THE MARINE CORPS DOCTORAL PROGRAM

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Abstract

The U.S. Marine Corps Officer Professional Military Education 2006 Study and Findings Report (Wilhelm Report) represents the Marine Corps’ continuing effort to better educate and prepare officers for future operating environments. Among the many findings and recommendations, the Wilhelm Report asserts that the future Marine officer needs a “greater variety of skills and a wider breadth of knowledge” to handle the military, political, social, and economic challenges impacting tactical, operational, and strategic objectives. Recent experiences in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Haiti are but a few examples future officers can expect. In response, the Marine Corps University’s (MCU) Vision and Strategy Committee expressed potential changes to Marine Corp PME and educational programs including the establishment of a doctoral program. In his 2010 Commandant’s Planning Guidance General James F. Amos further acknowledged the Wilhelm Report’s findings by expressing his intent to produce “highly-capable officers who are knowledgeable in the many complex disciplines” by improving future war fighting capabilities through existing special educational programs and PME. Unfortunately, MCU’s plan to establish a doctoral program as a means of enhancing the academic credentials of its military faculty falls short of improving future war fighting capabilities and preparing Marine officers for future operational challenges.

Subject Terms

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Disclaimer

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the individual student author and do not necessarily represent the views of either the Marine Corps School of Advanced Warfighting or any other government agency.

References to this study should include the foregoing statement.
Executive Summary

Title: The Marine Corps Doctoral Program

Author: Major Edward T. Nevgoski, United States Marine Corps

Thesis: As increasingly complex operating environments become the norm there is no better time to establish a Marine Corps doctoral program, through existing education programs and resources, to develop today’s Marine officer’s understanding of the evolving complexities of the art and science of war.

Discussion: The U.S. Marine Corps Officer Professional Military Education 2006 Study and Findings Report (Wilhelm Report) represents the Marine Corps’ continuing effort to better educate and prepare officers for future operating environments. Among the many findings and recommendations, the Wilhelm Report asserts that the future Marine officer needs a “greater variety of skills and a wider breadth of knowledge” to handle the military, political, social, and economic challenges impacting tactical, operational, and strategic objectives. Recent experiences in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Haiti are but a few examples future officers can expect. In response, the Marine Corps University’s (MCU) Vision and Strategy Committee expressed potential changes to Marine Corp PME and educational programs including the establishment of a doctoral program. In his 2010 Commandant’s Planning Guidance General James F. Amos further acknowledged the Wilhelm Report’s findings by expressing his intent to produce “highly-capable officers who are knowledgeable in the many complex disciplines” by improving future war fighting capabilities through existing special educational programs and PME. Unfortunately, MCU’s plan to establish a doctoral program as a means of enhancing the academic credentials of its military faculty falls short of improving future war fighting capabilities and preparing Marine officers for future operational challenges.

Recommendation: The Marine Corps doctoral program is not intended to replace existing PME programs. What it could produce is a percentage of officers with advanced thinking approaches and a thorough understanding of a number of relevant disciplines influencing operations in complex environments with changing demands. Marine officers, at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war, must understand how military, cultural, political, and economic factors influence war and how they can better leverage their understanding of the factors to be successful on 21st century battlefields. To leverage these skills, advanced thinking approaches are critical. With the right program, the need for a doctoral program in the Marine Corps may never again be an issue, especially if the program focuses on developing officers with a thorough understanding of the complex and dynamic nature of war.
Introduction

Senior leaders must strive to take the long view and appreciate the intrinsic and institutional benefits of a well-educated Marine officer. --Maj Gen Robert B. Neller

The U.S. Marine Corps Officer Professional Military Education 2006 Study and Findings Report (Wilhelm Report) represents the Marine Corps' continuing effort to better educate and prepare officers for future operating environments. Among the many findings and recommendations, the Wilhelm Report asserts that the future Marine officer needs a "greater variety of skills and a wider breadth of knowledge" to handle the military, political, social, and economic challenges impacting tactical, operational, and strategic objectives. Recent experiences in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Haiti are but a few examples future officers can expect. In response, the Marine Corps University's (MCU) Vision and Strategy Committee expressed potential changes to Marine Corp PME and educational programs including the establishment of a doctoral program.

