The Army University Research Program

(January 2020 – December 2022)

Background

The Army University Research Program (AURP) is a learning sciences research program with the aim of improving education across the Army Learning Enterprise with innovative projects that address specific needs. The AURP was created by the vice provost of academic affairs (VPAA), Army University (ArmyU), in 2019 to support evidence-based innovation in the learning enterprise. It is an inclusive program: one needn't be a researcher by trade to contribute. Practitioners can be faculty/instructors, curriculum or faculty development staff, students, or research staff.

The AURP uses the Army Learning Coordination Council (ALCC) structure to drive solicitation, selection, and oversight of research projects. The administration of the program rests in the Institutional Research and Assessment Division (IRAD), VPAA, ArmyU. AURP activities are managed by the Learning Sciences Committee (LScC), which is a standing committee of the ALCC.

The strengths of AURP projects rest with the opportunity for topics to be proposed by anyone, and the research is done in a collaborative environment with investigators from organizations as varied as IRAD, the Center for the Profession and Leadership, the Army Research Institute, the U.S. Army Institute for Religious Leadership, the Sabalauski Air Assault School, U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command-Soldier Center, the Sustainment Center of Excellence, and U.S. Northern Command Gender Advisors. This makes certain that products or policies developed through this process have had input from potential user groups and subject-matter experts.

Current AURP Projects and Status

Since its introduction at the November 2019 meeting of the LScC, the AURP has resulted in seven supported research projects. The Table provides an overview of these projects.

AURP Way Forward

As the AURP grows, additional programmed funding will be required for contracted research support and to transition products to the operational force. Every year, new, varied, and relevant research ideas are proposed to the LScC; we hope that collaborations and support through the LScC continue to grow, and the Army Learning Enterprise is able to produce better educated soldiers through these efforts. ❧

Table

Overview of Current AUIRP Projects

Title (Year Begun)	Project Description
Survey of the Army Learning Enterprise (SALE) (2019)	The SALE provides an enterprise level overview of professional military education (PME) from the student perspective after they return to the operational force. The main aims are (1) to facilitate the collection of best practices, lessons learned, and techniques, tactics, and procedures from those who are excelling; and (2) to facilitate the identification and remediation of barriers to success.
Tacit Knowledge Transfer (2019)	Tacit knowledge refers to the knowledge, skills, and abilities an individual gains through experience that is often difficult to put into words or otherwise communicate. Understanding tacit knowledge and how it is transferred within the total force is critical to improve the military's agility, adaptability, and speed of responding to any challenges presented by adversaries.
Defining and Quantifying Rigor in Army PME (2020)	The term "academic rigor" is often used within Army doctrine and heard within command directives. However, there is not a common understanding of what is meant by "academic rigor" within PME. The aims of this project are to (1) create a common understanding in the context of PME of the term "academic rigor" and (2) develop tools to measure and evaluate the level of rigor in specific courses.
Applying Learning Science to Skill and Knowledge Acquisition (ALSSKA) (2020)	Academic research in learning and memory has validated several strategies to optimize the acquisition and retention of knowledge and skills. The aim of this project is to establish (1) learning outcomes associated with strategies for skill and knowledge acquisition; and (2) practices of value, lessons learned, and tactics, techniques, and procedures associated with the implementation of strategies.
Improving Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) Through Assessment and Feedback in a Distributed Learning Environment (2021)	For learning to be successful, students must be proficient in self-regulation skills including planning, goal setting, discipline, and focus. The aim of this project is to determine whether providing learner-centric assessments along with adaptive feedback and strategies for optimizing skills in self-regulation improves learning outcomes in a distributed learning environment. The key planned product of this project is an assessment and feedback tool leveraging adaptive learning technology to improve SRL skills.
Identifying Best Practices for Instructor Training for Virtual Learning (2022)	As the Army looks to modernize, Army instructors may increasingly be tasked to teach in a distributed learning environment. This will likely involve instructing online through platforms such as MS Teams or Blackboard. The aims of this project are (1) to identify best practices and challenges for virtual learning (VL) instructors and (2) to develop recommendations for VL instruction that can be used throughout the learning enterprise.
Assessing Affective Domain Growth in Soldiers (2022)	The affective domain is "the domain that examines a student's ability to internalize what is learned in the form of feelings and attitude" (TRADOC Regulation 350-70, 2017, p. 127). The aim of this project is to develop an affective domain assessment for use in Army training and education contexts. We propose utilizing existing, scientifically validated scales to help build an assessment of the affective domain to be used in Army training and education contexts.