

EDITING SAMPLE

Excerpts from *JMSS Special Edition*

The Rise of Reflexive Military Practitioners: Design Thinking and Beyond

Introduction: *Revolution in Military Epistemology*

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Introduction

A wide consensus of policy-makers, defense professionals and academics is raising doubt about the effectiveness and even the relevance of military intervention in the 21st century. In most recent cases — Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Afghanistan — military interventions led to worse outcomes than the previous status quo. These failures undermined the legitimacy of the military as both an institution and a profession. The continuing necessity of action gauged on efficacy in trials by fire provided fertile soil for an unexpected development. An increasing number of defense professionals realized, over and over, that technological capabilities would not be enough to tackle the challenges of contemporary conflicts. No matter the advancement, these could not alone replace conceptual capabilities. Dusting off the conceptual arsenal in doctrine inherited from the Cold War proved insufficient. Several defense professionals realized, often too late, that doctrine led them to wage wars that no longer existed on the ground. As remedy, several defense professionals suggested that the military would not only have to change what to think, but also how to think. **Most importantly, they came to realize that what to think and how to think are integral parts of the making and unmaking of contemporary conflicts.** Most reached this conclusion by conducting personal reflections during and after deployments and by learning new methodologies such as design thinking.¹⁴ In so doing, these defense professionals launched what we call a reflexive turn in strategic studies and military affairs.

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Comment [1]: Footnote indicators (superscript) belong after the punctuation in a sentence in English.

Moreover, this pragmatic turn also reversed the relationship between defense professionals and reality. Instead of mirroring an independent reality, pragmatism assumes that professionals contribute in enacting a specific version of reality by producing knowledge about it. In return, professionals implicitly disqualify alternative versions. For instance, military designers conducting framing and re-framing exercises seek to compensate for this phenomenon.¹⁵ While framing, designers decide which version of reality is relevant for a specific issue and which one is less. While re-framing, they may bring another version that was not there before. Therefore, whether the knowledge professionals use or generate is valid becomes less important than what this knowledge can make professionals think and do. In

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Comment [4]: I would either say, "which version of reality is more relevant" to balance out the "less" at the end of the sentence or rephrase the sentence, e.g.

While framing, designers decide which version of reality is most relevant.

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Comment [5]: The word "bring" in this context appears orphaned. Do you mean create another version? If not, add the word "in" after bring ("bring in") for clarity.

¹⁴ Hoffman

¹⁵ In the preface of *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, Schön (1987 :xi) explains how his PhD thesis on John Dewey's *Theory of Inquiry* — a founding father of pragmatism — lay the ground for his exploration of architectural design later.

¹⁶ Cit. Ofra Ben, Chris, 2017, xx

¹⁷ Baert, Dewey, Rorty

¹⁸ Feyerabend

¹⁹ ...

Four Task Forces, 15 Practitioners, One Reflexive Military Movement

For this special issue, we invited 15 reflexive military practitioners to reflect on four hunches shared by supporters of the military design thinking movement and other forms of reflexive approaches in this era of contemporary conflicts. These hunches revolve around the criteria of validity, education, organizational politics and implicit practices involved in and by this on-going reflexive military turn. These hunches arose from tensions observed in this group gathered during a two day workshops in Toronto, Canada in October 2016. Echoing the very same reflexive turn, we sought to exploit these tensions in order to provoke further learning.

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Comment [8]: You use the word hunch a lot. While it **can** be interchangeable with words like *theory*, *thesis*, *instincts* or *intuitions*, it has a somewhat negative connotation.

Hunches are generally gut feelings without basis in fact.

For academic writing I would limit the use of the word hunch and instead use idea, theory, insight, premise, thesis, or supposition.

The second task force brings these concerns to education. As with validity, there is no measurable or definitive criteria for educating reflexive military practitioners. Several defense professionals tasked with teaching design thinking or other reflexive approaches often ran into dead ends in the midst of course development as a result. We took this confusion as an opportunity to summon a second task force — composed of Dr. Paul Mitchell, Robert Lummack and Col. (ret.) Christopher Paparone — to engage hunches on the content and target audiences of a reflexive military education. Tensions in the group of reflexive military practitioners gathered in Toronto confirmed the learning potential of these two elements. Our first hunch, building on these tensions, is that the education of reflexive military practitioners must be consistent with reflexive approaches. Course development must, therefore, always leave space for exploration in the form of trial and error and adaptation from one iteration to the next. Mentoring is better than lecturing, divergence via several syndicates is better than convergence, and self-learning is better than following a rigid program, as readers will find in this task force. Mitchell excelled in developing this iterative approach as he sought to introduce design thinking in senior officers' curriculum at the Canadian Forces College as he exposes in this special issue. Lummack follows-on by exposing his learning journey in adapting design and system

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Comment [10]: You may want to ease up on the use of the word expose. It rather denotes something scandalous or salubrious. In this context using it once in this paragraph may excite the reader to read more; however, using it twice sounds incorrect. Try "shares his learning journey" or similar language instead?