More Than Just a Compelling Story

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ABSTRACT

Too often case studies are simply entertaining stories; compelling stories, but stories never-the-less with few apparent learning objectives that challenge the student to higher levels of learning. Professional military training and education institute curricula are abundant with classes and seminars billed as case studies that are more case than study. Although the story-line or “case” is extremely important, it is only a vehicle for attaining the “study,” the learning objectives and outcomes. Reinforcing the importance of the learning objectives relative to the story, suggests that, rather than describing it as a case study, maybe it should be called a “study case.”

The purpose of this paper is to offer a general model, based on learning theory that links the two: Case + Study. It begins with learning objectives and outcomes centered on the identified needs of a community. The science of developing the case study is in linking the storyline to the learning outcomes via discussion points. Those discussion points bring life to the study; depending on the desired cognitive learning level, they can compel a seminar member to think critically about the topic. The art of developing the case study, in challenging seminar members to higher levels of learning, lies in the quality of those linkages in conjunction with appropriate teaching/learning styles.

To illustrate the model’s application this paper uses “A Case Study in Counterinsurgency” as the topic; it frames counterinsurgency tenets as the learning objective; and uses “Discuss the root causes of the insurgency” as a learning outcome. The case used to discuss the model and illustrate this process is the “Anbar Awakening,” the partnering of the Sunni Tribes with the Coalition and Government of Iraq to defeat al-Qaeda in Iraq in 2005-2008.

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INTRODUCTION

Tell me and I forget, Teach me and I remember, Involve me and I will learn.
—Benjamin Franklin
(Northern Illinois University, 2016)

Too often case studies are simply entertaining stories; compelling stories, but stories never-the-less with few apparent learning objectives that challenge the student to higher levels of learning. Professional military training and education institute curricula are abundant with classes and seminars billed as case studies that are more case than study. Although the story-line or “case” is extremely important, it is only a vehicle for attaining the “study,” the learning objectives and outcomes.

Per the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) Methods of Instruction Course (MOIC) Handbook, 2013, case studies are a “teaching method in which students encounter a real-life or fictional situation under the guidance of an instructor [teacher, facilitator] to achieve an instructional objective.” JSOU uses case studies, in general, as vehicles to attain higher states of cognitive learning, from the “comprehension” level and higher. In particular, case studies are the preferred venue for course capstone exercises (MOIC, 2013, p. 70).

There are many different ways of developing and using case studies. The purpose of this paper is to offer a general model, based on learning theory that links the two: Case + Study. Although many teachers know that the class or course needs credible learning objectives and outcomes to successfully guide course/class work, too often the connections to cases are haphazard and loosely coupled. This model provides a disciplined process to strengthen those links. It begins with learning objectives and outcomes centered on the identified needs of a community as directed by published authorities such as Department of Defense Directives (DOD) and doctrine; it includes input from the faculty, staff, education community and operators in the field to develop relevant topics, objectives and outcomes. Additionally, it uses those same authorities and resources to identify relevant audiences.

The science of developing the case study is in linking the storyline to the learning outcomes via discussion points. Those discussion points bring life to the study; depending on the desired cognitive learning level, they can compel a seminar member to think critically about the topic. The art of developing the case study, in challenging seminar members to higher levels of learning, lies in the quality of those linkages in conjunction with appropriate teaching and learning styles. Those styles will be discussed in terms of instructor/trainer, teacher and facilitator roles.

To illustrate the model’s application this paper uses “A Case Study in Counterinsurgency” as the topic; it frames aspects of counterinsurgency tenets as the learning objective; and uses “Discuss the root causes of the insurgency” as a learning outcome. The case used to discuss the model and illustrate this process is derived from The Anbar Awakening (Knarr et al., 2015), and the partnering of the Sunni Tribes of Al Anbar Province, Iraq, with the Coalition and Government of Iraq to defeat al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) in 2005-2008. This model has been developed, refined and strengthened through several previous applications; most notably in “A Case Study in Unconventional Warfare” using the 2001 battle for Mazar-e Sharif in Afghanistan (Knarr & Richbourg, 2010) as the case and “A Case Study in Information Operations and Strategic Communications” using the 2004 battle for Fallujah in Iraq (Knarr et al., 2011) as the case.
Terms

The author prefers using the term “seminar leader” because the seminar or small group is the setting of choice for case studies. Additionally, the seminar leader, as a general term includes the various roles of instructor, teacher and facilitator. Those roles are described in more detail later.

