

Developing Marines for Complexity

In complex terrain crowded with multiple adversaries and disparate threats intermixed with populations of various loyalties and motivations, Marines must be able to understand the battlespace with sufficient clarity to identify the points of advantage. Just as standard training teaches Marines how to read the ground and use the physical domain to their tactical advantage, it should teach them how to read the human terrain and navigate the social domain. Cognitive capabilities, especially critical thinking-based approaches such as negotiating skills and problem-solving methods, are highly valuable in certain situations where the use of lethal force might be counterproductive to the larger mission. We need Marines with mental acuity and resilience no less than physical fitness if we are to remain a professional, disciplined force that can be effective in chaotic environments and complex terrain.

To develop Marines for complexity, we must:

- Review our education and training curricula to ensure we are developing Marines with the agility and perspectives to manage uncertainty, think critically, and solve complex problems.
- Continue to refine and exploit the use of a Live, Virtual, and Constructive (LVC) Training Environment to enhance training vertically and horizontally across the MAGTF.
- Expand collective training opportunities at all levels, incorporate greater complexity in training constructs and leverage Combined/Joint opportunities to increase warfighting effectiveness.
- Revitalize programs such as Combat Hunter to emphasize specific skills to better prepare Marines to operate in the human terrain.