Design & the U.S. Military

EDUCATING SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES FOR A COMPLEX WORLD

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Design as Operational Art

The world has changed; every problem is a wicked problem

A design approach is a response to increased complexity

The defense paradigm has changed
  ◦ No longer exclusively a profession of arms, although we cannot forgo it either
The Design Insurgency

Institutional resistance is immense
  ◦ Military culture, structure & practice industrial to the core
  ◦ Design experimentation is scary when your medium is the use of force

Small cadre of people across the defense department embraced design
  ◦ The logic of the approach gaining wider acceptance over time
  ◦ Believers rose in rank and responsibility
Adapting traditional design models for non-traditional use
Appreciate the Context  

Define the Problem  

Develop an Approach  

Frame & Reframe  

Reflect & Innovate
Still process-oriented but non-linear

The problem with the word problem in a complex context

Ackoff’s 4-problems model particularly useful

Problem dissolution is the goal

Appreciate the Context

Imagine a Desired Future

Identify Challenges & Opportunities

Develop an Approach

Iteration & Reframing
Self-reflection
Empathy
Project Management
Communication

Complexity Theory
Organizational Theory
Sociological Theory
Narrative Theory

Systems Theory
Swarm Theory

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