

Welcome to the Edge Newsletter #4

This month, the *Course Director Corner* presents the concept of adding "thinking routines" to your Flight Commander courses. Thinking routines are designed to bring connections from a discussed (or studied) topic to the flight / work environment. This connection between academic topics and the work environment helps leaders create habits-of-mind focused on problem solving, creative, and critical thinking -- all critical skills for flight-level leaders. The goal of thinking routines is to encourage *beyond learning* where your participants explore the leadership topics in their flight / work environment and apply what they learned in class long after the course ends.

And...

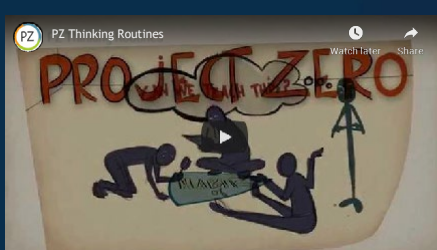
On the reverse, *The Leading Edge* newsletter examines the topic of trust. Trust is important for all leaders but it is critical for those tasked as *commanders*. Trust is about relationships. Flight-level leaders must strive to cultivate trust in relationships from the very start. To get started, review [Leading a Discussion With Your Airmen on "Trust"](#) on the [Squadron-Centered Learning](#) webpage for information on the topic of trust.

This is the fourth issue of *The Leading Edge* newsletter, and as a reminder, this product is purposefully designed for use in your units to support your efforts for developing skills for your flight-level leaders. We offer topics, tips and resources specifically targeted at the flight level. Feel free to contact us as shown below.

Course Director Corner

Encourage a Culture of Thinking

This issue examines the topic of adding "thinking routines" to your flight-level leadership courses. Thinking routines are designed to help us become better thinkers. To get started, watch this video (click the title):



There are many techniques you can use in your course to encourage deeper thinking. Consider these four routines:

- Connect.** Have your facilitators add a few specific questions to the end of a presentation to **connect** the topic to your local environment. This can foster intrinsic motivation when the group feels connected to the topic. (Note: *The Flight Commander Edge* leadership lesson plans have connect-questions built in. Ensure your locally designed lessons do this to maximize the benefit for your learners.)
- Apply.** Prompt your facilitators to provide realistic examples, preferably from your base, and to poll their audience for personal examples on a given topic. This helps the learners connect to the topic and **apply** it to their own units.
- Impact.** Our Airmen and Guardians are busy. They need to feel the value in attending your flight-level education courses. By prompting your facilitators to tie their presentations to the experiences of the group, your participants will begin to develop an understanding of how new information can be used and the **impact** it can make on people and the mission.
- Flexibility.** Your courses should be **flexible**. What works one time may not be ideal for a different audience. Mix up your content to try out new things. Add new presenters. Ask new or different questions. In other words, be **flexible**. Leading is about learning, and learning requires leaders to try new things.

We've included a *Skills and Behaviors for New Thinking* worksheet in the "New Problems, New Thinking" lesson to reinforce the idea of creative thinking -- use this worksheet with other lesson materials in your leader development course to help your participants develop deeper thinking.



Flight Leadership Course, Ramstein AB, Germany

(Tip: Open this newsletter in your browser, then save page 2 as a PDF file to create a 1-page flyer you send out to flight-level leaders!)

Consider incorporating Thinking Routines

view the

"New Problems, New Thinking" lesson

www.airuniversity.af.edu/GCPME/Flight-Commanders-Edge/



Be the kind of leader you would follow.

Sign hanging in a hallway at Air Command and Staff College

"Trust is the vital bond that unifies leaders with their followers and commanders with their units. Trust makes leaders effective."

Jesper R. Stubbendorff and Robert E. Overstreet, *A Commander's First Challenge - Building Trust*

Read

[A Commander's First Challenge - Building Trust](#)

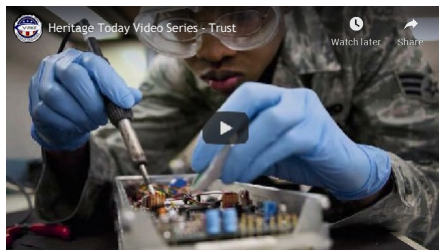
Lt Col Jesper R. Stubbendorff, USAF

Robert E. Overstreet, PhD

Trust played an enormous role during critical milestones in the Department of the Air Force's history. This "Heritage Today" video uses the topic of trust as a motivational framework to remind us of our duty to our country, and to the United States Air Force.

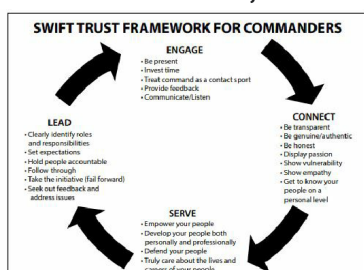
Watch this short video (click title to play) -- and discuss it with your team.

Watch



Questions to Consider

How can you quickly build trust in your flight using these four themes?



Trust-building framework
Source: ASPJ Summer 2019 p.38

Engage - How can you engage your team members?

Leaders who meet regularly and communicate consistently with their people are investing time in their people, and building trust. Communication, to include constructive feedback, is vital to team-development.

Connect - How can you "humanize" yourself?

Be open and honest. Use every opportunity to communicate with your people and develop a rapport. Build relationships with your Airmen and Guardians on both a personal and professional level from day one.

Serve - How do you serve your flight?

To serve your Airmen and Guardians is to empower them. Trust them to make decisions. Don't second guess or micromanage every action. Empowering your Airmen or Guardians improves performance and builds confidence.

Lead - Does your flight know what is important?

Every Airman and Guardian needs to know what is expected of them. Clearly communicate your expectations and be prepared to hold people accountable. Give consistent feedback.



Visit [The Flight Commander's Edge](#) website

If your unit would like to create its own Flight-level leadership course using professionally developed resources from Air University visit

<https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/GCPME/Flight-Commanders-Edge/>

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