



Lesson Plan

The Road Ahead

10 May 2022



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How to Use this Lesson Plan

This lesson plan is divided into three key sections and an appendix containing supporting material.

The **About the Lesson** section outlines the lesson and identifies requirements for its effective use. Course Directors should use this section to (a) understand the purpose and context of the lesson, (b) learn about lesson pre-requisites, and (c) guide the selection of facilitators.

The **Before the Lesson** section provides details on the preparation required for this lesson, including student prerequisites (if any), recommended facilitator pre-course readings, and guidance on how to prepare the classroom.

The **Presenting the Lesson** section contains the actual lesson plan. It provides the recommended outline, discussion, and slide prompts along with actual *questions* and *recommended language* for the facilitator to use in the classroom.

The **Appendix** includes any required in-class handouts or exercise material.

For more information on how lessons are structured, or how to use them in the course, see the **Course Director's Guide** or **Facilitator's Resources**.

Contact Us

Commercial: (334) 953-4231

DSN: 493-4231

Email: flightcommandersedge@us.af.mil

Website: <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/GCPME/FlightCCEdge>

Postal Mail: *The Flight Commander's Edge*
c/o Air University Global College of Professional Military Education
51 East Maxwell Boulevard
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112

About the Lesson

The Road Ahead

Overview

This lesson serves as the capstone of the *Flight Commander Leadership Course*. Participants summarize their self-assessments and are re-introduced to their end-of-course project – the **Professional Development Plan**. The lesson begins with a brief review of the self-assessments completed at the end of each leadership lesson to identify and prioritize development needs, then transitions to how those assessments can be used for planning improvements in abilities, knowledge, and experience. At the end of the lesson, participants have two tasks remaining to earn course credit – completion of the *Professional Development Plan* and an outbrief with their squadron commanders (or equivalents). In the final activity, students complete an end-of-course critique.

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

1. Interpret self-assessment results to identify development needs.
2. Plan for self-development using an abilities-knowledge-experience approach.
3. Develop a Professional Development Plan.

Recommended Prerequisites

- *The Role of the Flight Commander* lesson, and other leadership lessons provided by Air University.

Recommended Time

- 50 minutes

Recommended Facilitator Qualifications

This lesson is designed for a Facilitator with the following minimum qualifications:

1. Subject matter knowledge
2. Command-level experience

Subject matter knowledge can be developed using the information presented in **Preparing the Facilitator** section of this document.

Before the Lesson

Preparing the Participant

- Air University Global College, *Building a Professional Development Plan (2022)*. Each student should review this document which was distributed in the *Role of the Flight Commander* lesson. This document forms the basis of the plan each participant must complete, and brief his/her squadron commander (or equivalent) on to earn course credit.
- Additionally, all students will need the *self-assessment worksheets* from each of the course leadership lessons completed.

Preparing the Facilitator

All required materials and student preparation, plus:

- None.

(Optional) Additional deep-dive preparation materials are available on *The Flight Commander's Edge* website.

Preparing the Classroom

Ensure the classroom provides/is provisioned with:

- Adequate classroom space for separate small group discussions.
- A white board or an easel with butcher block paper.
- Computer and projector.

Preparing Required Materials

Prepare one copy of each handout below for each student. Do not distribute handouts before the class.

- Air University Global College, *Development Priorities Worksheet (2022)* – 1 copy for each participant
- Air University Global College, *Personal Development Worksheet (2022)* – 3 copies for each participant

Handouts are available in the Appendix.

Presenting the Lesson

NOTE: This lesson is designed for up to five (5) groups of students. Groups should be no larger than five (5) students to maximize participation during small group discussion.

Lesson Introduction (10 minutes)

This part of the lesson serves as a review of the participants' self-assessments. Each participant will interpret their self-assessment results and prioritize areas for improvement.

A set of slides is provided for the lesson blocks of instruction. These slides are designed to support the experiential narrative included in this lesson plan.

Slide 1: The Road Ahead

Introduce the lesson.

Welcome to the end of the course! Congratulations on completing our review of flight command leadership skills and behaviors, as well as our introduction to many important relationships across the base.

In this final lesson, we will look at your graduation assignment – the *Personal Development Plan* – and tell you how you will earn course credit after briefing your squadron commander (or equivalent).

Slide 2: Objectives

This slide lists the lesson objectives.

After students have reviewed the lesson objectives, continue.

Slide 3: Prioritizing Development

Introduce the activity.

At the end of each of the leadership lessons in this course, we've asked you to complete a self-assessment worksheet. Now it's time to do something with them.

