

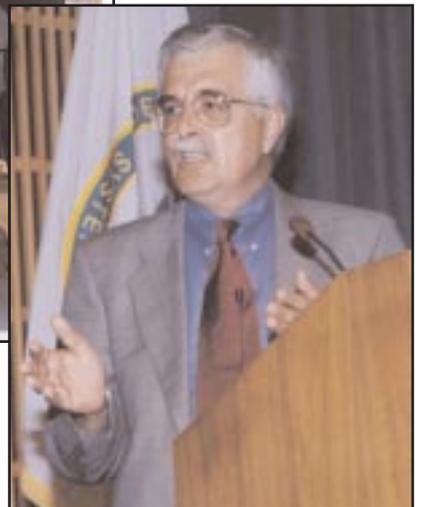
APMC “Turnabout” Makes Everyone a Learner, Everyone a Teacher

JDAM Case Study Facilitating Open Dialogue, Learning, Innovation

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DISTINGUISHED GUEST LECTURER TERRY LITTLE, FORMER JDAM PROGRAM MANAGER.



FRONT ROW, FROM LEFT: STEVE YARNALL; ARMY LT. COL. ED O’CONNOR; RUTHANNE ZOMBOLAS; PATRICIA HAGAN; JAMES SENCINDIVER; GREG MAKRAKIS. BACK ROW, FROM LEFT: AIR FORCE LT. COL. JERRY WORSHAM; AIR FORCE LT. COL. SCOTTY FAIRBAIRN; AIR FORCE LT. COL. JONATHAN SUMNER; TERRY LITTLE; FRANK SWOFFORD; ARMY MAJ. ETHAN COLLINS; NAVY CMDR. TERRANCE HAID; ALBERT GRIGGS.

An old axiom states that if you want to learn something – a concept, an idea, a theory, or a skill – then teach it. With that in mind, APMC 98-3 students literally took “center stage” at the September Distinguished Guest Lecturer (DGL) session.

Traditionally, DGLs deliver their presentations, followed by a brief, struc-

tured question-and-answer session. September’s DGL, however, departed from that traditional approach.

Led by Ruthann Zombolas, the student selected by peers as the Section C representative, 12 students representing all APMC sections asked questions of September’s DGL – former Program Manager of the Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM) Program Office, Terry Little.

This “turnabout” approach, moving more toward encouraging students to ask “their” questions, established open dialogue between lecturer and students from the *beginning*.¹

Why JDAM?

The JDAM program, which is still an ongoing program, converts dumb bombs to smart weapons using commercial practices. Originally begun as a tradi-

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tional program in 1991, in 1994 Little and his team streamlined the JDAM program using the principles, practices, and processes of Acquisition Reform, with extraordinary results.

Since the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Technology) and Defense Acquisition University were interested in the use of case studies as a means to share lessons learned and to provide insight to all sides of an acquisition relationship, DSMC, in partnership with Boeing, began developing a JDAM Case Study in May 1997.² The JDAM case study highlights how one particular office – the JDAM Program Office – implemented the policies and strategies emerging from Acquisition Reform and all it embodies.

This joint DSMC-Boeing JDAM Case Study is actually designated “JDAM I” because it focuses on one particular time in the life of the program.³ For this reason, we asked students to limit their questions to this snapshot in time.

During week 13 or 14, the students begin JDAM II, a “present” look at the program

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in terms of real-time programmatic and issues. During JDAM II, the DGL is the current JDAM Program Manager, Oscar Soler.

DSMC’s APMC students use the case study to assess and evaluate one outstanding example of cutting-edge Acquisition Reform. Rather than a detailed analysis of functional and programmatic aspects, the JDAM I lesson focuses on understanding leadership and the transformation dynamics of *cultural change*.

Toward that end, DSMC established the following Terminal Learning Objective for JDAM I:

Given the early Phase II in the JDAM program, critically assess and evaluate the transformation decisions, strategies, processes, and techniques the government and industry leaders used to implement Acquisition Reform.

After a thorough study of the case, students develop and prioritize their questions for the DGL. Actually, the learning process starts with each student’s individual reading of the case study, aided by a concise set of structured, self-help questions.

- What are your general impressions (who, what, when, where, why, how)?
- Who are the primary protagonists? What were their dilemmas, success issues?
- What were their assumptions? What decisions did they make? Why? How?
- What are your assumptions?
- What are the primary issues?
- What are your recommendations for action?
- What are the important events?
- How much time elapsed during the events described?
- Who are the players?
- What are their backgrounds?
- What are their motivations?
- What are their attitudes toward other characters and events?
- What does the organization look like?
- What are the reporting relationships?
- Who has influence over whom?

