Briefing at Camp Rhino, southern Afghanistan.

Fleet Combat Camera Group, Pacific (Johnny Rivera)

Creating a New Path for Joint Education

By ROBERT M. ANTIS *and* CLAUDIA H. CLARK

Increasing challenges are raising the operations tempo for military organizations and for personnel deployment, complicating training and education. An important aspect of readiness is the ability to plan and execute new missions amidst the turmoil. Combatant commanders and their staffs must deal with humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, enforcement of no fly zones, noncombatant evacuations, and new types of war against terrorism. Thus Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations,* states, "training and education programs focusing on joint, multinational, and interagency operations should be developed and implemented." It is imperative that joint education be expanded to provide requisite skills to all personnel operating in this complex environment.

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Not a Deviation

General Henry Shelton, USA, said, "Education and leader development are vital . . . to fulfill both short-term needs and long-term requirements. Education must be thought of not as a deviation from a soldier's duty, but a central and continuing focus."[1] Joint professional military education (JPME) must ensure that officers supporting combatant commanders can address the full range of tasks. "All service and joint educational systems also serve another important role by helping to meet current readiness requirements."

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55th Signal Company (Christina Ann Bennett)

Checking identification near Strpce, Kosovo.

This educational preparation contributes substantively to the readiness of the CINC for daily mission execution.

While readiness is crucial in itself, education also enables the military to manage its transformation, which is more than making incremental improvements to current capabilities. Rather, added Shelton, "transformation is first and foremost an intellectual exercise, requiring the brightest minds actively engaged in taking our Armed Forces to new and higher levels of effectiveness. Therefore, the road to transformation begins with a strong program of education and leader development."

the Skelton Panel prescribed small seminars, focusing on active versus passive learning

The environment for joint education already contained in law and regulation and programs in place can address the above concerns. Solid curriculum and assessment/evaluation in use in JPME are a starting point. Proposed here is confirmation of the efforts to date and a greater role for the current framework in expanding the system. This can assist the joint force commander with the variety of missions he faces.

First, it is necessary to examine those forces that have defined JPME needs. Congress gave specific requirements for joint education with the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986. How they should be implemented was detailed for the Chairman in the House Report of the Panel on Military Education of the 100th Congress, known as the Skelton Panel Report. The focus of all joint curricula is to be on combatant command and three-star joint task force (JTF) contingency levels. The report proposed that the intermediate service colleges be identified as Phase I of JPME and teach joint education from a service perspective. Phase II would build on Phase I as presented by the service schools and concentrate on the integrated deployment and employment of multi-service forces. The Phase II course was directed to concentrate on joint doctrine, use case studies in developed and undeveloped contingency theaters, and encourage joint perspectives while increasing understanding of service cultures. The proposal to establish specific phases was implemented in the FY90 National Defense Authorization Act.

Most of the structure introduced in the Goldwater-Nichols Act and subsequent legislation has remained in law. In addition to defining what are considered joint matters in education, Title X of the U.S. Code also highlights rigorous standards, which is as much a readiness as an educational issue. Just as rigorous training ensures that personnel are prepared for their duties, rigorous educational standards ensure that their leaders are too.

Guided by the needs of the combatant commanders and congressional mandates, the joint education vision was refined through the officer professional military education policy (OPMEP). Issued as an instruction by the Chairman (CJCSI 1800.01A), the policy provides the primary guidance for all joint instruction from pre-commissioning to the Capstone Course. It mandates the fundamental learning objectives for institutions, focusing their joint educational efforts. However, other sources of input need attention as well. In conjunction with OPMEP, the Chairman routinely publishes special areas of emphasis (SAEs). Topics such as peace operations, asymmetric warfare, and consequence management, selected well before September 11, highlight the importance of this tool in maintaining relevance. These sources are complemented by congressional guidance, which not only specified topics, but also addressed the learning environment and the best teaching techniques. The Skelton Panel, for example, prescribed small seminars, focusing on active versus passive learning.

Thus ample guidance exists regarding what should be included in joint education on various levels. However, the central issue addressed by Shelton and others is the need for a greater availability of joint education as well as more levels of detail. Current initiatives might address these difficulties. The question is whether we will maximize time, money, and personnel to provide the most appropriate education to each servicemember at the right time.

A Spectrum of Joint Education

This article proposes integrating current joint education with new capabilities. Only by linking existing resources to innovative initiatives can

DOD meet this wide-ranging shortfall. The JPME Phase II institution of the National Defense University, Joint Forces Staff College (JFSC), must serve as the focal point. As the school Congress chartered to address joint specialty officer needs, its success is unquestioned. As the school that educates the largest portion of staff officers being assigned to the combatant commanders, it must serve as the cornerstone of this initiative. Shelton pointed out that although its seats are not routinely filled, many individuals are still unable to attend. More importantly, an even greater number have no need for such extensive education yet still require some level of preparation. But in the current structure there is no alternative for them.