Ask the participants to take out the self-assessment worksheets they completed previously.

While participants are collecting their worksheets, distribute the **Air University Global College, *Development Priorities Worksheet (2022)*** document. One copy for each participant

This entire course has been about self-development. We've introduced, in very broad terms, the skills and behaviors in various areas that you need to cultivate as a flight-level leader.

Building proficiency as a flight commander in these areas is a time-consuming, dedicated task. But, as you well know, flight commanders are busy. You will never have all the time you need to improve your performance.

Because of this, prioritization is required.

On the worksheet, you can begin that prioritization.

Take five (5) minutes and review your self-assessment worksheets. Also consider the other lessons in the course where we didn't have you fill out a self-assessment. Answer this question:

Which three (or four) areas, if I improve my performance, will yield the biggest results for me as a flight commander?

Record those areas on your *Development Priorities Worksheet* and rank order them in the column provided. When you are done, we will start our discussion.

After five (5) minutes has elapsed, continue.

Initial Discussion (10 minutes)

The initial discussion focuses on interpreting the priorities set on the ***Development Priorities Worksheet***. This discussion is designed to help participants refine their development needs and adjust their priorities with peer input.

Slide 4: Small Group Discussion

Divide the students into small groups (4 or 5 members) and prompt the students with the following experience.

In your small groups, take five (5) minutes to share your personal development priorities. Consider the question here:

What do I need to work on?

Why?

Share the thought processes behind your choices, and, after discussion, make any necessary adjustments to your *Development Priorities Worksheet*.

Monitor students' discussions for activity.

After five (5) minutes, continue.

Slide 5: Large Group Discussion

Reconvene the large group and ask if any themes or recurring skills surfaced in discussion. Record key points from answers on a whiteboard. You will use these common skills in the activity part of the lesson.

What did you learn?

Are there any common themes or skills in your groups?

Why?

Anticipated Responses: Answers will vary, but will likely focus on common flight-level leadership problems. There is no right answer to this question.

After a brief discussion, continue.

Content Presentation (10 minutes)

The previous discussion asked participants to prioritize developmental needs. This section presents a simple mechanism based on abilities, knowledge, and experience, to help participants develop actual improvement plans in identified areas.

Distribute the **Air University Global College, *Personal Development Worksheet (2022)*** document.

When complete, continue.

Slide 6: Planning for Personal Development

Introduce the Personal Development Worksheet by stating the following:

In the last activity, you prioritized your personal development needs. The question you should be asking now is this:

How do I get better in these areas?

This is where personal development often breaks down, because improving in these areas is difficult.

Fortunately, there is an easy-to-follow approach that will help you build an actionable plan for improvement. The model is based on abilities, knowledge, and experience, and is reflected on the *Personal Development Worksheets* now in front of you.

Slide 7: The Front – Identifying Needs

Continue the presentation.

The slides for this section have builds to emphasize elements of the text below.

The front of the *Personal Development Worksheet* is designed to help you refine what you want to improve.

You will see blocks to define the desired area of improvement, and a place to record your rationale for wanting to improve.

This rationale is important – it should reflect your motivation. As you fill the worksheet out, recall your small group discussions on “Why?” and record your personal motivation here.

Slide 8: The Front – Identifying Needs (Cont.)

Continue the presentation.

(Click for build) Below the rationale, you see blocks with a series of questions. For the area you want to improve, answer these questions to the best of your ability:

ABILITIES: What skills should I acquire to excel in this area? What behaviors, habits, and practices should I cultivate?

(Click for build) *Some of these skills and behaviors may come directly off your self-assessment worksheets. Others, from discussion with your supervisors, commanders, or peers.*

KNOWLEDGE: What must I learn (through training/education/self-study) to develop these abilities?

(Click for build) *In other words, what must I know to improve in this area?*

EXPERIENCE: What experiences (training, education, self-directed practice, etc.) would help me develop these abilities? How do I get them?

(Click for build) *Or, what must I do to improve in this area?*

By answering the questions on the front of the Personal Development Worksheet you will have a firm understanding of what is required to get better in your selected area.

But, there's more you can do to ensure success.

Slide 9: The Back – Planning for Success

Continue the presentation.

On the back of the form are fields that help you plan your learning. From resources required...to time required...to reinforcement required, the back of the worksheet helps you plan your learning. And, if required, it can help you justify training, funding, or free time to your supervisor or commander.

Pause for questions on the worksheet.

After questions are resolved, continue.

