

THE NCO LEADERSHIP CENTER of EXCELLENCE
Master Leader Course (MLC)

M433: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
Advance Sheet

1. SCOPE:

This lesson establishes the foundation of the ability to think and to solve problems. We accomplish lesson objectives by means of advance readings, classroom discussion, and practice in the form of a practical exercise. Analyzing a contemporary issue confronting today's military helps to accentuate the concepts in problem solving and critical thinking. The practical exercise highlights the importance of sound thinking when dealing with unfamiliar situations. This lesson focuses learners on how to think rather than on what to do. This lesson reviews the steps to solving problems and the fundamental concepts of thinking. After this lesson, the learners are ready to solve problems in cohesive teams and provide logical solutions.

This lesson ties back to the Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education II (SEJPME II) course. This lesson supports The Army Profession, Ethic, and Leadership (ADP 6-22) of honorable service, military expertise and esprit de corps. This lesson is the backbone of the Master Leader Course. Students must be able to critically and creatively think to solve the problems presented in learning activities. This lesson prepares students for DLC V.

2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

TLO: This lesson supports 400-MLC-0430, Formulate management processes and skills to be an agile senior NCO at the organizational level.

ELO: 400-MLC-0430.14

Action: Determine critical thinking and creative thinking tools.

Condition: As a learner and senior leader attending face-to-face or virtual environments participating in dynamic, collaborative facilitated discussions, given references and multimedia resources.

Standard: Given a scenario, solve an ill-structured problem by:

1. Establishing a framework for solving complex problems, and
2. Analyzing blocks to creativity in self and organizations.

Learning Domain: Cognitive

Level of Learning: Analysis

ELO: 400-MLC-0430.15

Action: Analyze mental models.

Condition: As a learner and senior leader attending face-to-face or virtual environments participating in dynamic, collaborative facilitated discussions, given references and multimedia resources.

Standard: Analyze a scenario, by validating military mental models.

Learning Domain: Cognitive

Level of Learning: Analysis

ELO: 400-MLC-0430.16

Action: Analyze probable solutions for an ill-structured problem.

Condition: As a learner and senior leader attending face-to-face or virtual environments participating in dynamic, collaborative facilitated discussions, given references and multimedia resources.

Standard: Based on a scenario, summarize your findings that include:

1. Determining critical thinking processes; and
2. Ensuring the quality of a decision.

Learning Domain: Cognitive

Level of Learning: Analysis

This lesson supports the following NCO Common Core Competencies (NCO C3):

a. Readiness:

- (1) Assist the commander in prioritizing AR 350-1 training; enforced the unit's training program.

b. Leadership:

- (1) Live and demonstrate the attributes and competencies of the leadership requirements model.
- (2) Strengthen the characteristics of trust, honorable service, military expertise and esprit de corps through stewardship of the Army Profession.

c. Operations:

- (1) Analyze operational gaps in both the organization and the plan; leverage the shortfalls by providing the appropriate resources and guidance to achieve positive results.
- (2) Advise commanders and staff; direct the NCO support channel in all operations.

d. Training Management:

- (1) Understand and participate in the operations process.

e. Program Management:

- (1) Execute talent management.

3. PREPARATION FOR CLASS:

a. Read (35 Total Pages):

- ADP 5-0, *The Operations Process*, July 2019, Ch. 1, p. 1-15, para 1-65 thru 1-70 (1 page). Found at <https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/ADP.aspx> audio at https://rdl.train.army.mil/catalog/search?current=true&search_terms=audiobook
- ADP 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession* (W/Basic Incl C1), July 2019, Ch. 4, pp. 4-1 thru 4-2 (2 pages). (Found in previous location) (audio found in previous location)
- FM 5-0, *Planning and Orders Production*, May 2022, Ch. 3, pp. 3-1 thru 3-9 (9 pages). Found at <https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/FM.aspx>
- FM 6-22, *Leader Development*, June 2015, Ch. 5, pp. 5-1 thru 5-8 (8 pages). (Found in previous location) Interactive digital at https://rdl.train.army.mil/catalog/search?current=true&search_terms=Interactive%20Digital%20Publication%20
- *Red Team Handbook*, version 9.0, Ch. 4, pp. 43 thru 49 and Ch. 6, pp. 57 thru 66 (15 pages). Found at <https://usacac.army.mil/organizations/ufmcs-red-teaming/schedules-and-handbooks>

b. Be prepared to discuss the following in class:

- What is critical thinking? ADP 5-0 para 1-65 thru 1-70
- How is creative thinking different from critical thinking? ADP 5-0 para 1-65 thru 1-70
- How can assumptions inhibit mission readiness? FM 5-0 pp. 3-1 thru 3-9
- How do mental models assist leaders? FM 6-22 pp. 5-1 thru 5-8
- What are some models for problem solving used in the military? FM 5-0 pp. 3-1 thru 3-9
- What types of biases do we encounter in everyday life? ADP 5-0 para 1-65 thru 1-70, FM 6-22 pp. 5-1 thru 5-8
- What are some pitfalls that might cause groups to malfunction or issues that can hinder the performance of the group? FM 6-22 pp. 5-1 thru 5-8

4. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT(S): None.

5. ASSESSMENT PLAN: Refer to ISAP.