The terms seminar member and student will be used interchangeably. In today’s seminar environment, in particular in PME institutes, seminar member experience is extremely high and the old adage that the teacher of a case study needs to be the expert, is not always possible. The teacher should strive to be the expert, but in today’s environment, a student could be just as versed, or more so, in the case as the teacher and is more of a seminar member and participant than a student. That may change as the student/seminar-member population becomes less experienced in the future as the United States decreases its military participation in overseas operations.

This paper uses the term “case” to refer to the narrative or storyline and the term “study” to refer to the learning objectives and outcomes. The paper will also refer to The 2005 Iraqi Sunni Awakening: The Role of the Desert Protectors Program (Knarr, 2015) by its short title Desert Protectors. It will use Desert Protectors (italicized) when referring to the monograph and Desert Protectors (non-italicized) when referring to the program. It will also refer to An Education and Training Resource Guide: Al Sahawa—The Awakening (Knarr et al., 2015) by its short title The Anbar Awakening.

Structure and Presentation

The structure of the paper is provided by the Case Study Model. The presentation consists of five sections: The introduction; the science, the art and the application of the model; and the summary and conclusions.

THE SCIENCE OF THE MODEL

The model (Figure 1) provides a structure for thinking about and developing a case study. The science of the model is in filling and connecting the appropriate blocks.

![Figure 1. Case Study Model, Source: William Knarr](image-url)
Approach

The approach to developing the case study begins at the top of the model, with the study. Although the model can be used to develop a case study for any community of interest, in this paper, it was applied to professional military education (PME).

The topics and learning objectives are derived from a number of source documents such as Title 10 of the U.S. Code authorities, DOD directives, doctrinal manuals and others. Two documents that help focus the effort on PME are the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) on Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP, 2015) and its partner publication CJCSI Enlisted Professional Military Education Policy (EPMEP, 2015). Both provide policies, procedures, objectives and responsibilities for education. The OPMEP and EPMEP generally emphasize national security and military strategies, joint and multinational campaign planning, and warfighting. They both speak to planning and operating along a continuum from the tactical to the strategic levels of war and generally link PME levels accordingly. As such they also help in determining the most relevant audiences for the case study.

As an example, if the case study emphasizes the operational level of war with implications at the tactical and strategic, the most appropriate audience might be intermediate to senior levels (major to colonel and senior E6 to E9) and the most relevant schools might be Service and Joint intermediate and senior level institutes. Attendance at those schools reflects 10 to 20 years of training, education and experience. Knowing the background and composition of the group is important because it helps the seminar leader gauge the role (trainer, educator, facilitator) he or she must play in the seminar and also helps determine the quality and cognitive level of the discussion points. As an example, today’s seminar members have years of experience in combat areas which, if artfully handled, is an incredible asset to seminar discussion. At this point teachers become facilitators of learning rather than transmitters of information; additionally, students become self-directed learners rather than receivers of information (Knowles, 1975, Parts I and II).

In addition to the most relevant PME levels, audience size is also important. This case study model was developed for small group/seminar discussion of seven to 10, but no more than 15 (“Seminar Class Size,” 2016; Shiver, 2016, p. 174). Exceeding 15 may make it difficult for the seminar leader to provide all seminar members maximum opportunity to participate.

Faculty and staff input

In addition to determining the target audience for the case study, it’s important to determine what curricula might be best served. Communicating with the faculty and staff (top right block of the model) via email, one-on-one, or working groups, is probably the most efficient. In this case, recommendations included case study support to courses dealing with irregular warfare/counterinsurgency, strategy development, operational planning, intelligence, socio-culture implications, and ethics.

Level of learning achievement

Bloom’s taxonomy as reflected in the OPMEP (Appendix A to Enclosure E) is used to discuss levels of learning achievement for the cognitive domain: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluating and creating with “knowledge” at the bottom of the hierarchy and “creating” at the top. The appropriate descriptive verbs for defining learning objectives and outcomes are also provided in the OPMEP appendix.