Application Activity (15 minutes)

Now that participants have an understanding of how to plan for improvement in their selected areas, this activity provides an opportunity for them to collaborate with their peers and begin to fill-in their individual worksheets.

Note that this is only an introduction. Participants are NOT expected to complete the worksheets during the lesson. Rather, they must be completed and included in the *Professional Development Plans* briefed to their commanders. The in-class group activity is to get participants talking about different opportunities, approaches, and resources for learning.

Slide 10: Small Group Discussion

Begin the activity with the following directions.

Now that we've talked about using the *Personal Development Worksheets*, let's take a few minutes to practice.

In your small groups, take a minute to fill out a worksheet for one of your improvement areas. Share your inputs. As you discuss your ideas, see if you can glean any insight from your peers.

Your forms won't be perfect, let alone complete. This exercise is simply designed to get you comfortable with this simple improvement planning approach and give you an opportunity to ask questions – and get ideas – from your peers. You will be able to finish your forms after the course is over, as you prepare your *Professional Development Plan*.

Begin the exercise and monitor for time.

When complete, continue.

Lesson Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

The final lesson activity is the course wrap up. Participants are reminded of the Professional Development Plan course completion/graduation requirement and reminded to complete the course survey.

Slide 11: How to Graduate from this Course

Reconvene the group from the activity.

Ask participants to retrieve the **Air University Global College, *Building a Professional Development Plan (2022)*** document distributed on the first day of the course.

Note: This document may be found in *The Role of the Flight Commander* lesson.

When complete, continue.

Remind participants that they must submit a *Professional Development Plan* and brief their squadron commanders (or equivalents) on graduation from the course.

Congratulations on almost completing the Flight Commander Leadership Course!

As we discussed on the first day, the *Professional Development Plan (PDP)* is your ticket to graduation. It is an assignment which you must complete to earn final course completion – and get your certificate -- for this course.

(Click for build) **The *Building a Professional Development Plan* handout walks you through the entire assignment step-by-step. This assignment:**

- **builds on the content of each leadership lesson,**
- **helps you plan to improve your leadership strengths, and**
- **provides an opportunity for feedback and mentoring.**

After your PDP is complete, you must schedule a meeting with your squadron commander (or equivalent) and brief him/her on the results of your training. After this presentation, your commander will present you with your completion certificate.

As you build your PDP, recall all our previous lessons. If you completed all the activities up to this point, you will have no problem finishing this assignment.

If you have any questions on the PDP instructions, please ask.

Share contact information for follow on questions after the course is complete.

Slide 12: Wrap-Up / End of Course Survey

Conclude the course with personal remarks.

Distribute the (unit-specific) end-of-course survey. For information on recommended local survey content, see the ***Course Director Handbook***.

End. Break (10 minutes).

Appendix: Required Materials and Handouts

The materials required for this lesson include:

- Air University Global College, *Development Priorities Worksheet (2022)* – 1 copy for each participant
- Air University Global College, *Personal Development Worksheet (2022)* – 3 copies for each participant
- end-of-course survey (locally produced) – 1 copy for each participant

These handouts, on the following pages, are designed for printing directly from the lesson plan. Ensure you print enough copies for all class participants.

Development Priorities Worksheet

Developed by the Air University Global College

Take five (5) minutes and review your self-assessment worksheets. Also consider the other lessons in the course where we didn't have you fill out a self-assessment. Answer this question:

Which three (or four) areas, if I improve my performance, will yield the biggest results for me as a flight commander?

Record those areas below.

Area / Topic	What do I need to work on?	Why is this important to me as a Flight-level leader	Priority <i>"rack and stack"</i>

Personal Development Worksheet

Developed by the Air University Global College

Area:

Rationale:

Why is this area important to me? What is my motivation to improve?

To improve in this area, I need the following...

ABILITIES:

What skills should I acquire to excel in this area? What behaviors, habits, and practices should I cultivate?

KNOWLEDGE:

What must I learn (through training/education/self-study) to develop these abilities?

EXPERIENCES:

What experiences (training, education, self-directed practice, etc.) would help me develop these abilities? How do I get them?

Personal Development Worksheet (cont.)

Area:

Other Questions to Consider

RESOURCES:

What resources are available to help me develop my expertise in this area?

LEARNING:

Is formal learning required? If so, how much will it cost? When is it available?

TIME:

How much time will it take? Where will it fit into my schedule?

REINFORCEMENT:

Are these skills/this knowledge perishable? If so, how often do I need a refresher?

OTHER NOTES: