

Abstract

Defense acquisition education has relied heavily on rules-based, compliance-focused training, which limits the judgment and flexibility needed to implement innovative contracting approaches. Recent executive guidance (Executive Order 14265) directs the Department of Defense (DoD) to expand the use of case studies to support acquisition reform and workforce development. This research analyzes gaps in current DoD acquisition education, reviews evidence on case-based learning, and develops a framework for designing and implementing defense-specific case studies. The goal is to provide practical tools, such as a Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA)-based decision case and reusable templates, that help field training teams and educators institutionalize case-based instruction across the acquisition workforce.

Methods

- Analysis of gaps in current DoD acquisition education and training
- Review of case study research, and examine its benefits and impact on learning
- Assessment of the Harvard Business School case method to identify transferable case-design principles
- Interview CCA program personnel to inform a sample case study and supporting teaching materials



Results & Impact

- Developed a sample case study to demonstrate how case studies can mirror complex scenarios and be used for teaching
- Adapted a reusable case template, teaching guide, and discussion structure that can be tailored for defense acquisition
- Created an implementation framework for integrating case-based learning using existing structures such as DAU curricula, field training teams, and program management office led training

Future Research

- Review service level implementation plans and perform a cost benefit analysis of case-based training
- Compare case-based instruction to traditional lecture-based acquisition training in terms of learner engagement, application of innovative authorities, and impact on decision-making and critical thinking
- Develop DoD-wide repository of validated acquisition case studies and teaching material



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