The Skelton Report speaks of a spectrum of joint education spanning the pre-commissioning programs of the Reserve Officer Training Corps and service academies to senior service colleges, National War College, and Capstone. This spectrum should be deepened and integrated. Congress had the right concept when suggesting that joint education was necessary throughout an officer's career. What was not so apparent was the range of personnel who require some portion of that instruction. Joint education included in the service intermediate schools is designated Phase I JPME. It should in and of itself provide the foundation for many officers supporting the combatant commanders on component or joint task force staffs. Additionally, to that educational spectrum outlined for selected officers' careers we must now add opportunities for those enlisted personnel, civilians, and Reservists of all grades, as well as officers who might need more preparation than would normally be forecast by a career pattern Goldwater-Nichols projected for nonjoint specialty officers. We will now examine this new spectrum.

While Congress and OPMEP provide detailed directives, an integrated education program must have a flagship institution for curriculum development with the teaching expertise and assessment skills to make a joint education program viable. One institution must provide the core curriculum for CJCS to ensure that this greater variety of education and training is focused on appropriate topics. The obvious choice is Joint Forces Staff College. As a JPME Phase II institution, it prepares officers for the joint specialty with a joint curriculum along with a faculty and students equally representing all military departments. OPMEP has further defined the student allocation as according with the distribution of billets by service on the joint duty assignment list. Only through this mix sharing an educational experience over time can students achieve the level of acculturation Congress desires and that is needed for joint specialty officers. An examination of the program therefore demonstrates the necessary background for a comprehensive plan and shows the potential of existing material to underpin the other elements of the educational spectrum proposed here.

The integrated JFSC curriculum combines a unique teaching environment with a full range of assessment strategies linking the educational experience to critical needs of the combatant commands and JTF staffs. Students are evenly distributed into 17–19 seminars, usually including an international officer and often an interagency representative. Seminars serve as representatives of a CINC staff or of a joint task force, thereby emphasizing the skills Shelton highlighted. Serving in a notional body, Africa Command (AFCOM), supports the learning environment. The realism of complex contingencies confronting U.S. interests daily in the region provides a rigorous underpinning to the education process.

A total environment supports this realistic framework. As with combatant commands, the Africa Command homepage serves as a daily focal point for staff actions and information within its area of responsibility (AOR). Each day of the twelve-week course represents 10–12 days. The homepage keeps students serving on the AFCOM staff current on issues and hotspots not only in their AOR but around the world. Their command's plans and standard operating procedures are available both within the seminar rooms and on the homepage. These documents are not shells or outlines as are often found in military institutions but in most cases are actual plans, modified and kept unclassified to fit the learning environment.

As students work with the AFCOM materials, they not only ponder the type of documents routinely produced in joint staff actions but also see an example of what looks right in many types of plans and procedures. Thus officers learn the processes and decisionmaking skills so critical to a joint staff while gaining experience with related products.

Campaigning

According to the Skelton Report, "Armed Forces Staff College should concentrate on case studies and wargames on the combat employment of joint forces." This intent is seen throughout a curriculum that provides learning in an increasingly complex and integrated environment. As new lessons are introduced, students examine historical or practical experiences to add depth, then demonstrate their understanding. They explore the strategic environment and issues relating to national and regional security early in the

U.S. Navy (Jonathan R. Byrd)

Preparing for takeoff from *USS Theodore Roosevelt*, Allied Force.

curricular program. At the same time, their AFCOM duties require them to address a variety of staff actions and procedures. They gain understanding of the relationship between regional and national issues and how the Chairman and unified commanders act within that environment by studying the joint strategic planning system and joint strategy review. After they work the issues involved in reviewing a draft joint strategic capabilities plan, students explore the role of service contributions to CINCs as well as the challenges of componency for the combatant command structure. Case studies place the issues of strategy, resourcing, and command and control in historical perspective.

mission analysis and concept development are critical in both deliberate and crisis planning

Students next explore tools for joint planning through a campaigning block. They examine operational art as well as the campaign and its application in historical and contemporary venues. They also survey broad topics such as battlespace management, multinational issues, peacekeeping, and joint force command. They are introduced to processes such as mission analysis, security cooperation, and the theater strategy formulation as they confront the challenges of ways, means, and ends on the combatant command level. Amidst this instruction, practical exercises and simulated crises drive students to use material and procedures already covered to reinforce and demonstrate their understanding.

