu, South Korea. The battalion was previously stationed in South Korea, but transitioned to the U.S.