In his 2010 Commandant's Planning Guidance General James F. Amos further acknowledged the Wilhelm Report's findings by expressing his intent to produce "highly-capable officers who are knowledgeable in the many complex disciplines" by improving future war fighting capabilities through existing special educational programs and PME. Unfortunately, MCU's plan to establish a doctoral program as a means of enhancing the academic credentials of its military faculty falls short of improving future war fighting capabilities and preparing Marine officers for future operational challenges. As increasingly complex operating environments become the norm there is no better time to establish a Marine Corps doctoral program, through existing education programs and resources, to develop today's Marine officer's understanding of the evolving complexities of the art and science of war.
The Benefits of a Marine Corps Doctoral Program

It is my constant ambition to see the Marine officer filled with ambition, initiative, and originality; and they can get these attributes only through liberality of thought - broad thought - thought that differs from precedence and the compulsory imprint of others.4

--Brig Gen J.C. Breckinridge, USMC

Preparing Marine officers for what General Amos describes as a “world of increasing instability and conflict, characterized by poverty, competition for resources, urbanization, overpopulation and extremism” means the difference between success and failure.5 The “strategic corporal” theory applies to officers as much as it does the junior-most Marine. The challenges confronting Marine officers demand advanced thinking approaches—broad, critical, creative, intellectual, direct, and indirect—leaving the imagination as the only limitation.

According to the Wilhelm Report future Marine officers must:

- Think critically, whether confronting concrete or abstract problems;
- Express themselves, both orally and in the written form, clearly and effectively in a diverse set of circumstances and before a wide range of audiences;
- Understand national security strategy and policy as well as the responsibilities of other agencies of the federal government;
- Be proficient in their military specialty, Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) operations and how they fit into joint, international, and interagency operations;
- Appreciate the roles that international organizations, non-governmental agencies, and the private sector play in military operations, especially in the emerging security environment;
- Coordinate, where needed, the employment of military capabilities with the other elements of national power.6

The best means to develop advanced thinking approaches is through education, training, and experience. Education provides officers with a base of knowledge and principles for greater
understanding. Officers arrive at a true understanding of a specific set of principles through
exposure or, for Marine officers, training and experience. Expanding an individual’s thinking
processes to look beyond the obvious solution to a problem is one of the many products of
graduate education and the basis for a Marine Corps doctoral program. The benefits of
understanding advanced thinking approaches and applying them in complex environments are
immeasurable.

Graduate education, in a traditional sense, also produces experts in a particular field of
study who possess critical and intellectual thinking skills, complex problem-solving and
communications skills, and increased personal discipline and initiative—qualities essential to
developing and applying advanced thinking approaches. To a greater extent, doctoral programs
typically produce the same qualities with superior original thinking skills. Combining these
skills with experience significantly enhances the potential for success because the same practical
and holistic approaches applied to complex problems and decision-making in graduate education
also apply to complex environments with changing demands.

Complex operating environments have all but become the norm for Marine officers.
Operations in Somalia from 1992 to 1994, where the “three-block war” challenged Marines
tactically and strategically, confirmed a requirement to educate and prepare Marine officers for
changing cultural and political demands. Recognizing the impact of changing demands on
Marines, Lieutenant Colonel Howard E. Snow, a proponent of linking graduate education with
PME to better prepare officers contends in his April 2000 Marine Corps Gazette article that to
“meet the demands of today’s technological and social advances” the Marine Corps must
develop educational programs to foster new and advanced thinking approaches. Snow adds:

As much as we would like to continue on the path of the old paradigm, the
changes that technology has issued must be acknowledged. As the new complex
society of the future comes upon us, there exists a need for greater thinking throughout all levels of the Marine Corps. The average Marine in this rapidly changing, complex, technological world has to do more thinking and make more decisions than ever before. 8

Advanced thinking approaches are fairly common throughout Marine Corps history, particularly as they pertain to adapting to unfamiliar and complex environments. In fact, many Marine officers unknowingly use advanced thinking approaches as primary tools for change and adaptation but often fail to realize it or how they might increase potential, on and off the battlefield, by applying this skill. The standard method of educating Marine officers to better understand complex environment is through the study of lessons learned, or, history, and combining the same lessons to concepts and doctrine. There are many ways to achieve this, notably through resident PME programs.

