Senior Planners Course
Origins

“This course fulfills a void in our education continuum for our Senior Officers in between Top Level School (TLS) and follow-on education post-TLS. The curriculum is based in Service strategic planning/thinking skills among Colonels to fill that void. Implementing the SPC will fill this recognized gap by creating capable strategic planners and leaders serving at HQMC, MCCDC, OSD/Joint Staff, COCOM, and NATO/Coalition staffs.”

MajGen Neller, CG EDCOM 2010
Proof of Concept Letter, CG TECOM
## SPC Key Tasks / Implied Tasks

### Key Tasks

1. **Look** “two levels” up from MEF (at the interface of Strategy and Policy)
2. **Change** “how they think” (*Transformational Learning* = a new schema or mental model)
3. **Shape** perception of “value added” for the student and sending Commander
4. **Equip** the students with “how to orient the staff” ISO the “decision-maker’s” thinking and decision-making process

### Implied Tasks

1. **Elevate** the focus “**two levels up**” (interface of policy and strategy)
2. **Increase** “**time to think**”
3. **Decrease** reading and decrease number of classes
4. **Broaden** horizons (Cyber, NDU, OLA, Think Tanks)
5. **Equip** the student on **“how to orient the staff”** IOT “help” the decision-maker think and make decisions.
6. **Increase** engagement with Senior Leaders (GO/FOs, Policy makers, Congress & Think Tanks)
7. **Change** “**how the students think**”
   a. Transformational Learning = a new schema or mental model
   b. Increase Critical and Creative Thinking and Decision-Making
   c. Increase Red Teaming methods
   d. Increase Design

### Methods

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Current SPC Model

- **Requirement**
  - No structured PME post-TLS for O6’s
  - Opportunity to enhance skills of selected officers and encourage innovative approaches to problem solving

- **Purpose of the Course**
  - To provide focused education on operational and strategic-level planning and problem solving for senior officers likely to assume the most challenging USMC billets

- **Prerequisites**
  - O6’s Likely to assume Key Billet.
    - Ideally:
      - HQMC DC EA
  - O5 Command / O6 Command (desired)
SPC Curriculum Construct

Ph 1 - Foundations
- The Nature of Warfare
- The Strategic Environment
- Joint Arena
- The Whole of Government
- Critical Thinking
- Decision-Making

Ph 2 - Planning & Op Art
- Marine Corps Concepts
- Operational Art
- Design & Planning
- Componency/Command Relationships
- Role of the Commander
- Interagency/Coalition Ops
- Red Teaming

Ph 3 - Application
- Case Methods
- Staff Ride (Antietam)
- Course preparation time
  (100-150 pages per night)