LD 1-3 AAR, METL, Continuity Book Development

Training Objective:

Task: Assess organizational performance and create necessary planning materials to foster continuous improvement

Condition: Having already received a classroom LTP on “How to Conduct an AAR” and given the How To Train Manual

Standard: Comply with exact instructions issued by the TAC and company commander

Instructor Notes:

This is the subject of the next four LTPs for the seniors. Prior to each one, the TAC must communicate his expectations and issue his guidance, to include the products he expects the cadets to individually and collectively produce. This guidance may include such things as the following:

- AAR the execution of a specific policy or procedure and record the results in Issue, Discussion, Recommendation format. This could be a group or individual project.
- Initiate or complete a specific portion of the METL assessment training brief. One technique would be that under the supervision of the commander, the Academic Officer could work on the academic pillar portion, the XO and PLs the military pillar portion, the HA and Honor Rep the character pillar portion, and the Athletic Officer the fitness portion.
- Prepare continuity books for specific chain of command positions. It is recommended that once completed, the cadets turn the continuity book in to the TAC for safekeeping over the summer and issue to the new chain of command member next AY.

Below are excerpts from selected publications that may be useful references for this LTP:

From the How to Train Manual

Effective training results from a sound analysis of the unit’s mission and its ability to accomplish that mission. The mission of The Citadel is “to educate and develop our cadets to become principled leaders in all walks of life by instilling the core values of The Citadel in a disciplined and intellectually challenging environment.” The Citadel Experience is built upon The Citadel’s core values and is integrated across the four pillars of Academics, Military, Moral-Ethical, and Physical Effectiveness. These four pillars will be used to form the following Mission Essential Task List (METL) for each cadet company:

a. Produce principled leaders in the academic pillar
b. Produce principled leaders in the military pillar
c. Produce principled leaders in the character pillar
d. Produce principled leaders in the fitness pillar.
During April, each company TAC and cadet company commander will assess the company’s performance in each of these four tasks as either T (trained), P (needs practice), or U (untrained) and develop a plan for continuous growth. They will then brief the assessment and plan to the battalion TAC for approval. The out-going cadet company commander will be responsible for this action, but the in-coming company commander will be an active participant.

During April, each out-going cadet company commander, with the support of the TAC and in-coming company commander, will brief the Commandant or his representative on his company METL. The battalion TAC will schedule this event and all companies in the battalion will give their briefing in the same meeting. The battalion commander will provide battalion trends at the beginning and concluding remarks at the end. Each company will plan on a fifteen minute presentation using the prescribed template. An archive of previous briefings is available on the Leadership Programs webpage under Company Training Briefs.
http://www.citadel.edu/root/assistant-commandant-company-training-briefs

During Leadership Week, the company TAC will brief the cadet company commander on any developments and new guidance that has been generated over the summer, and the company commander will then use the updated METL assessment as part of her company expectations brief. This METL assessment provides a basis for any subsequent planning of training.

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An effective means of forwarding recommendations up the chain of command is the “Issue, Discussion, Recommendation” format. An example follows:

**Issue:** “Room inventory & arrangement/box inventory” execution

**Discussion:** There are some 50 items to be inventoried. The typical COA is to have one person (usually supply sgt or PSG) yell out items one by one across a platoon spread out across the entire 4th Division on both sides of the letter. This does not facilitate command and control. Cadets typically say they do it this way because they have only one copy of the inventory sheet.

**Recommendation:** Cadets should be trained to conduct the inventory at the squad level to facilitate efficiency, junior leader development, and command and control. Cadets should exercise their initiative and problem-solving skills to make additional copies of the inventory sheet. Squads should gather at a designated location with the SL in charge of inventorying five knobs and the CPL in charge of inventorying the other five knobs. The PSG should supervise the SLs’ performance of this task. Once the inventory is done, the SLs can teach a designated room arrangement task such as “how to make your bed.”

**From the TAC Handbook:**

TACs can contribute to this [METL assessment] process in several ways. First is to be an honest broker of the commander’s assessment. Many commanders assess their companies as “Trained” when they more accurately are at the “Needs Practice” level. T-A-Cing in this area is more than just teaching a lesson in humility. It is helping cadets develop the ability to objectively assess,
monitor, and evaluate in a way that can lead to recommendations and direct action. TACs should help cadets develop an assessment plan to monitor progress for each strategy throughout the year and then evaluate the end state. Additional information is available in the Officers’ Guide on pages 26-28 and the How to Train manual in Chapter 4.

Second, TACs can help the commanders develop actionable plans to improve weaknesses and sustain strengths. Left to their own devices, many commanders will merely establish goals in lieu of such plans. For example, many commanders address the academic pillar strategy as “to have a company GPA of 3.0.” Without any plan of execution, this is merely a goal.

Third, TACs can rehearse the briefing with the commander. Many commanders exceed the time limit, have distracting typos on their slides, do not anticipate what questions might be asked, or otherwise could benefit from delivering their briefing at full combat speed to a TAC before trying it out on the Commandant.

Some General Thoughts on Continuity Books

**Purpose:** Continuity books are one way to fulfill the fifth step in CTM: “work for growth in others.” Continuity books contribute to this growth at both the individual and organizational levels. At the individual level, they are essential to leader’s moral obligation to “train your replacement” so that his successor has the ability to do well at his new position. At the organizational level, continuity books help promote growth by sustaining momentum. Many activities an organization performs are cyclic or recurring in nature. For example, The Citadel conducts Commandant’s and President’s Inspections each year. Complex operations such as these are exhausting, and harried leaders must resist the temptation of moving from one major event to the next without capturing the lessons learned in order to foster continuous improvement.