Resident PME programs are a critical tool in developing an officer’s understanding of the military profession. A sound PME program “draws from a breadth and depth of education in a range of relevant disciplines to include history, anthropology, economics, geopolitics, cultural studies, the 'hard sciences,' law, and strategic communications.”9 Military campaign studies and service and joint concepts and doctrine play a vital role in the developing the officer’s understanding of the art and science of war at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels.
PME, however, is not enough since programs are limited in educating officers in many of the technical and non-technical aspects of these focus areas. The Marine Corps depends upon civilian graduate education programs—the Special Education Program (SEP), at the U.S. Naval Post-graduate School (NPS), and the Advanced Degree Program (ADP), with attendance at numerous major civilian universities—to provide technical (international relations, analytical operations, and information warfare) and non-technical (history, political science, economics,
and cultural anthropology) expertise for officers serving in specialized assignments within the operating forces and supporting establishment.\textsuperscript{10}

While education is a critical component to developing advanced thinking approaches, experience, in and out of uniform, is critical component of an officer’s ability to recognize, apply, or adapt lessons in complex environments. More importantly, experience provides the Marine officer with what the Wilhelm Report describes as “the confidence needed to make informed decisions and take appropriate action”\textsuperscript{11} Experience in different environments is a critical element in developing flexible thinkers. ADP and SEP provide Marine officers with a new venue and educational experience, creating an environment far different from what officers are accustomed by removing them from their comfort zone. Whereas education provides the base of knowledge, experience provides familiarity, true understanding, and flexibility. If an officer lacks experience, education fills the gap thereby making education and experience mutually supporting and reliant upon one another.

Combining education and experience creates balance. Unfortunately, determining the right balance is a point of contention among Marine officers and prevents an honest assessment of how the Marine Corps might benefit from a doctoral program. Although experience is not an issue for today’s Marine officer, the benefit of a graduate education to promote advanced thinking approaches as well as lending relevance and credibility can become a catalyst for paradigm change.

\textbf{Time for a Paradigm Change}

\textit{While professional learning is a lifelong responsibility of all Marine officers, they, along with their commanders and the Marine Corps as an institution, share a collective responsibility for its success. But success also requires major changes in the Marine Corps' military education system, and a substantial increase in resources. This challenge
is one that cannot be deferred, and must be met, if the Marine Corps is to maintain its heritage of service to the nation.\textsuperscript{12}

\textit{2006 Wilhelm Report}

According to the Officer Assignments Branch at Headquarters, Marine Corps selection to resident service PME programs, SEP, and ADP is often a competitive process with career-broadening possibilities. If this is true, why do so few Marine officers apply to SEP and ADP compared to the number of Marines seeking attendance at resident PME schools? The most common reasons are timing and the need to maintain military occupational specialty (MOS) proficiency. The perceived institutional bias against graduate education programs and the impact a graduate education "payback" or utilization assignment has on future promotions and command selection are also determining factors.\textsuperscript{13} Future promotion and command selection concerns, however, are rarely voiced when officers apply to resident service PME, and for good reason.

Attendance at resident service PME schools typically follows or precedes operating forces or career-broadening supporting establishment assignments and several years of practical experience at a particular grade, leaving no adverse affects on an officer’s competitive career track. Since PME represents the study of concepts and doctrine, officers view it as career enhancing and the next step in an officer’s operational career progression. Conversely, attendance in SEP and ADP and subsequent utilization assignments typically occur in lieu of the more common and competitive supporting establishment assignment, affecting the level of professional diversity an officer is expected to achieve in a career. Because of this, reversing the perception of graduate education as simply time away from the Marine Corps to a diversifying assignment with long-term war fighting and institutional benefits must be demonstrated for there to be a proper understanding of doctoral or comparable academic programs.
The advanced thinking approaches graduate education provides, as long as it does not detract from the operational experience and proficiency of the officer, makes for a highly-capable officer corps. Graduate education and doctoral programs enhance intellectual development and thinking approaches of Marine officers as well as improving the Marine Corps’ operational effectiveness and relevancy within the national military strategy are also becoming a common theme among Marine officers. In his December 2009 Marine Corps Gazette article Lieutenant Colonel Michael D. Grice, a proponent of graduate education, proposes a Marine Corps doctoral program, linked to the current PME process, is the best method of developing Marine officers intellectually, as well as preventing Marine officers from being marginalized within the DOD. Grice also stresses graduate education develops officers with an “ability to think brilliantly and unconventionally.”