Picking a topic, learning objectives and outcomes, and a compelling case

The suggested method is to pick a topic (MOIC, 2013, p. 70) and then select a case that best illustrates the critical aspects of the topic. Generally, the topic is dictated by the seminar leader’s field of work and practically speaking, selecting a specific topic, learning objectives and outcomes is an iterative process. As the seminar leader works within a certain community (such as Special Operations) that focuses on certain topical areas (such as irregular warfare), the genesis for the case study on a particular topic may not occur until the teacher discovers a compelling narrative that best illustrates aspects of a specific topical area of interest. That will be further explained in the Application section below. However, this step, developing the learning outcomes, and linking the learning outcomes and case—the top and bottom of the model—frames the problem. Here-in lies the art.
THE ART OF DEVELOPING AND ADMINISTERING THE CASE STUDY VIA DISCUSSION POINTS

The art of developing and administering the case study for the seminar lies in understanding the needs of the community; the training, education, and experience of the audience; and time available. In addition to considering all of those factors, seminar leaders need to accommodate for different learning styles and select the most appropriate teaching style and case study application to attain the desired level of learning. Assuming solid learning objectives and outcomes, and a relevant compelling story-line, the proper balance among the above factors must be reflected in the development and delivery of the discussion points. First, a discussion of the level of learning achievement.

Adult Learning theory

This paper draws heavily on Andragogy—adult learning theory. Malcom Knowles, known as the Father of Adult Learning provides several assumptions of the adult learner to include: “why” they need to learn a particular subject, a self-concept of responsibility for their own decisions and a capability for self-direction, a rich foundation of life experiences, an internal motivation/readiness to learn, and an inclination to be more problem centered, rather than subject centered (Conlan, Grabowski & Smith, 2016; Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2011, pp. 63-66). As such, he defines the teacher’s role as the “facilitator of learning,” which is student-centered, rather than a “content transmitter,” which is subject-centered (Knowles, 1975, pp 31-33).

In The Adult Learner the authors attribute this learner/teacher relationship to the “great teachers of ancient times—Confucius and Lao Tse of China; the Hebrew prophets and Jesus in Biblical Times; Aristotle; Socrates and Plato in ancient Greece.” They saw adult learning “to be a process of mental inquiry…accordingly, they explored techniques for engaging learners”. Those techniques included the case method that they attribute to the Chinese and Hebrews. Additionally, the Greeks mastered what we now call the Socratic method of questioning for guiding the group discussion to higher levels of inquiry and problem solving (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2011, p. 34).

There are other applicable concepts and theories such as participatory and experiential learning. Participatory learning “refers to the action of taking part in activities and projects, the act of sharing in the activities of a group.” It is student-centered where students interact and learn from each other and “learning is viewed as the construction of new information” (Domínguez, 2016). Experiential learning in its simplest form is learning by doing and the application of knowledge and comprehension to various situations. Because of the similarities in directly involving the seminar members in the process of learning, this author considers participatory and experiential learning to be rooted in those same ancient masters’ adult learning concepts.

But, according to Jack Mezirow, (2011; also see Brookfield, 1995), “By far the most significant learning experience in adulthood involve critical self-reflection - reassessing the way we have posed problems and reassessing our own orientation to perceiving, knowing, believing, feeling and acting.” He goes on to say that, “Critical reflection addresses the question of the justification for the very premises on which problems are posed or defined in the first place.” He also makes a distinction between “reflection” and “critical reflection”:

> Although reflection may be an integral part of making action decisions as well as an ex post facto critique of the process, critical reflection cannot become an integral element in the immediate action process. It requires a hiatus in which to reassess one’s meaning perspectives and, if necessary, to transform them.