Students entering the deliberate planning process are confronted with an approved operations plan but diminished resources and a changing international scene. This scenario drives a reexamination of the entire process and leads students to an even greater understanding of the complex decisionmaking skills inherent in it. Mission analysis and concept development are critical in both deliberate and crisis planning. They have thus been routinely highlighted by CINCs as areas of emphasis for their action officers.

These varied taskings, guidance, and recommendations, to include OPMEP and SAEs, are incorporated into an overarching set of objectives used to develop more specific learning goals and the accompanying assessment. The resulting list is known as the 15 academic objectives that guide curriculum development and assessment in the Joint and Combined Staff Officer School. These objectives stimulated a curriculum update while ensuring that the focus remained on key learning areas.

The content of Phase II programs at JFSC ensures that the officers are educated in the critical areas of joint operations, meeting the Title X requirement to teach joint matters. To do this most effectively, the curriculum must be maintained meticulously and integrated with a wide range of assessment and evaluation techniques. Currency and evaluation will ensure confidence in the program on the part of both students and the institution.

F–15s over Saudi Arabia, Southern Watch.

1st Communications Squadron (Jack Braden)

Opportunities for Assessment

An absolutely current, focused curriculum is critical to JFSC. However, the college must also have confidence in the learning achieved in this dynamic environment. Seminar faculty must be able to relate learning outcomes in the seminar room, the wargame suites, and in the variety of off-site environments with JFSC academic objectives. Faculty can then provide the best feedback to students.

A variety of assessment opportunities are incorporated throughout the twelve weeks. The first is the multiple-choice pretest taken on arrival and focusd on knowledge/comprehension in three objectives relating mostly to Phase I. After the first portions of the curriculum are covered, an essay exam demonstrates individual understanding of course objectives as opposed to the group efforts shown through exercises and simulations. Following the deliberate planning process block, a short answer essay exam assesses other academic objectives and shows where reteaching is necessary. An examination at this point also allows use of the Capstone exercise as a means of individual remediation or of reinforcing learning objectives for the entire seminar.

A vigorous review program ensures that classes are examined for accuracy and currency as well as teaching techniques. The college solicits student comments for selected lessons while faculty members provide feedback through workshops and individual initiatives. In each case, the goal is to examine the accuracy of specific material and how it contributes to overall curriculum and learning objectives. Finally, the commandant annually asks the combatant commanders in chief, as the commanders of the headquarters where most JFSC graduates report, for their perception of the preparedness of graduates as well as for suggestions and priorities. This response is incorporated into the annual review of curriculum. Thus the college ensures that the tone and timbre of curriculum change meets the needs of the primary customers, the combatant commanders.

Students can also give feedback in other areas of this process through faculty-rating and a survey at the end of the course that treats curricular, policy, and procedural areas. While student opinion is useful to curriculum planners, the college employs a sophisticated outcomes assessment strategy to determine what graduates can actually do with their educations. The objective and essay examinations, testimony from commanders in chief in the field, and refinements in the officers' abilities to operate in their new joint environment all provide evidence of student learning.

Patrolling at Kandahar Airport.

Fleet Combat Camera Group, Pacific (Ted Banks)

Beyond efforts to increase academic rigor in the core curriculum, JFSC continues to refine and expand its Focus Study, or elective program. For ten weeks, students spend one afternoon per week taking four hours of electives, which usually consist of two twenty-hour courses, although five week, ten-hour sessions are offered. Some electives detail the global command and control system or joint targeting skills while others cover broader topics such as ethics within the joint environment or war in the 21st century. At the same time, officers en route to combatant commands or assigned to one for less than six months must take a course introducing the issues within their respective areas of responsibility.

Indicative of the new stringency in teaching and assessment, the college is now recognized as a substantial graduate level institution. Universities nationwide are establishing agreements for academic recognition of the JPME Phase II program. The potential for substantial credit from civilian institutions may lead individuals to seek further education on their own time.

Both Ends of the Spectrum

With its emphasis on the combatant command and JTF level, JFSC instruction hits the mark identified by Congress and the Chairman. It provides the focused curriculum, joint faculty and students, rigorous education, and assessment mandated. It must be seen as the benchmark for joint education.

Needed now is a true spectrum. Some Reservists, DOD civilians, noncommissioned officers, and junior officers work in support of CINCs and JTFs with only a limited requirement or opportunity for joint education. At the other extreme, a case might be made for more intense joint instruction akin to the School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth or School of Advanced Airpower Studies at Maxwell Air Force Base for officers en route to duty as key planners on combatant command staffs. High on the spectrum is the education JFSC provides for joint specialty officers.