Intrinsically linked with any discussion of the benefit of doctoral programs for Marine officers, however, is the detrimental affect it has on an officer’s long-term performance due to the exposure to non-military ways of thinking, reliance on scientific principles vice raw experience, and the inordinate amount of time spent away from operating forces and occupational specialties. Add the concerns of accomplished and promising officers losing technical proficiency and practical experience as compared to their peers who remain with the operating forces or complete critical supporting establishment assignments one can understand the low number of officers applying to civilian graduate education programs. For many these concerns, regardless of the benefits of developing advanced thinking approaches, are not worth the potential adverse affect on an officer’s practical reasoning and decision-making abilities.

Colonel Gordon D. Batchelor, USMC (ret), a decorated Vietnam War veteran, contends that civilian graduate education, and particularly doctoral programs, tend to produce
professionals “less knowledgeable in a practical sense, less articulate, and less effective as
decision framers and decisionmakers” compared to officers with a wealth of experience in their
respective fields. Although not opposed to graduate education as a whole, Batchelor favors an
education built on experience and lessons learned, arguing the Marine Corps of the past has
never suffered “for lack of intellectual breadth and depth” among its officers. Lieutenant
Colonel Neil Schuehle supported Batchelor’s position and added in his February 2010 Marine
Corps Gazette article and rebuttal to Grice that current Marine Corps methods (progressive PME
and experience) produce brilliant officers, on and off the battlefield, and without benefit of
doctoral programs.

These concerns should not be overlooked but considered more on a case-by-case basis
rather than as a stereotype. This can only happen if the Marine Corps officially places greater
value on graduate education by selecting the best and brightest officers for graduate education
programs. Official recognition is critical since, without it, perceived bias will undercut the
purpose and benefits of graduate education and reduce the prospects of inculcating advanced
thinking approaches among Marine officers. The U. S. Army is investing in the next generation
of officers by maximizing their potential through doctoral programs without an initial utilization
assignment while at the same time recognizing the importance of graduate education as a tool to
develop future war fighters. Although the Army will not reap the benefits of this approach for
a number of years, they will eventually produce a relevant and credible officer corps, on and off
the battlefield, with the foresight to see future challenges and provide viable solutions to
overcome them.
The Brigadier General James D. Hittle Doctoral Program

*The society that separates its scholars from its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting done by fools.*

--- Thucydides

Doctoral programs, regardless of the university, require mastery of a field of study and completion of requirements and components of a terminal degree. The average time to complete a doctorate, in a full-time status, is three to five years including completion of preliminary courses and seminars, fieldwork, comprehensive exams, and writing and defending a dissertation. The doctorate, in most cases, represents lifelong study with years of practical understanding through experience. A Marine Corps doctoral program should represent the same lifelong study of the art and science of war, merging designated non-technical or technical core disciplines with military studies at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war. Under the supervision of MCU, a program of this nature meets a number of the Commandant’s specified tasks to maximize existing education programs and resources. The Wilhelm Report’s recommendations on preparing officers under one program could become a reality with creation of a single program—the Brigadier General James D. Hittle Doctoral Program.

Named after Brigadier General James D. Hittle, a decorated Marine officer and lifelong student of the art of war, the Hittle Program follows the same construct as most civilian doctoral programs but with greater emphasis on practical experience. Officers entering the program would follow a standard career track rotating between operating forces and supporting establishment assignments for the first ten years of their careers accumulating experience within their MOS, the Marine Corps as an organization, and operations. Eligibility requirements are selection to major, completion of resident Marine Corps Expeditionary Warfare School, which provides a foundational in war fighting education, attendance in a resident intermediate level
service PME program and completion of intermediate degree requirements (Master of Military Studies). The goal of the Hittle Program is to produce a body of officers with extensive practical experience and a terminal education in the art and science of war to better prepare them for tactical and operational assignments.