**Organizing the book.** If you do not inherit a continuity book from your predecessor, a good technique to create your own is to just “build it as you go.” Get a three ring binder and some alphabetical dividers. Make the first page a table of contents and as you come up with something that you think might be useful to your successor, list it on the table of contents and put it behind a divider. At this point err on the side of too much. Every now and then review your contents and do some editing. Things you thought might turn out to be important but didn’t can be eliminated and maybe you have several back-and-forth emails about a subject and in the end decide you only need to keep the last one. At the end of the year, reevaluate everything you collected and finalize your table of contents and organize the book accordingly. Organizational options include chronological, event, or issue based on the specific characteristics of the job. Remember that sometimes leaving your successor too much is as confusing as leaving him not enough. When deciding the final contents, ask yourself:

  - Is this something I wish I had when I started this job?
  - Is this something that helps my successor pick up where I left off?
  - If I don’t pass this information on to my successor, where and how else would he get it?
  - Is this something my successor will likely encounter or was this a one-time thing?
  - Is this information available elsewhere and if so, is it better that I refer my successor to that source or include it here?
Table of Contents - This page should be at the very beginning of the document to give the reader a quick reference to all the information contained within the book.

“Read Me First” - This section is a pass-down note from the creator of the continuity book to orient the reader to any items of emphasis, urgency, on-going action, clarification, or other uniqueness that helps promote understanding, context, and prioritization.

References - This section lists the documents, forms, publications, websites, and other sources of information that the author found useful in effectively performing her job. Examples might be the link for training schedules on the Operations and Planning webpage, The Citadel Physical Readiness Training Manual, or CC Form 61, Weapons Count/Inventory. The best section of references not only lists or has the reference; it also has a brief explanation of how and why the cadet uses that reference.

Duties and Responsibilities - The author should provide a job description of the duty position. The White Book provides general statements and the author should include that verbatim. He should also, however, include his own personal statement of his duties and responsibilities based on his experience and his particular unit.

Mission Essential Task List (METL)/Training Assessment Briefing - At the end of each year, the out-going and in-coming company commanders brief the Commandant on the unit’s METL assessment. These briefings are housed on-line on the Leadership Programs webpage and can be referred to that way or included in a paper copy here. Most importantly, however, is a specific reference to those portions of the assessment and training strategy that impact the duty position. For example, the Academic Officer would provide in this section the specific details justifying last year’s assessment and the detailed plan to accomplish the training strategy for next year.

Common Tasks - This is one of the key sections of the continuity book. It provides step-by-step instruction on how to accomplish key common tasks for that duty position. This can be done with worded instructions or through pictures and diagrams, such as flow charts. References can be made to existing documents that outline, for example, how a PR is processed, but the R & D NCO should still include the specific nuances of that procedure in that particular company. Clerks should explain how to complete the strength and status report. Drillmasters should explain how to review parade results and use them to plan an upcoming drill period. Athletic Officers should explain who each intramural season works. If paperwork must be filled out as part of a task, the author should enclose properly completed examples of it.

Unit Roster or Suspense Roster Templates - Continuity books that refer to positions involving leadership of a unit should include templates for the various rosters associated with the unit and position. Examples are the hurricane roster for the 1SG, the leader book for the squad sergeant, the key roster for the supply sergeant, and the room assignment roster for the clerk. Continuity books that refer to positions responsible for staff actions should include a suspense roster for how an action is tracked from initiation to completion. An example would be the R & D log for the XO and Fourthclass Knowledge Checklist for a squad sergeant.

Important Points of Contact (POCs) – The author should list the position, name, location, and contact information for people she regularly interacts with. For example, for the armorer, this
would include Chief McIntyre; for the HAO it would include Ms Shealy; and for the Ops NCO it would include SFC Greene. Even better is to include what exactly it is that this routine contact exists for.

**Equipment Listing** – If any equipment is associated with the job such as road guard vests for the Provost or cleaning supplies for the Supply Sergeant, list it here, along with where it is maintained or who it is drawn from.

**Battle Rhythm Chart** - This chart shows the normal recurring events in the unit that the author attended or conducted. These would include the squad sergeant’s battle rhythm for inspecting MRI, the Ops Officer’s training meetings, and the XO’s staff meetings.

**Oporders and AARs** - The author should have a separate section for each key event that directly impacted her duties such as the Commandant’s Inspection for a CSM, the CFPT for an Athletic Officer, and a pep rally for the Activities Officer. She should include both the oporder for that event and a personal AAR.

**Calendar of Events** – If the author has access to the long range calendar for the upcoming year, he should include it. More than likely that will not be the case, so he should include last year’s calendar. In either case, he should highlight those key events that impact the duty position and briefly explain how they are planned, prepared, executed, and assessed.

**Recent Inspection and Evaluation Results** – If these are not included in other sections such as the METL/Training Assessment, they should be included here. These would include such things as supply room inspections, parade results, intramural standings, and cumulative class absences. The author should annotate how to sustain good results and improve poor ones.

**Summary of Ongoing Actions**- This section will likely be blank because most things reset here each year. There may be some exceptions, however, such as if CAS is only partially fielded, the author may explain what lies ahead and how it impacts the position.

**Lessons Learned and Personal Note**- This section is an opportunity for the author to highlight personal lessons learned and specific advice and encouragement to her successor.