The three-day Joint Planning Orientation Course (JPOC) was the only alternative to longer, more formal courses in earlier years. Thus this course has been a heavily subscribed mobile instruction program, conducted by teams from the JFSC faculty who visit combatant commands and other active and Reserve organizations annually. For junior officers, NCOs, and civilians on a component headquarters staff that might occasionally support a JTF, a minimal orientation to joint operations may be sufficient. Hardly intensive joint education, such introductory training might provide only what is needed to improve command

C–17 being unloaded at Kandahar Airport.

Fleet Combat Camera Group (Ted Banks)

readiness. At the same time, Reservists in an organization augmenting the staff of a unified command might need a similar level of instruction, while those earmarked for the staff of a combatant command or as part of the JTF planning group might need more.

A Reserve component program recently developed by JFSC, while extensive in time and cost, provides a joint experience similar to the Phase II program at JFSC without 12 weeks in residence. Acculturation may be difficult to obtain because the majority of lessons are accomplished by distance learning, but the nature of distance learning is such that knowledge, comprehension, and application levels would likely be equal or superior to what resident students gain. Such a program would satisfy the congressional mandate of section 666, Title X of the U.S. Code, which directs that the Secretary of Defense will establish personnel policies for Reserve officers to prepare them for joint duty and that "such policies shall . . . be similar to [that portion of Title X that establishes policies for managing and educating joint specialty officers]."

distance learning would likely be equal or superior to what resident students gain

A JPOC level of instruction might suffice for many NCOs. Such teaching could be integrated into existing schools. Where an NCO needs the instruction and it is not readily available, a JPOC-like course could be provided online focusing on learning objectives and made similar to face-to-face instruction.

Woven throughout the above levels of joint education is the need for a system of lifelong learning. Incorporating these new curricula with distance learning could offer solutions. For example, a selection of distance learning courses might help personnel involved in joint operations to maintain their particular skills and develop new ones. As long as the instruction relates to the joint matters dictated by Congress and the Chairman and are incorporated into the JFSC curriculum, the college can provide the foundation for curriculum development in this expanded joint spectrum.

Many of these programs exist or are under development. What is lacking is their integration into a holistic view that ensures that each servicemember and civilian employee receives the right education or training at the right time in their careers to carry out assigned duties. Combining these programs as conceptualized above could enhance individual and unit readiness. It could also ensure that DOD leads transformation rather than being driven by it. The personnel manager

U.S. Navy (Claude J. Troullier)

U.S. and Korean officers, Enduring Freedom.

faces the greatest difficulties in implementing such a system. Duty positions in joint, service, and defense agencies would need to be coded for the level of joint training or education they require. Personnel movements and training/education opportunities would then need to be matched. The case of JFSC demonstrates that both must work in synch. Despite the clearly-defined need for well-trained officers in joint positions, the college routinely has empty seats in each class due to the mismatch of personnel to positions. Finally, the level of education or training an individual obtains must be tracked. Over time, monitoring would minimize the need for new schooling and would only be needed extensively for a first joint assignment or in a transfer to a position calling for more education. Greater flexibility would eventually be provided to personnel managers with a wider and more focused variety of joint education opportunities and a large pool of servicemembers with the requisite background.

The need for joint professional military education is growing even as the call to minimize time away from duties increases. DOD leadership must resist the temptation to limit education. The range of joint education envisioned by Congress must be expanded. The elements in place must remain. Critical aspects of education are being accomplished from pre-commissioning through the senior service colleges and Capstone. At the same time, the growing challenges of combat operations and the wide variety of contingency operations bring many additional military officers, enlisted personnel, and civilians into the joint planning and decisionmaking environment. The JPME structure only considers a portion of the officer corps despite this greater requirement. Opportunities must increase.

JFSC must remain the premier school in joint operational-level warfare and in preparing joint specialty officers. From this flagship institution the other needs of joint force commanders can be addressed. A variety of short training programs, both online and by means of mobile training teams, can provide broad overviews for those enlisted, civilian, and officer personnel primarily working in support of the joint force commander. Distance learning integrated with resident periods can provide Reservists with critical preparation prior to augmenting the combatant commander and his subordinate headquarters. Along with new technologies, it may also contribute to a lifelong learning environment.

Through OPMEP and SAEs, CJCS ensures that all institutions are focusing on timely topics. He ensures through his accreditation process that the curriculum is rigorous and complete in preparing officers as joint force commanders. The ability to maintain readiness for today's urgent and ongoing operations should be integrated with the intellectual flexibility to prepare and execute transformation for the future. The remaining question is whether we have the vision and desire to take the opportunities before us and provide our personnel the skills they need to best serve the Nation. **JFQ**

NOTE

[1] Henry H. Shelton, "Professional Education: The Key to Transformation," *Parameters*, vol. 31, no. 3 (Autumn 2001), p. 15.