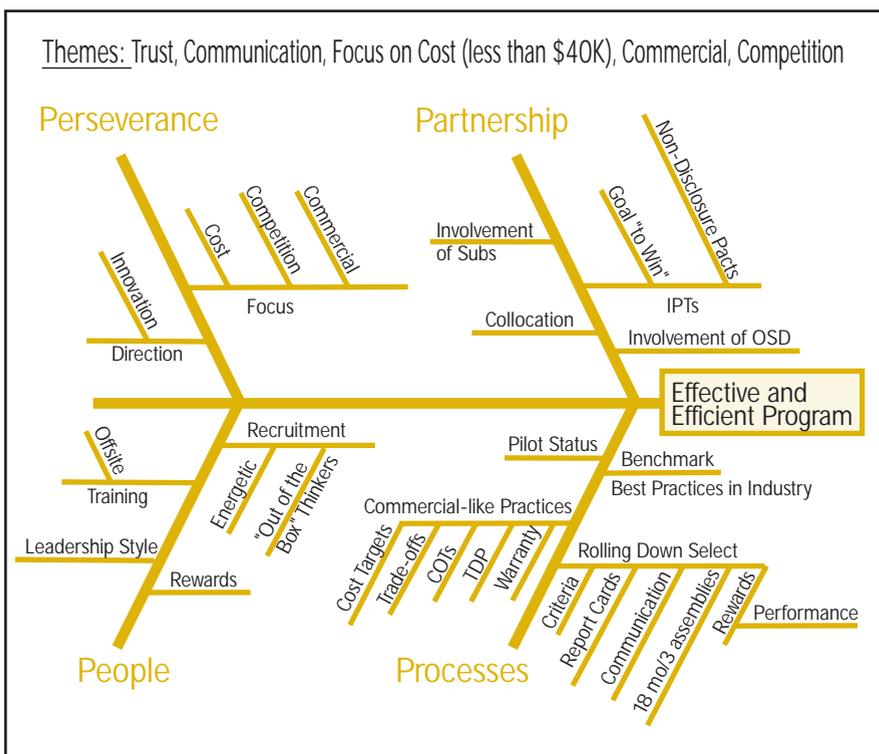


FIGURE 1. Ishikawa (Fishbone) Diagram

- What are the cultural overtones?
 - What are the histories and traditions of the organization and teams?
 - How do the structure, culture, history, and traditions factor into the current situation?
 - What is the central problem, decision, or opportunity to be analyzed?
 - What is the case about?
 - Does organizational change play a role? If so, what forces exist both for and against change?
 - Which change forces are most compelling? What can be done to either augment or mitigate the change?
- What is the operating environment like?
 - What external factors impact the people, teams, and organization?
 - What is the industry like? Is it competitive? Who are the competitors?
 - What are the program or team strengths and weaknesses compared to competitors?
 - What are the socioeconomic, environmental, and technical considerations that impact the program?
- After developing their questions, students follow this effort by a workgroup

discussion (six or seven students) to collaborate on an individual interpretation of the case. This individual interpretation uses another set of questions to guide students:

- Who are the primary players? How are they motivated? What were their leadership styles?
- What are the important events discussed in the case? When did the events take place? Who was involved?
- What is the operating environment for the case? What is the external environment like? What is the internal environment like?
- What are the primary problems the protagonists face?

The third aspect of the case study was a section discussion of the dominant themes throughout the case study: People, Processes, Partnerships, and Perseverance. The Ishikawa (Fishbone) Diagram (Figure 1) visually identifies and categorizes root causes of program success.

After analyzing and synthesizing the information in the case study, students compare the leadership and cultural dynamics manifested in the JDAM Case Study, to the Kotter model for leading change. Depicted in Figure 2, this model is developed in John P. Kotter's work, *Leading Change*.⁴

The final exercise included brainstorming questions the students wanted to ask Little. These questions were prioritized within each workgroup and then at the section level. Additionally, each workgroup selected a representative for the DGL session. From these five representatives in each section, one person was selected to represent their section on the discussion panel.

Assessing the Value-Added

At the end of the session, students assessed the value-added of the class. The data indicate that 82 percent of students believed the length of the class – three-and-one-half hours – was



FIGURE 2. Kotter Model for Leading Change

just right or even too short to assess the issues within the case.

The bar chart (Figure 3) displays the relative value students assigned to each part of the lesson. Overall, students felt that the information and learning methodology added value.

In an effort to continuously improve the quality of instruction, the faculty conducted a post-instruction review and recommended improvements to the case study. The data indicate a slight drop in the value added from the case discussions (Figure 3) to the comparison with Kotter's Model for Leading Change (Figure 2). Experience from the classroom was that the JDAM case too easily fit this change model, and the analysis did not provide an appropriate challenge to the students.