Phase I of the Hittle Program identifies officers for selection, which occurs at the conclusion of an officer's second assignment within operating forces and during attendance at a resident Intermediate Level School (ILS). Fresh from a second three-year operating forces assignment and one supporting establishment assignment and Marine Corps Expeditionary School already behind them, those officers with demonstrated exceptional performance in their particular occupational fields undergo a MCU interview and screening process. Upon completion of resident ILS, selected officers would attend either a major university or NPS to complete coursework in a MCU-approved core discipline.

During Phase II, officers focus on doctoral requirements in the fields of analytical, cyber, and information operations or history, international relations, economics, and cultural anthropology. After completing the required ADP or SEP coursework and comprehensive exams, officers begin Phase III of the Hittle Program at MCU during a two-year utilization assignment as an instructor supporting all associated schools and assignments. Equally as important as their instructor duties is the completion of all dissertation requirements from their respective universities or NPS. Upon successful completion officers receive a Doctorate in the Art and Science of War.

Each year, the Marine Corps selects as many as seventy-five officers for attendance in ADP and SEP, all of whom complete utilization assignments and consist of officers ranging from first lieutenant to major. With official recognition of the importance of a doctoral program,
twenty-five percent of the ADP and SEP allocation redirected to the Hittle Program, and the program at full operational capability in 2012, as many as 18 officers could earn a PhD in 2017 and return to the operating forces that same year to apply their skills in an tactical or operational environment, influence their respective MOS, and inspire the next generation of officers. By 2022, the Hittle Program could produce 108 PhDs and, by 2027, the number could reach 200.

**Conclusion**

*The talents, abilities, and habits of thought which the officer needed in combat could in large part be acquired only through the broader avenues of learning outside his profession. The fact that the officer was continually dealing with people required him to have an understanding of the human attitudes, motivations, and behavior that only a liberal education provided.*

---Charles E. White, *The Enlightened Soldier*

The Marine Corps doctoral program is not intended to replace existing PME programs. What it could produce is a percentage of officers with advanced thinking approaches and a thorough understanding of a number of relevant disciplines influencing operations in complex environments with changing demands. Marine officers, at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war, must understand how military, cultural, political, and economic factors influence war and how they can better leverage their understanding of the factors to be successful on 21st century battlefields. To leverage these skills, advanced thinking approaches are critical. With the right program, the need for a doctoral program in the Marine Corps may never again be an issue, especially if the program focuses on developing officers with a thorough understanding of the complex and dynamic nature of war.

If nothing else the Hittle Program expands an officer’s thought process through advanced thinking approaches and broadens the officer’s understanding of war. It also answers a number of findings and recommendations. First, the program meets the Commandant’s intent of getting
the most out of existing special education programs and PME by transforming the most beneficial aspects of education and experience into war fighting capabilities for the 21st Century. Anything less is an inefficient use of Marine Corps PME and graduate education programs and resources. Second, the Hittle Program fulfills the Wilhelm Report's recommendation to equip Marine officers with new and unique skills necessary to succeed in the most complex environments. Finally, the Hittle Program produces officers capable of applying advanced thinking approaches to solve complex future challenges, something every Marine officer needs for success on future battlefields.
Notes


8. Ibid.


12. Ibid., 4.


16. Ibid.


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The society that separates its scholars from its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting done by fools.

--Thucydides

Major Ed Nevgloski
Future War Paper Presentation
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The Marine Corps Doctoral Program

Agenda

- The Debate
- Historical Context
- Benefits of Graduate Education and the Doctoral Program
- The Paradigm
- Brigadier General James D. Hittle Doctoral Program
- Pros/Cons
- Summary
The Marine Corps Doctoral Program

The Debate

"As much as we would like to continue on the path of the old paradigm, the changes that technology has issued must be acknowledged. As the new complex society of the future comes upon us, there exists a need for greater thinking throughout all levels of the Marine Corps. The average Marine in this rapidly changing, complex, technological world has to do more thinking and make more decisions than ever before." -- Lieutenant Colonel Howard E. Snow, USMCR (Ret)

A sound PME program "draws from a breadth and depth of education in a range of relevant disciplines to include history, anthropology, economics, geopolitics, cultural studies, the 'hard sciences,' law, and strategic communications." -- MCU's Wilhelm Report

Graduate education develops officers with an "ability to think brilliantly and unconventionally." -- Lieutenant Colonel Michael D. Grice, USMC

