

Chapter 7

Evaluation of Training

Overview

The evaluation of performance is one of the most important steps in UTM. It is during this phase that the commander can identify areas of training that need more focused attention and gauge the effectiveness of the training plan and the quality of the trainers.

*"Good ships and good men are simply good weapons, and the best weapons are useless save in the hands of men who know how to fight with them."*⁷

Theodore Roosevelt

Performance Evaluation

To evaluate the performance of subordinate leaders, Marines, and units, leaders gather information on individual and collective proficiency. This information is used as feedback to correct identified weaknesses. Once the weakness is identified, future training programs can be developed that address the deficiency. Evaluations also produce information that commanders at all echelons use to coach their subordinate leaders and hold them responsible for their training management actions.

Evaluations conducted by battalion/squadron and higher echelons should address—

- Subordinate unit proficiency.

- Integration and conduct of combined-arms training.

- Conduct of all centralized training, including unit schools and use of resources by trainers at their level and one echelon below.

- Training management procedures used at their level and one echelon below, with particular emphasis on the development and maintenance of their training plans.

Evaluations conducted by company and below should address—

- Collective and individual proficiency of the company and subordinate elements.

- Conduct of training and use of resources by trainers within the company.

- Effectiveness of the planning and preparation for the unit's training.

Evaluation Programs

Commands establish programs to evaluate combat readiness within their units. These evaluation programs should provide the commander with valuable information regarding the state of both individual and unit training performance throughout the unit. Evaluation programs must address more than just instructor techniques and management procedures. They must address the full spectrum of leader tasks, drills, teamwork, and individual and collective skills performed within the framework of the mission or task. If a command's evaluation program checks only records and reports, subordinates may tend to focus their attention on the production of records and reports rather than on achieving high levels of performance.

Every command has several evaluation programs. They monitor a variety of activities such as maintenance, supply, training, and administration. Commanders can coordinate these different programs by—

- Designating specific tasks to be evaluated.
- Determining if existing evaluations produce adequate information.
- Reducing redundancy between existing evaluations.
- Ensuring that command evaluations complement unit activities.
- Ensuring that feedback from subordinates is obtained.

The evaluation process is only as effective as the feedback it gains and its subsequent employment toward improving training proficiency.

Methodology of Evaluation

Commanders at all levels should base their judgment of individual and collective training proficiency on both personal observations and performance evaluations. Commanders should ensure that evaluators are adequately prepared for their task. Figure 7-1 is a guide for the commander to use in the preparation of evaluators to evaluate individual or unit performance. Actual proficiency evaluations are based on the established performance standards for the individual or unit.

Methods

The desired methods of conducting evaluations are to—

- Observe the training personally.
- Evaluate collective training by using the appropriate MCCRES MPSs.

- Evaluate individual training by using ITSs from the *ITSS/Marine Battle Skills Training Handbook*, and/or checklists that identify unit performance-oriented tests.
- Conduct short notice or unannounced inspections/evaluations.

Continuous Process

Evaluation is a continuous process at all echelons. Continuous evaluation provides the commander with current information regarding a unit's state of training readiness to perform designated tasks. Commanders constantly evaluate their plans and allocate resources

Provide evaluation guidance. Evaluator is given purpose of evaluation, training standards, and specific activities to be evaluated.

Provide background information. Scenario, LOI, SOP, control plans, radio frequencies, and guidance for the unit being evaluated are provided to evaluators.

Provide resources needed to conduct the evaluation.

Provide preparation time so evaluator can:

- Review references, to include checklists if provided.
- Gather and prepare equipment and supplies.
- Visit training site.
- Make personal notes to guide evaluation as needed.
- Prepare and coordinate any subordinate evaluators.

Determine evaluator proficiency, which should include:

- Tactical and technical knowledge and skill.
- Evaluator techniques, such as not interrupting performance to ask questions.
- Performance-oriented training skills, which emphasize coaching and critiquing skills.

Post evaluation responsibilities, to include:

- Recording and reporting requirements.
- After-action review responsibilities.

Figure 7-1. Commander's Guide for Preparing Evaluators to Evaluate Performance.

based on their assessment of what their training focus needs to be to ensure they are mission-oriented and that they build toward combat readiness. Higher headquarters evaluate their own planning and resource actions and those of subordinate units to ensure that both plans are mutually supporting. Individuals and units must be evaluated daily they conduct routine training or perform day-to-day missions. Leaders at all echelons evaluate training performance and provide feedback to the chain of command, trainers, and those being trained. Leaders also evaluate how well the trainers instruct their pupils.

Testing Versus Evaluation

Testing differs from evaluation. A test measures proficiency against established MCCRES or ITSS standards and results in a pass-fail rating. An evaluation seeks to determine, by assessing strengths and weaknesses, where in the performance scale an individual or unit is at a given time. It does this through interaction with those being evaluated.

During a test, individuals and units strive to meet established standards without deviating from a prescribed process by experimenting or trying innovative techniques. When tests are conducted, Marines are not given any assistance by personnel conducting the test, even when mistakes are detected, unless safety is a factor. On the other hand, an evaluation provides an opportunity to interact with those being evaluated. It is another opportunity to not only measure proficiency, but also increase it.

Realism

Evaluations are based on selected tasks that Marines perform within a realistic scenario. The scenario should include realistic cues that cause desired responses. For example, if the unit must move in response to an enemy's presence, it should receive intelligence information or actually encounter the enemy, rather than simply being told to move by the evaluator.

Proficient Evaluators

Evaluators must be tactically and technically proficient in the tasks they evaluate. For internal evaluations, evaluators should be selected from unit personnel. For external evaluations, evaluators should come from similar units and hold the same duty positions as the personnel they will evaluate. This type of external evaluation assignment allows evaluators to gain additional experience from other units and builds a base of qualified evaluators and trainers. Evaluators must know evaluation and training techniques. They should be provided useful information about the units; for example, unit missions, personnel turbulence, assigned priorities, equipment serviceability, and shortages.

Categories of Performance

A command evaluation program must plan to evaluate the three main categories of performance: individual and collective performance; the quality of the unit's training management procedures; and the quality of training.

Individual and Collective Performance

Evaluation of individual, leader, and unit performance is the most important type of training-related evaluation. It allows commanders to see how well units and Marines can perform their mission and tasks and how well resources are used. Commanders can also determine if performance is in accordance with command policy. Individual performance may be evaluated to sample performance during individual or unit training. Collective performance is measured against standards found in the unit MCCRES. A collective evaluation may be either internal or external. If conducted in a field setting, it should be as realistic as possible since its purpose is to provide solid feedback concerning observed unit strengths and weaknesses. The results of this evaluation are used to shape future training programs at all echelons and to provide immediate feedback for the evaluator to use in training the units and Marine being evaluated.

Quality of a Unit's Training Management Procedures

Training management procedures are evaluated to assess the overall quality of unit training management programs and their compliance with command goals and objectives. The evaluation should also assess how training information is passed within the unit, to higher and lower echelons, and to supporting units. This evaluation results in immediate feedback that should be used to improve existing training management programs. It may create long-term changes to programs and shape future command training guidance.

Quality of Training

The quality of training is assessed through evaluations that center on the performance of the trainer. These evaluations reveal whether training standards were met, whether the training was adequately prepared and conducted, and how allocated resources were used. In general, it provides an evaluation of how effective the trainer was in conveying the required instruction to the Marines being trained. The evaluation results in immediate feedback to the trainer and assists him/her to further develop his/her ability to train Marines. These evaluations also serve to shape future command training guidance. When evaluating the leader's conduct of training, the presentation, practice, performance, planning, and preparation are reviewed. Figure 7-2 is a guide for evaluating the quality of training. The trainer's preparation should be evaluated based on indicators observed during the training.

The personnel involved in UTM should be fully trained to perform their duties. Appendix A contains recommended UTM tasks by grade. Training personnel to be proficient in those tasks ensures a high quality of training management procedures.

Evaluation Results

Evaluations should reveal valuable information about individual Marines, the unit, and the exercise; assess known unit weaknesses; and emphasize the goals and standards of the command. If an evaluation is performed correctly, it will provide the maximum training benefit with a minimum amount of resources. Sufficient time must be allowed for corrections and further practice during the course of the exercise. Depending on the severity of the deficiency and the tactical nature of the problem, it may be necessary to stop the evaluation process when a deficiency is identified so that it can be corrected.