As a result of that assessment, improvements are being made to further challenge students' critical thinking skills. The Definition of Acquisition Reform segment (Figure 3) received the lowest score, suffering, in many cases, from lack of time. Since this is important but not an Enabling Learning Objective, it will

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be switched to another class in APMC 99-1.

Acquisition Reform will continue as one of the dominant themes, not only within APMC, but also throughout the entire DSMC curricula.

Editor's Note: For information on attending a DSMC course, visit <http://www.dsmc.dsm.mil/registrar/applic.htm> on the DSMC Web site.

ENDNOTES

1. A requirement that students develop questions for this turnabout DGL session was actually built into the curriculum as part of the JDAM Case Study.
2. Harman, Dr. Beryl A. and Daniel G. Robinson, "DSMC & Boeing Cultivate an Unconventional Educational Partnership Beyond the Norm," *Program Manager*, Vol. XXVII, No. 4, DSMC 145, July-August 1998.
3. To read the JDAM Case Study in its entirety, go to <http://www.dsmc.dsm.mil> on the DSMC Web site.
4. Kotter, John P., "Leading Change," *Harvard Business Review* (March-April 1995).

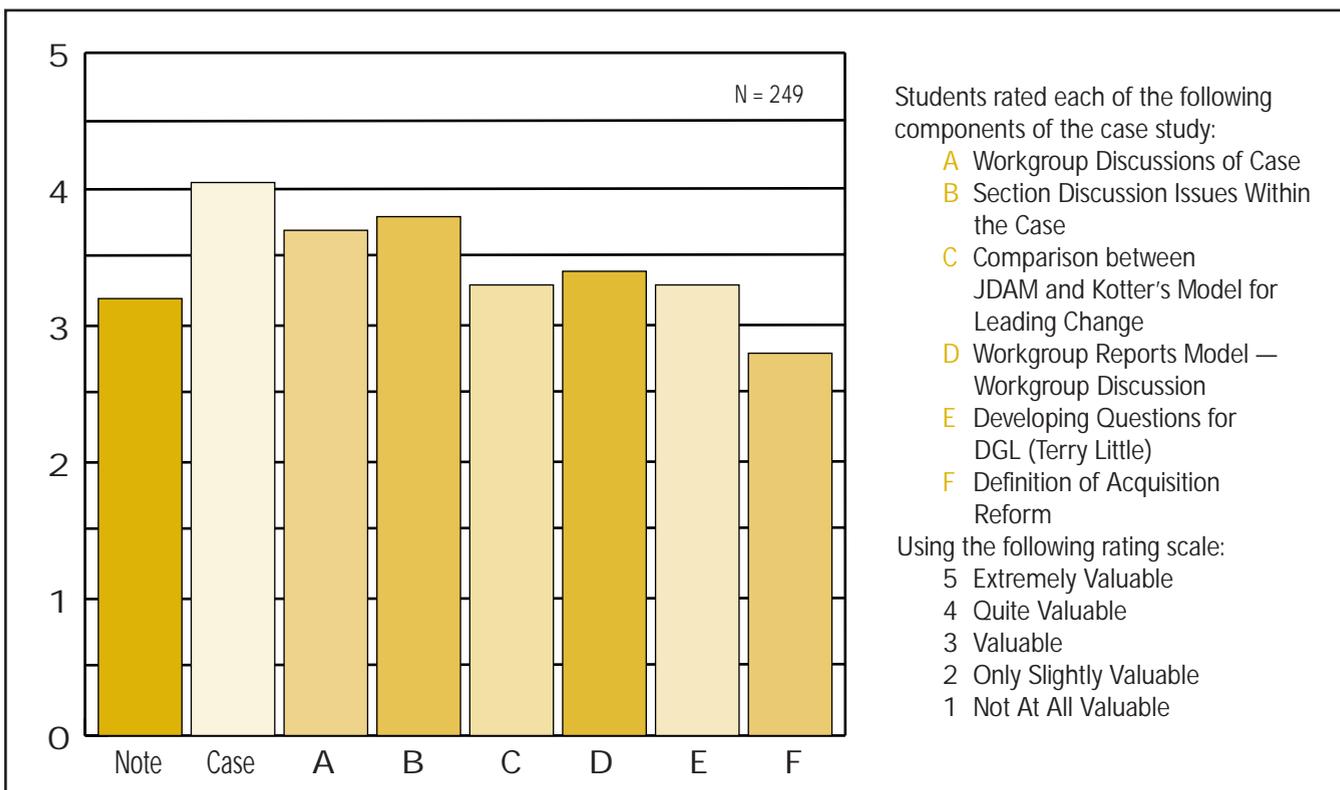


FIGURE 3. JDAM Case Study Survey Results