

Chapter 6

Evaluation

*“It cannot be too often repeated that in modern war, and especially in modern naval war, the chief factor in achieving triumph is what has been done in the way of thorough preparation and training before the beginning of war.”*⁶

President Theodore Roosevelt

*“To lead an untrained people to war is to throw them away.”*⁷

Confucius

Once Marines complete the practice portion of their training, leaders evaluate individual and unit performance against MCCRES mission performance standards, training and readiness events, or ITSS standards. The commander is responsible for the evaluation phase. The trainer and the Marines being trained also provide input to the evaluation.

Evaluations help determine if the training program is meeting its training goals. The evaluation phase measures the efficiency and effectiveness of the training program. Training effectiveness is determined by how well Marines meet or exceed the established training standards. Training efficiency is determined by how well the trainer (and indirectly the training manager) used available resources (e.g., training resources, time, funds, personnel, facilities, equipment, etc.) to train Marines. Evaluation results can indicate that additional training is necessary or that the training program needs revision.

Individual training proficiency is best evaluated by hands-on performance tests. Performance tests measure how well a Marine can perform a specified task. Team proficiency can be evaluated by the use of battle drills and exercises designed to measure how well Marines perform as a unit.

EVALUATIONS AND TESTS

Leaders at all levels continuously evaluate the performance of Marines and units. Leaders must know Marines' capabilities so they can lead properly, improve the training environment, and effectively coach and critique during training. Commanders must know their Marines' capabilities so they can better plan for the necessary resources such as time and equipment.

Performance evaluations include internal and external evaluations. Internal evaluations are performed by the leaders of the unit conducting the training. For example, the squad leader continuously assesses the training status of his/her squad and the individuals within the squad. External evaluations are conducted by the next higher echelon or by peer leaders.

Tests are given to determine if a Marine or unit can perform each task to standard. The tester does not interfere with the performance; the tester only reports results.

There are four primary techniques for evaluating training performances:

- Post training checks.
- Sampling.
- On-the-job observations.
- Evaluations by higher headquarters.

Post Training Checks

Post training checks are evaluations of training effectiveness. They are conducted at varying intervals after training. For the most timely results, trainers make the post training check the last part of the training session if time and resources permit. This provides the trainer with immediate feedback on the training's effectiveness and immediately identifies if the trainer needs to conduct remedial training to resolve deficiencies. If post training checks must be

conducted separately, they are conducted as soon after the practice as possible.

Post training checks also assess the need for sustainment training. When assessing the need for sustainment training, Marines do not receive pre-training information before the assessment. Sustainment checks are also another form of training. To achieve the best evaluation, leaders personally observe the training of Marines or units.

Sampling

Sampling determines if Marines and units can still perform specific tasks to standard. Leaders use performance evaluations, similar to a post training check, to randomly evaluate several Marines or a portion of a unit. This sampling technique can be applied to either individual or unit tasks. It provides the evaluator with an idea of the individual's or unit's proficiency level on a specific task.

Evaluators sample individual or unit performance as it exists at the time, advanced sustainment training is not provided. The intent is to determine the individual's or unit's level of proficiency without additional training. Marines are given just enough notice of the sampling so they have time to report to the evaluation site. They should not be notified too far in advance. They should not be given enough time to study or practice beforehand. For example, an evaluator can simply walk up to a Marine and say, "Show me how to emplace a Claymore mine." Then the evaluator gives the Marine the task, conditions, and standards. The results will indicate the Marine's actual level of proficiency.

Evaluator proficiency is important since the evaluator is tasked to observe a Marine's actions, decide if a Marine met the standard, and critique a Marine's performance. Therefore, evaluators may also need sustainment training if they have not performed the task for some time. They should be basing their evaluations on their proven abilities and recent experiences in accomplishing the same tasks.

To have an effective sampling, evaluators must assess more than one Marine, crew, squad, or platoon. Ten percent of the unit's personnel strength is usually an adequate sampling and provides a good indicator of the unit's proficiency level. Evaluators should not sample too many tasks at once, but concentrate on certain areas at a time.

On-the-Job Observations

Many Marines, particularly in support or aviation units, regularly perform their combat mission during their daily performance on the job. Therefore, leaders can conduct performance evaluations simply by watching Marines perform their daily tasks. Leaders then compare the results of the Marines' work to the standards.

Evaluation by Higher Headquarters

The chain of command conducts several kinds of performance evaluations at regular intervals. This allows leaders to assess how well their Marines and units perform their missions in the evaluated areas. They observe their Marines during evaluations and review the results. This helps leaders decide if their Marines are proficient or need more practice. These evaluations include—

- Marine battle skills training (MBST), which tests Marines on selected common tasks.
- Internal/external MCCRES evaluations. Internal MCCRES evaluations identify weaknesses. External MCCRES evaluations are conducted by higher headquarters to evaluate the ability of subordinate units to demonstrate selected tasks. See MCO 3501.1D, *Marine Corps Combat Readiness and Evaluation System*, for more information on MCCRES.

Leaders use evaluation results to determine the strengths and weaknesses of their Marines and subordinate units. During training meetings, they recommend future training based on this information.

PERFORMANCE-ORIENTED EVALUATIONS

Performance-oriented evaluations normally follow this sequence:

- Establish the conditions.
- Restate the tasks/conditions/training standards.
- Observe and evaluate.
- Coach and critique.
- Record the results.
- Report the results.

Establish the Conditions. ITSS manuals or MCCRES establish the conditions as part of the training objectives. For example,—

- If an ITSS manual's training objective lists a 7.62mm, M240G machine gun with all components, cleaning kit, cleaning solvent, rifle bore cleaner, lubricant, rags, and patches, then these materials must be on hand for use during the evaluation.
- If a training objective condition states during darkness, then the leader schedules the evaluation at night.
- If the evaluation is conducted as part of an FTX, the leader works with the exercise planner to incorporate the conditions as part of the exercise.