Teaching styles

Teaching styles have been categorized in a number of different ways. Some have divided those styles into three or four categories. As an example, Paul Thornton (2013) advocates three styles: direct, discuss and delegate. “Direct” promotes learning through listening, “discuss” through interaction and “delegate” through empowerment, i.e., individual and/or team projects. Gill (2016) advocates five teaching styles: Authority, or lecture style; demonstrator, or coach style; facilitator, or activity style; delegator, or group style; and the hybrid, or blended style. This paper suggests three styles: Instructor/trainer-focused that emphasizes “what to think”; teacher/transfer-focused that is based on declarative or objective knowledge plus some higher order learning; and facilitator/student focused whose objective is higher order learning (D. Fautua, personal communication, May 3 and 30, 2016). The seminar leader’s application of those styles, from trainer to facilitator will allow for higher order learning and move the seminar to more complex learning on Bloom’s hierarchy of learning. This paper will focus on the “teacher” and “facilitator” and promote critical...
reflection and opportunities for seminar-members to “reassess one’s meaning perspective and, if necessary, to transform them.”

Ascending Bloom’s taxonomy

Ascending Bloom’s taxonomy from Knowledge to Creating demands that seminar leaders balance/consider all the above as he/she develops and applies discussion points. As an example, a teacher’s objective to transfer objective knowledge may only be concerned with the student “remembering” or “comprehending” information. As such, there may be no facilitation and the teacher may simply assess progress by having students identify, define, or classify information. However, if the seminar leader wants the students to move towards higher levels of learning, he/she will use those lower level questions or discussion points as a warm-up for higher level discussions and, in doing so will move from teacher to facilitator.

Discussion Points

The application of learning theory, learning/teaching styles and moving to higher levels of learning achievement all come together in the development and application of the discussion points. Discussion points include a number of elements:

1. The Study. Relevant sections from doctrinal publications and directives. These are included as student read ahead material.
2. Discussion points in the form of questions for the facilitator to ask the students that link those doctrinal/conceptual readings to the narrative (or vice versa).
3. Potential or Expected Responses. This is not intended to be all inclusive but rather a summary of potential or expected responses from the study and case. This serves as “teacher’s notes” as an aid to guide or facilitate the discussions. It also becomes a great resource to prepare the facilitator for seminars.
4. Student Assessment. Provides different methods/tools for assessing student performance as well as rubrics to standardize the process across various classes. This not only aids the seminar leader in assessing the seminar members, but also assessing the class/course itself.

This section is the nucleus of the case study and prepares the seminar leader to adapt to roles of teacher or facilitator as he/she better understands the dynamics of the seminar. Discussion points are best described in the next section, its application as an example through *The Anbar Awakening* and specifically the *Desert Protectors*.

MODEL APPLICATION: COUNTERINSURGENCY AND THE CASE OF THE DESERT PROTECTORS

This section offers an approach to applying the model to topics of interest to Special Operations by using the *Desert Protectors* monograph and associated material as a vehicle. Those topics can be found in a variety of source documents such as Title 10 of the U.S. Code authorities, DOD directives, doctrinal manuals and others. One such topic, listed as a Special Operations Core Activity, is counterinsurgency (Special Operations, 2015, p. II-12). Counterinsurgency is defined in the *DOD Dictionary of Military Terms* (2015) as “comprehensive civilian and military efforts designed to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes.” It is the subject of Joint Publication 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (2013). Therefore, using the model for developing a case study, the study is about counterinsurgency and the case is the *Desert Protectors*. Hence, the selected topic is: A Case Study in Counterinsurgency: The *Desert Protectors* Program.

Seminar members are expected to have read the case before class along with the relevant material from the doctrinal publications on counterinsurgency, however, the case is abbreviated in the following subsection for the benefit of this paper.

Case Background

Most popular narratives of the Anbar Awakening in Iraq, the partnering of the Sunni Tribes with the Coalition and Government of Iraq to fight al-Qaeda, associate the beginning of the movement with Sheikh Sattar Albu-Risha’s 14 September 2006 proclamation in Ramadi, where he coined the term *Al Sahawa*. However, Dr. William Knarr, in the
monograph the *Desert Protectors*, contends that the Anbar Awakening, as a movement, started 12 months prior to the proclamation in the northwest of Al Anbar, in Al Qaim District along the Syrian/Iraqi border. The Albu-Mahal tribe initially sided with AQI to fight the Coalition forces. But it soon became apparent that AQI was the real enemy as they sought to eliminate tribal influence and destroy the social fabric of the province. The Albu-Mahal, in what would become a fight for survival, realized that they could not fight AQI on their own and pleaded for help from the Coalition and the Government of Iraq. The foundation for developing that partnership was a little known program called the “Desert Protectors.”

