

Instructional Scenario

Taking Care of the Team



Course/Duty Area: Cadet Leadership / Leading Teams: Communication, Trust, and Conflict

Scenario: C/Sergeant Miller is the Squad Leader for 1st Squad. During a high-stakes field exercise, his squad is tasked with navigating a complex land navigation course. One member, Cadet Rivera, is struggling to keep up and has made several errors with the compass. Another member, Cadet Vance—who is known for being technically proficient but highly aggressive—begins to berate Rivera in front of the group, saying, "If you can't even read a map, you're dead weight. Give me the compass before you fail us all."

The squad stops moving and looks to Miller. Miller knows that they are losing time, but Vance's outburst has caused Rivera to shut down and the rest of the squad to feel tense and hesitant. Miller must decide how to regain control of the situation to ensure the mission is completed while maintaining the dignity and development of his subordinates. He must balance immediate mission demands with long-term leadership responsibilities and team cohesion.

Miller reflects on the following:

1. Leadership Traits and Principles:
 - Which of the 14 Marine Corps Leadership Traits (e.g., justice, tact, unselfishness) are being violated or required right now?
 - How does the principle of "know your Marines and look out for their welfare" apply to both Rivera and Vance?
 - Is mission accomplishment more important than troop welfare in this specific training environment?
 - How should Miller prioritize both in a balanced, professional manner?
2. Authority and Discipline:
 - Does Vance's technical proficiency give him the right to correct a peer in that manner?
 - What is the immediate professional response to horizontal (peer-to-peer) hostility within a unit?
 - How should a leader intervene to restore order and respect?
 - How can Miller redirect Vance's energy into coaching rather than criticizing?
3. Decision-making Under Pressure:
 - If Miller takes the compass himself, what does that teach the squad about his trust in them?
 - How can Miller use this friction to build a stronger team for the next leg of the course?
 - What leadership actions reinforce confidence, accountability, and teamwork?

Big Question: How does a leader balance the urgent requirement of mission accomplishment with the long-term necessity of troop welfare and development?

Focused Questions:

- Why is *tact* considered a force multiplier in high-stress environments?
- How does a leader address a toxic high-performer without discouraging their technical drive?
- In Marine Corps doctrine, why is *internalization of standards* more effective than *compliance through fear*?

Project-Based Assessment:

The Small Unit Leadership (SUL) Action Table

Students will create a three-column Tactical Decision Game (TDG) sheet:

- **Column 1 (The Friction):** Identify five specific leadership friction points (e.g., a subordinate refuses an order, a teammate is being bullied, a gear requirement is missed).
- **Column 2 (The Marine Corps Lens):** Identify which of the **11 Leadership Principles** applies to this problem and why.
- **Column 3 (The Command Decision):** Write a two- or three-sentence Script of Action detailing exactly what the leader would say and do to resolve the problem immediately.

Teacher Resources:

- **MCWP 6-11 (Leading Marines):** The foundational Marine Corps publication on the philosophy of leadership, focusing on the human element.
- **The Marine Corps Counseling Program (NAVMC 2795):** Provides a standardized framework for providing feedback and developing subordinates.
- **The BAMCIS Model:** A 6-step tactical planning process (Begin Planning, Arrange Recon, Make Recon, Complete Plan, Issue Order, Supervise) used to teach cadets how to manage tasks systematically.
- **Standard Leadership Rubric:** Derived from the Marine Corps Fitness Report (FITREP) qualities: Character, Knowledge, and Performance of Duties.