Restate the Tasks/Conditions/Training Standards. The training standards are the evaluation objectives. Trainers restate the tasks, conditions, and standards to the Marines, even if the Marines have heard them before. This ensures that Marines know exactly what is required of them.

Observe and Evaluate. Trainers tell Marines when to start, either by saying *begin* or *go* or by giving them realistic verbal or visual cues.

Commanders must ensure that sufficient evaluators are available to evaluate the task. Evaluators compare a Marine's or unit's performance to the standards and take notes to use during the critiques or AARs.

Coaching and Critiquing. Coaching and critiquing are the primary tools leaders use to tell Marines how they performed. Coaching and critiquing techniques are covered in greater detail in appendix E.

Record the Results. Trainers record individual performance evaluation results in the appropriate records. They record the results of unit training in the AARs or appropriate records as determined by the unit standing operating procedure (SOP). (AARs are covered in detail in appendix F.) Evaluations help leaders determine individual or unit proficiency. Evaluators' reports include—

- How evaluations were conducted. By knowing how the evaluations were conducted, leaders can judge the validity of the findings.
- What happened. Evaluators describe what they saw, both good and bad.
- Recommendations for change. Evaluators make recommendations for future training needs or changes in training.

These reports are used as a basis for future training management decisions.

Report the results. Trainers must inform the chain of command which tasks were or were not trained to standard. Unit training policy determines if this report is given at a scheduled training meeting or by a written report.

EVALUATORS

To evaluate training effectively, evaluators must—

- Establish/follow procedures for evaluating individual and unit performance.
- Determine the standards they will evaluate.

- Understand their critique and AAR responsibilities.
- Know who is in charge of the evaluation team, who is on the team, and what the individual evaluation taskings are.

Evaluators must also—

- Be proficient in the task to be evaluated.
- Be equal or senior in rank and position to the leaders being evaluated. Unit commanders should evaluate unit commanders, company commanders and platoon leaders should evaluate platoon leaders, etc..
- Use the same movement techniques as the units being evaluated.
- Be familiar with the tactical and field SOPs for the units being evaluated.
- Wear the same uniform as the troops.
- Know how to use sampling techniques.

To evaluate effectively, evaluators require training and the necessary resources. Such training is usually conducted by the chief evaluator together with the commander responsible for the training. Additional guidance for evaluators may also be appropriate and should be issued by the commander or the commander's representative prior to the start of the evaluation.

EVALUATE TRAINING RESULTS

The training manager and the trainer work together to evaluate the results of training as soon as possible after completion of the activity. Initial training evaluation results come from testing the performance of individuals and units. No other indicator is as important as initial training evaluation.

The most difficult part of the evaluation phase is to correctly identify the cause of a training problem. The training evaluation report and feedback from

Marines provide information on the possible causes of training problems. Usually, failure during performance can be attributed to one of the following factors:

- Individual failure.
- Team failure.

- Trainer failure.
- Training program failure.

Individual Failure

One possible cause for failure is the inability of a Marine to perform certain tasks required to accomplish the objective. The Marine may have a skill deficiency or may have misunderstood the directions.

Another possible cause for failure is lack of motivation. Some Marines do not pay attention, fall asleep during the activities or events, allow personal problems to interfere with their progress, or just do not have the proper attitude to receive training. For example, the Marine who failed rifle requalification may have missed the instruction for placing the proper windage or elevation on the weapon and, as a result, never fully understood the procedure.

Unit Failure

Unit failure can be caused by lack of coordination as a unit, which leads to a deficient performance. If an aviation crash crew cannot work smoothly to rescue the pilot, they need further training as a team.

Team failure can also be caused by the deficient performance of an individual on the team. If the driver of a crash vehicle does not choose the correct fire-fighting agent, the rescue of the pilot may not be successful.

Unit failure may be caused by a lack of leadership. The team will not perform to standard if the team leader cannot make decisions quickly and communicate decisions clearly.

Trainer Failure

If the trainer does not know enough about the subject matter to teach it, his/her lack of knowledge could cause the student's performance failure. This

frequently occurs during a shortage of qualified personnel or if one trainer has to fill in for another trainer without enough time to prepare. If the trainer does not know enough to teach the subject, Marines will not successfully complete the training.

Some trainers are very qualified in the subject matter, but they cannot communicate their ideas very well. They may be unable to instruct. Good instructors know there is more to the art of teaching than simply relaying information.

At times, trainers may also lack motivation. They also must overcome personal problems, uncertainty about duty requirements, or just not caring about the assigned duty. A trainer's lack of motivation can seriously impair training for the individual and the unit.

Finally, the trainer must know how to use the training materials. The trainer must devote the necessary time to studying and becoming familiar with the materials so that the activity progresses smoothly.

Training Program Failure

Marines may fail because they did not receive adequate training. Deficiencies in training materials are a common cause of trainee failure. Marines cannot be expected to pass performance tests if important information is omitted or inaccurate. To determine if a training program failure exists, trainers must ask the following questions:

- How was the instruction given?
- How were tests conducted?
- Were all the resources available when required?
- Were all instructional personnel present and in sufficient numbers?
- Was the test conducted in a reasonable time after the instruction was presented?

Reaping Success From Failure

A properly conducted evaluation should provide the trainer with the information necessary to make changes in training that will improve its effectiveness on the student. The importance of honestly and properly evaluating the conduct and results of a training effort, by asking the above questions, benefits all participants and ensures that we use our limited training resources wisely.