The Desert Protectors were local tribesmen: recruited, trained, organized and deployed as scouts under the watchful eye and guidance of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force in Iraq. The movement, born in Al Qaim, moved from west to east along the Western Euphrates River Valley, from Al Qaim to the Corridor and then to Ramadi. Subsequently, the Al Qaim awakening evolved into the Anbar Sunni Awakening and later, as it spread to other provinces in Iraq, the Iraqi Sunni Awakening.

A number of major themes were highlighted from the narrative and concluded from the analysis.

- Understanding the root causes of the insurgency is a necessary first step to developing and executing plans and approaches to address those causes and counter the insurgents’ narrative
- Establishing the legitimacy of the national government is arguably the most difficult part of a counterinsurgency campaign
- The importance of relations and understanding relationships fills the gaps and connects the dots within an otherwise disconnected narrative.

Through those themes a number of counterinsurgency tenets and complementary precepts are discussed. Examples of operational tenets include: Understanding the operational environment, the associated sociocultural implications, and the root causes of the insurgency; the primacy of politics and developing the host nation government’s legitimacy; and securing the population which includes understanding and isolating the insurgency (*Counterinsurgency*, 2013, pp. III-7 to III-16).

In summary, to illustrate the model’s application this paper frames aspects of counterinsurgency tenets as the learning objective; and identifies the Desert Protectors as the vehicle to discuss those aspects. The detail in the following example is not intended to focus the discussion on the Desert Protectors, the case, but to show how this one example can be used as guide.

### Developing learning objectives and learning outcomes

A review of doctrinal tenets of counterinsurgency and relevant illustrations from the *Desert Protectors* yields a number of potential learning objectives. One example to be used here is:

Each seminar member will comprehend (or apply, analyze, synthesize, or evaluate) aspects of select tenets from US/DOD Counterinsurgency doctrine as they related to the Coalition effort in Al Anbar, Iraq and described in the *Desert Protectors*.

For brevity, this paper selected one (of many possible) learning outcome(s):

Discuss (or apply, analyze, categorize, compare) the root causes of the insurgency in Al Anbar in terms of why the Anbaris were inclined to initially side with al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).

Note that this outcome is at the nexus of doctrine and narrative, that is, it is an aspect of a doctrinal tenet noted above, and a narrative theme, i.e., understanding the root causes of the insurgency. But again, it does not have to be tied to doctrine. It could challenge doctrine, be linked to something else of significance, or be new knowledge and stand on its own merits.

“Comprehension” level was selected for this example as a starting point for discussion. Higher cognitive levels are demanded in accordance with the descriptive verbs in the parenthesis. As those levels increase from comprehension to application and above, so does the complexity, demands, expectations, and time required for instruction, interaction
and assessment. Correspondingly, as a foundation to drive towards those higher levels, seminar member experience will probably be greater and the seminar leader’s style must be anticipatory and adaptive.

Figure 2 provides a summary model view of the case study as it applies to Counterinsurgency—the study—and the Desert Protectors—the case. Also note that the model reflects two other themes as learning outcomes: legitimacy and relationships. However, the only one to be addressed here is the first outcome, or A. Root causes of the insurgency. The discussion points, the linkage between the study and the case are addressed next.

**Discussion Points: Linking the case to the study (or the study to the case)**

Discussion points link the narrative to the learning objective and learning outcomes. The value (or not) of the case study should become evident here. This section provides the facilitator discussion points from both the doctrinal publications and the narrative that best illustrate the subjects provided in the learning outcome statements. These are “teacher’s notes” as an aid to guide or facilitate the discussions and can be very detailed or summary bullets as an aid to the seminar leader. Although the discussion points in this example are supportive of the doctrinal tenet, the reader should keep in the mind that the design of the case study may be to counter or show alternatives to existing doctrine.

The following structure starts with the statement of the Learning Outcome followed by four sub-paragraphs:

1. The Study based on relevant sections from Joint Publication 3-24. These are included as the student read ahead.
2. Discussion points in the form of questions for the facilitator to ask the students that link those doctrinal/conceptual readings to the narrative (or vice versa).
3. Potential or Expected Response.

