
Certificate in Military Planning

Strategic Leadership and Decision Making

Strategic leadership and decision making are crucial components of military planning. The following terms and vocabulary are essential for understanding these concepts:

1. **Strategic Leadership**: the ability to establish a direction for an organization, build a team to achieve that direction, and make decisions that support the organization's goals and values. Strategic leadership requires a deep understanding of the organization's mission, vision, and values, as well as its external environment.

Example: A military commander demonstrates strategic leadership by setting a clear vision for their unit, building a team of skilled and motivated individuals, and making decisions that align with the organization's goals and values.

2. **Decision Making**: the process of selecting a course of action from multiple options. Decision making involves identifying the problem, gathering information, evaluating alternatives, selecting a solution, and implementing and monitoring the solution.

Example: A military planner must consider multiple factors, such as resources, terrain, and weather, before making a decision about the best course of action for a mission.

3. **Strategic Thinking**: the ability to think critically and creatively about the organization's long-term goals and how to achieve them. Strategic thinking involves analyzing the internal and external environment, identifying trends and opportunities, and developing plans to capitalize on them.

Example: A military commander must engage in strategic thinking to anticipate potential threats and opportunities, and develop plans to address them.

4. **Mission Command**: a leadership philosophy that emphasizes decentralized decision making and empowering subordinates to take action. Mission command requires clear communication of the organization's objectives and intent, and trust in subordinates to make decisions that support those objectives.

Example: A military leader may use mission command to delegate decision making to their subordinates, allowing them to respond quickly to changing circumstances on the battlefield.

5. **Risk Management**: the process of identifying, assessing, and mitigating potential risks. Risk management involves analyzing the probability and impact of different risks, and developing plans to address them.

Example: A military planner must consider potential risks, such as enemy resistance or adverse weather conditions, and develop contingency plans to address them.

6. **Decision Making Models**: frameworks that guide the decision making process. Decision making models may include cost-benefit analysis, expected value analysis, and decision trees.

Example: A military planner may use a decision making model, such as a decision tree, to evaluate the potential outcomes of different courses of action.

7. **Critical Thinking**: the ability to analyze information, identify patterns and relationships, and make reasoned judgments. Critical thinking involves questioning assumptions, evaluating evidence, and considering alternative perspectives.

Example: A military commander must engage in critical thinking to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different courses of action, and make informed decisions.

8. **Creative Thinking**: the ability to generate new and innovative ideas. Creative thinking involves thinking outside the box, challenging assumptions, and exploring new possibilities.

Example: A military planner may use creative thinking to develop unconventional strategies that capitalize on the enemy's weaknesses.

9. **Ethical Decision Making**: the process of making decisions that align with ethical principles, such as fairness, respect, and integrity. Ethical decision making involves considering the potential consequences of different actions, and choosing the course of action that best aligns with ethical principles.

Example: A military leader must engage in ethical decision making to ensure that their actions are consistent with the organization's values, and do not harm innocent civilians.

10. **Crisis Decision Making**: the process of making decisions in high-pressure situations with limited information. Crisis decision making requires quick thinking, adaptability, and a focus on the most critical issues.

Example: A military commander may need to make crisis decisions during a surprise attack, when there is limited time to gather information and evaluate alternatives.

11. **Cognitive Biases**: systematic errors in thinking that can lead to poor decision making. Cognitive biases may include confirmation bias, availability bias, and sunk cost fallacy.

Example: A military planner may be susceptible to confirmation bias, which is the tendency to seek out information that confirms their pre-existing beliefs and ignore contradictory evidence.

12. **Decision Support Systems**: tools that help individuals and organizations make informed decisions. Decision support systems may include data analytics platforms, simulation models, and expert systems.

Example: A military planner may use a decision support system, such as a simulation model, to evaluate the potential outcomes of different courses of action.

13. **Group Decision Making**: the process of making decisions as a team. Group decision making involves collaboration, communication, and consensus-building.

Example: A military unit may engage in group decision making to develop a plan for a complex mission, drawing on the diverse perspectives and expertise of each team member.

14. **Decision Making Under Uncertainty**: the process of making decisions when there is limited information and high uncertainty. Decision making under uncertainty requires a focus on the most critical issues, and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Example: A military commander may need to make decisions under uncertainty during a complex mission, when there is limited information about the enemy's movements and intentions.

15. **Cultural Intelligence**: the ability to understand and navigate different cultural norms and values. Cultural intelligence is essential for effective strategic leadership and decision making in a global context.

Example: A military leader may need to demonstrate cultural intelligence when working with coalition partners from different countries and cultures.

In conclusion, strategic leadership and decision making are complex processes that require a deep understanding of the organization's mission, vision, and values, as well as the external environment. Effective strategic leaders must be able to think critically and creatively, engage in ethical decision making, and adapt to changing circumstances. Decision making models, decision support systems, and group decision making can help individuals and organizations make informed decisions, while cognitive biases and decision making under uncertainty can present challenges. Cultural intelligence is essential for effective strategic leadership and decision making in a global context. By understanding these key terms and concepts, military planners can enhance their strategic leadership and decision making skills, and better achieve their organizational goals.