Evaluators should train the leaders or Marines being evaluated by providing them with immediate feedback through critiques or AARs. This feedback allows them to immediately improve their performance, vice waiting until the completion of the exercise to “learn” what they did incorrectly. Critiques should actively involve the people being evaluated and should answer three questions:

What happened? (Identify the strengths and weaknesses.)

Why did it happen?

How can it be done better?

Typically, feedback is provided through the use of critiques, which are an informal, mostly verbal style of debriefing method. An AAR is a more formal style of critique that is given by evaluators (controllers and umpires, if used) after larger training exercises. For long exercises, they should also be conducted at predetermined times following significant activities. See appendix G for detailed information on AARs.

Evaluators should interview participating Marines to determine the reason for a good or a poor performance. This information assists evaluators in making recommendations to the unit commander or to others in the chain of command. The verbal content of a critique should include the same information that will be provided in the written critique that is forwarded up the chain of command. This practice serves to build trust between the evaluator and the evaluated. As part of the critique, evaluators should use any remaining time and resources to coach participants on improving in identified deficient skills or tasks. Critiques should reinforce the team building of leaders and Marines.

After the evaluation, evaluators provide their findings and recommendations to the evaluated unit commander and to others in the chain of command. Based on this report and other pertinent information about the unit and individual Marines, the commander is able to improve individual and unit performance, develop qualified trainers, and improve UTM. When possible, results of the evaluation should be incorporated into the unit training plan.

Information derived from the evaluation can affect the unit training program long-range, midrange, and short-range goals. It can also affect unit SOPs. Information received from Corps-wide evaluations can be used to change doctrine, equipment, force structure, literature, and training aids. Figure 7-2 depicts a guide for evaluating the conduct of training.

Training and Readiness Manuals

T&R manuals, developed for weapons systems and combat organizations, serve as a single-source document that provides the commander a tool to build logically sequenced training and to determine combat readiness based on training accomplished against a published standard. T&R manuals consist of a series of training events. More than just a listing of tasks to be trained, tasks are clustered into executable training events incorporating individual and collective training standards for all participants. The training events are numbered and logically arranged from the simplest to the most complex. If conducted in order, the events	The trainer was proficient, organized, confident, and enthusiastic.
	The trainer was given adequate guidance, resources, references, and time to prepare.
	The trainer used equipment and support materials effectively.
	The Marines required to receive the training were present with the correct and serviceable uniform and equipment.
	The Marines were given necessary preliminary training.
	The facility or site was adequately prepared for training to be conducted.
	The facility or site afforded maximum freedom from distractions.
	The training was performance-oriented to the maximum extent possible.
	The training was METL/standards-based.

Figure 7-2. Guide to Evaluating the Quality of Training.

provide a progressive, challenging, and building-block approach to training with specifically stated time periods for redemonstration of combat skills. Performance of the participants can be evaluated on each event.

Comparison of the participants' performance of each event to the established standard can provide immediate feedback to the participants and an indicator to the commander of their readiness. After-action discussion of each task contained in the event, often accomplished immediately after the event in a "debriefing" forum, increases each participants' understanding of expected performance, highlights the tasks done well and those that require more training emphasis, and poignantly presents lessons learned from the experience.

Aviation

The aviation T&R manuals standardize aircrew training syllabi and specify performance requirements for flight qualifications. These manuals prescribe the number of sorties, the tasks to be accomplished on each sortie, and the re-fly factor for skill retention. The T&R manual is organized into an introductory volume and seven specialized volumes that cover each aviation community.

Ground Combat

The ground combat T&R manuals standardize training within specific ground combat units; e.g., tanks, artillery, LAVs. They provide the

unit commander with a tool to use when developing his unit's training plan, to track training conducted, and to provide a training readiness indicator based on training accomplished to standard. This training readiness indicator, called a combat readiness percentage, facilitates the decision-making process regarding training requirements and resources. It does this by providing the commander a method of determining what training is most important to his mission accomplishment (METLs), and the resources required to complete the training.