The learning outcome A (at Figure 2) is repeated here for convenience:

Discuss the root causes of the insurgency in Al Anbar in terms of why the Anbaris were inclined to side with Al-Qaeda in Iraq (Counterinsurgency, 2013, Chapters II and III).

![Figure 2. Awakening/Desert Protectors Case Study](image-url)

**Study**

Chapter two of Joint Publication 3-24 (Counterinsurgency, 2013) describes the root causes of an insurgency and Figure 3, extracted from Joint Publication 3-24, provides an excellent visual aid for structuring the discussion (a model...
for discussing Root cause of an insurgency, embedded within the case study model). Chapter 3 of Joint Publication 3-24 discusses the tenets of counterinsurgency. Another source for discussing root causes for an insurgency is Chapter two of Human Factors Considerations of Underground Insurgencies entitled, “Underlying Causes of Violence,” (2013) which describes eight risk factors of political violence. Both provide an exceptional opportunity for a practical exercise as addressed in the student assessment sub-section below.

According to the DOD Dictionary of Military Terms (2015), an insurgency is defined as, “the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region.” The prerequisites for the insurgency are opportunity, motive and means (Counterinsurgency, 2013, p. II-2).

Discussion Points: Question and potential/expected responses
For brevity, the following provides two examples of discussion points. As a practical matter, there may be four or more planned discussion points and seminar discussion may provide the leads for more—the seminar leader needs to be prepared to modify existing discussion points and capitalize on new ones. This is the art of facilitation.

Discussion Point 1. Facilitator to seminar members: A. “What are the three prerequisites for an insurgency?” B. “Someone name one of the three and explain what it means.” [Pause for response] C. “In general, were the prerequisites present in Al Anbar?”

This opening question is a warm up question that focuses on knowledge of doctrine and its application to the case.

Expected Response: A. “Opportunity, motive and means.” B. Sub-bullets for each prerequisite are provided in Figure 3. C. The short answer is, “Yes, they were all present to some or to a large extent in Al Anbar.

Certainly all three elements of ‘Opportunity’ were present. As an example, initially, there was no government; Al Anbar was a very large economy of force, ungoverned area; and gaps in security included open borders and unsecured Iraqi ammunition supply points that were open for pillage [Desert Protectors, 2015, pp. 9-11].”
Motive in terms of core grievances are addressed in more detail in Discussion Point 2.

Means are discussed in various sections of the monograph. As an example, criminal networks are mentioned on page 12: “In the chaos, the criminal elements migrated to the groups that promised the most gain for the least risk.” Page 31 describes Al Qaim as a “lucrative smuggling route for black market goods, and was AQI’s lifeline to Baghdad as foreign fighters, money, and other resources that fueled the insurgency infiltrated Iraq.” Reference the sub-bullet on recruiting: The recruitment pool for the insurgents was abundant due to a lack of alternate means to earn money. Additionally, scandals like Abu Ghraib prison and the grievances discussed below, were reason enough for some to join the insurgency (page 13).

Discussion Point 2. To what extent did “core grievances” play in the development of the insurgency? Provide examples.

Expected Response: Chapter 1 of the Desert Protectors discusses the insurgency and reiterates a number of factors listed in Joint Publication 3-24. The details are in the monograph, but in summary those factors included:

- Inadequate security: Again, open borders and unsecured Iraqi ammunition supply points (p. 9),
- Unemployment and disrespect as a result of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) orders 1 and 2 calling for de-Ba’athification and dissolution of the military respectively (p. 10),
- Marginalization of Sunnis as “Shia religious leaders and sectarian parties with strong Iranian influence were” put at the helm of this new Iraqi government (p. 10),
- Perception that Soldiers’ conduct in dealing with Iraqi citizens was offensive (p. 11).

The Anbaris saw AQI as an alternative to both the Coalition “occupiers” and this new Shia government in terms of regaining influence, preserving their identity, and as a source of money and jobs (p.11).

Student Assessment.

The method of assessment depends on the level of learning achievement desired. The intent of this section is not to detail and discuss the various factors of learning assessments such as validity and reliability; but to provide examples of methods and tools that might be used by the facilitator.

