

USAWC students test creativity in 'egg drop'

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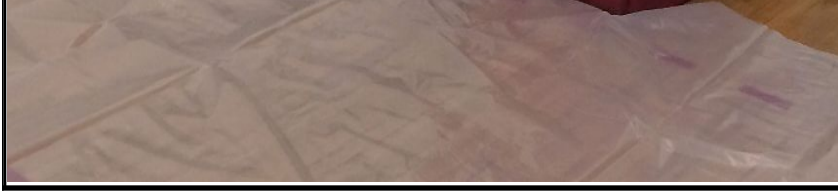
March 11, 2015 -- Army War College students must have wondered about the connection between fragile eggs and senior leadership as they walked into the Root Hall gym to attend Prof. Chuck Allen's Creative Leadership elective, March 9.



The students had to come up with their own design that would allow a raw egg to be dropped from a height of eight feet, yet remain unbroken. To make the task more interesting, Allen required that the students use edible materials. Entries ranged from loaves of bread to fruit roll ups, marshmallows and rice. Of the 12 attempts, eight eggs survived the drop unscathed.

Returning to the seminar room, the students engaged in an after action review of the exercise, discussing their process of preparation. In many cases, it involved seeking others' ideas, doing some research and, then, taking a chance – steps to overcome the mental blocks to creativity that we all have.

“My observation is that students are excited by the challenge and are competitive by nature, which serves



as motivating factor for the exercise,” said Allen. “They also observe and learn from the designs of their peers, pretty much in the same

way as in the real world. This exercise provided an opportunity to demonstrate concepts of creativity from the lessons thus far and validate, in many cases, their creativity preference to reinforce the need for self-awareness.”

The key question posed was "what about protecting the egg from impact helps thinking about protecting our soldiers in other contexts? Like IEDs, Impact of force reduction (SERB, QMP), Impact of service (PTSD) as service members fall back into U.S. society...?"

Libyan Col. Muhsen Elabeidi and Lt. Col. Carl Parsons await their turn to test their creative thinking as Prof. Chuck Allen demonstrates an egg drop as an exercise in broadening perspectives in problem-solving. Allen used rice cakes, marshmallows and fruit rollups to protect his egg, Allen said, "Mine made it unbroken," but there was no immediate confirmation of the validity of his statement.

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