A short summary of Anne Linda Løhre’s presentation at the NATO-BILC seminar from 17-21 October in Provo, Utah

Title: Choosing Pedagogical Models from Mission Command leadership.

The point of departure was the cohorts from the Royal Norwegian Naval Academy  leaving  harbour to embark on a tall ship for 11 months. This has happened over a period of 20 years. Upon embarking, the novice cadets, boys and girls from NGO school have primarily been used to order based leadership, but here at sea where their subjects are leadership, sea power and English as well as basic seamanship, they are exposed to a different type of leadership, mission based leadership. What they encounter right away is an experience more real than anything they have come across in their lives.

Through harsh weather, little sleep and climbing aloft at all hours, cadets gradually acquire a desire to change both approaches to learning as well as the pedagogy in which subjects are taught.

 For some cohorts some years (I have taught English at sea for 12 years) I introduce the pedagogical direction of autonomy (as of Henri Holec, Universite de Crapel)  as well as self-directed learning. Particularly in two cohorts some cadets are first movers and inspire the others  to choose their own program: own syllabus, own methods.

In English we do this very methodically, registering particularly the new mission command cum autonomy has on the effect of learning. The first and foremost effect has to do with ownership, thus inspiring the students to want to learn in order to become  a better learner, a better soldier and a better person.

The effect of the learning operation has had different outcomes. Twice I experienced that there were severe repercussions upon the return. Cadets required to continue the experiment at home. Since classes were very small, 14pax, it was easy to forge a common take on how to develop the new pedagogy in the English classes. For once, cadets chose their own books and articles according to what they saw fitting. They organised small groups and took charge carrying out classes according to their needs. I also gave them the possibility to create oral exams  which would cater to what they meant was important.

Following the cadets over a year, I took notes, carried out surveys and recorded how cadets actually developed their own tenets,  a combination of mission command and  autonomy. The article “ Mission Command leadership and choice of teaching methods” by associate professor  Anne Linda Løhre and cdr Tommy  Krabberød has been issued in three different venues, two Norwegian and one American. It is written with a profound respect for the curiosity,  dedication and commitment which the cadets  carried out when they sought to forge mission command leadership and  autonomy in their first year of officer training.

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