As an example, at the comprehension level, the facilitator could use true/false, fill in the blank, matching or multiple choice items. The line and block chart at Figure 3 provides an excellent tool for matching and fill in the blank because it helps structure the way one thinks about the root causes of an insurgency. A rubric could be developed to reflect assessment at the various cognitive levels.

Higher Levels of Cognitive Learning

As indicated earlier, the real value of the case study is to attain higher levels of cognitive learning (MOIC, 2013). This paper started with “comprehension” and the use of Joint Publication 3-24 (Counterinsurgency, 2013) and a short monograph (Knarr, 2015) to best illustrate the use of the model. However, the benefits of, and opportunities provided by a case study lie in active participation of the seminar member and his/her opportunity for critical reflection. As the starting quote of the paper claims, “…involve me and I will learn (Northern Illinois University, 2016).” Rather than true/false, matching, fill-in-the-blank or multiple choice exercises to assess “comprehension” level learning, the student’s participation can be much more sophisticated and complex. However, reaching those higher levels may expand the breadth and depth of reference materials required for both the case and study. As an example, for study, Human Factors Considerations of Underground Insurgencies (Tomkins and Bos, 2013, Chapter 2) could be added to the student reading list to provide a deeper appreciation of root causes of an insurgency and another perspective for looking at those causes. For more depth on the case see The Anbar Awakening. In particular the Iraqi transcripts that are included in the study, such as those for Dr. Hareth al-Dhari, former insurgent leader, and Dr. Ibrahim al-Jaafari, former prime minister of Iraq, provide personal perspectives. Those references would allow for additional approaches, methods and tools (suggested below). That in turn would enable a higher level of cognitive learning. Examples include:
Team exercise. Capitalizing on the structure provided by Figure 3, the seminar could be broken into 3-4 member teams with each team assigned a “prerequisite” such as opportunity, motive and means, and have them present their findings to the rest of the seminar. An alternative would have seminar members show where the material in the case did not fully support the doctrinal material or, disproved the doctrinal material. This could raise the cognitive level of learning to the evaluation level.

In the case of the Human Factors Considerations of Underground Insurgencies (2013), the seminar members could provide examples of each of the eight factors, prioritize those factors from the most relevant to the least, and provide a justification for their prioritization. This could easily reach the analysis cognitive level.

Teams could first analyze the root causes of the insurgency in accordance with JP 3-24 model and Chapter 2 of the Human Factors Considerations of Underground Insurgencies and then compare/evaluate the two.

Iraqi transcripts in The Anbar Awakening would provide the material for role-playing. This would allow the students to understand and promote understanding a different perspective.

The next step could be an exercise to develop solutions to grievances and a counter-narrative to the insurgents’ narrative.

The point is, the comprehension level was used to demonstrate the use of the case study model, but the model could easily accommodate higher levels of cognitive learning. As such, it would require more complex and expansive discussion points to express those linkages between case and study. All this could be captured in a rubric developed to assess the different levels of cognitive learning.

Again the purpose was not to focus on the Desert Protectors but, in general to describe the iterative process of linking case to study and study to case to catalyze discussion and exercise critical thinking skills that should be the foundation for any case study. As stated in the Introduction, this model has been developed, refined and strengthened through several previous applications in other case studies and shows a general utility, at least for JPME.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Case studies are more than just a compelling story. Too often case studies are billed as historical events that provide incredible chronologies and analyses of events but leave the reader or participant at a loss when considering the learning objectives and outcomes.

This paper provided a model for connecting the case, or event to the study, the learning objective and outcomes. Although case studies are used to attain higher states of cognitive learning, from the “comprehend” level up through “creating,” this paper started at comprehension in order to highlight the use of the model by drawing from Counterinsurgency (2013) for the learning objective and outcomes and the Desert Protectors for the case. This kept the discussion points and illustration simple. However, it also showed how the model and those discussion points, could easily be used to illustrate and adapt to the more complex demands of higher level cognitive learning. That learning is promoted by, and based on learner experiences, self-direction, active participation and the adaptation of real life compelling situations as a vehicle to illuminate learning objectives and outcomes.

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