Doctoral programs, tend to produce professionals "less knowledgeable in a practical sense, less articulate, and less effective as decision framers and decisionmakers." -- Colonel Gordon D. Batchelor, USMC (Ret)

Current PME programs produce brilliant officers, on and off the battlefield "without benefit of doctoral programs." -- Lieutenant Colonel Neil Schuehle, USMC

The Marine Corps Doctoral Program

Historical Context

- Marine Corps is the only service that does not have a doctoral program
- House Armed Services Committee (HASC) 1987 and 2010 PME reviews recommend tailored graduate education as a means to develop operational and strategic thinking within the armed services, including select doctoral studies
- U.S. Marine Corps Officer Professional Military Education 2006 Study and Findings Report (Wilhelm Report) states the future Marine officer needs a "greater variety of skills and a wider breadth of knowledge" to handle the military, political, social, and economic challenges impacting tactical, operational, and strategic objectives
- 2010 Commandant's Planning Guidance General James F. Amos further acknowledged the Wilhelm Report's findings by expressing his intent to produce "highly-capable officers who are knowledgeable in the many complex disciplines" by improving future war fighting capabilities through existing special educational programs and PME
- The 2010 Marine Corps University (MCU) Vision and Strategy Committee expressed potential changes to Marine Corps PME and educational programs including the establishment of a doctoral program to "enhance the academic credentials of its military faculty"
The Marine Corps Doctoral Program

Thesis

As increasingly complex operating environments become the norm there is no better time to establish a Marine Corps doctoral program, through existing education programs and resources, to develop today's Marine officer's understanding of the evolving complexities of the art and science of war.

The Marine Corps Doctoral Program

Benefits of a Doctoral Program

- Expanding an individual's thinking processes to look beyond the obvious solution to a problem is one of the many products of graduate education

- The best means to develop advanced thinking approaches is through education, training, and experience

- Produces experts in a particular field of study who possess critical and intellectual thinking skills, complex problem-solving and communications skills, and increased personal discipline and initiative—qualities essential to developing and applying advanced thinking approaches

- Fosters practical and holistic approaches to complex problems and decision-making in complex environments with changing demands.
The Marine Corps Doctoral Program

Resources

• MCU PME and Graduate Education (MMS, MOS)
• SEP (NPS)
• ADP
• Off-duty education

The Paradigm

• PME vs SEP and ADP
• Payback or utilization assignments
• Finding a balance between education and experience
• Promotions, command, competitiveness

"Senior leaders must strive to take the long view and appreciate the intrinsic and institutional benefits of a well-educated Marine officer."
—MajGen Robert B. Neller
The Marine Corps Doctoral Program

Brigadier General James D. Hittle Doctoral Program

- OpFor Tour
- Supporting Establishment Tour
- EWS (MAGTF)
- OpFor Tour + MCU Screening Process (OQR, Board, Interests)
- ILS (CSC, CGSC, NCSC, ACSC) and completion of master's program
- SEP/ADP (doctoral courses)
- 2-yr MCU Utilization Tour (Dissertation)

The Marine Corps Doctoral Program

Pros

- Meets the Commandant's intent of getting the most out of existing special education programs and PME
- Transforms the most beneficial aspects of education and experience into war fighting capabilities at the MARFOR and MAGTF levels
- Fulfills the Wilhelm Report's recommendation to equip Marine officers with new and unique skills necessary to succeed in the most complex environments
- Provides officers with advanced thinking approaches to solve complex future challenges
- At FOC in 2012, 18 officers could earn a PhD by 2017, 108 by 2022 and 200 by 2027
The Marine Corps Doctoral Program

Cons

- Potential to create specialized officers outside of MOS or MAGTF if not managed
- Takes officers out of normal career track
- Potential to replace experience and training with educational mindset if not managed

Summary

A Marine Corps doctoral program could produce a number of officers with advanced thinking approaches and a thorough understanding of a number of relevant disciplines influencing operations in complex environments with changing demands. Marine officers, at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war, must understand how military, cultural, political, and economic factors influence war and how they can better leverage their understanding of the factors to be successful on 21st century battlefields. To leverage these skills, advanced thinking approaches are critical.
Discussion