



JOURNAL OF MILITARY LEARNING

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Smith, Farra, Ulrich, Franco, Keister, and Chatterjee

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Berg and Rousseau

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Welcome to the third edition of the *Journal of Military Learning*. As the editor of *JML*, I am proud of the hard work that our authors, editors, and reviewers have completed to bring this issue to you. As Army University moves into fully functional, we continue to expand our writing as a peer-reviewed semiannual publication that supports efforts to improve education and training for the U.S. Army and overall profession of arms. *JML* is the Army University's professional journal bringing current adult learning discussions, new adult education writing, and current educational research from the field for the development of our present and future leaders, current professional military education (PME) faculty, and all levels of Army staffs.

JML offers articles that have intellectual discussions regarding education, instructor and faculty development, and aligning our education with universities and colleges to help soldiers today and in the future. To assist in having better educated soldiers and leaders increases our Army's force readiness and mission success. Increased rigor in all educa-

tional levels improves our training and educational outcomes. The process of learning and education complements our profession of arms.

The peer-reviewed articles in this edition include discussion of teaching the right education in our PME at the right time, lessons regarding veterans' student experiences in higher education, and effects of combat stress on adult learning. Our articles of interest include servant leadership in the classroom, fostering instructor competencies through faculty development, and a staff ride for the modern battlefield.

I will continue to always encourage educators, researchers, and military professionals, both uniformed and civilian, to submit articles to this journal. In regards to military learning, only through critical thinking and challenging our education paradigms can we as a learning organization fully examine and assess opportunities to improve military education and training for our profession of arms. A detailed call for papers and the submission guidelines can be found at <http://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Journal-of-Military-Learning>. 

Col. Paul E. Berg, PhD, U.S. Army
Journal of Military Learning
Editor

The Right Education and Training at the Right Time

Deciding What to Teach and Ensuring It Happens

Jack D. Kem, PhD

William E. Bassett, MA

Abstract

In our professional military education, do we really teach what we need to teach? Are we really teaching “the right education and training at the right time?” Do we really work to link courses across a career to ensure that these courses are sequential and progressive? The Accountable Instructional System provides a process to address these very questions, as well as developing the approach to ensure that student assessment and program evaluation provide evidence that the right education and training takes place at the right time in a career. The authors also provide an approach to integrate the “language of professional educators” with the “language of the profession of arms” using the concept of the commander’s intent (purpose, end state, and key tasks) to describe the purpose, outcomes, and terminal learning objectives required for curriculum design.

A Sequential and Progressive Continuum of Learning

In the October 2017 edition of the *Journal of Military Learning*, Maj. Gen. John Kem, Brig. Gen. Gene LeBoeuf, and Dr. Jim Martin wrote the lead article titled “Answering the Hottest Question in Army Education: What is Army University?” There were a number of key points from that article worthy of highlighting. First, in the Army, training and education are accomplished in a sequential and progressive fashion along a career-long learning continuum. Second, this continuum of training and education is not limited to instruction in formal schools but spans all learning experiences in the “learning enterprise,” which includes classrooms, the workplace, and self-directed learning. Third, the key component across this continuum of training and education is the development of “habits of mind” to improve and optimize in-

tellectual performance. Lastly, Army University was formed as the entity responsible for governing both the training and education activities.

Army University, drawing upon recognized educational best practices, has the charter to synchronize across the entire learning enterprise to ensure that learning is indeed sequential and progressive, which improves the quality and rigor of the curricula, integrates and synchronizes faculty and curriculum development, and creates new business practices to implement policies and new governance models to improve assessment practices and learning performance.¹

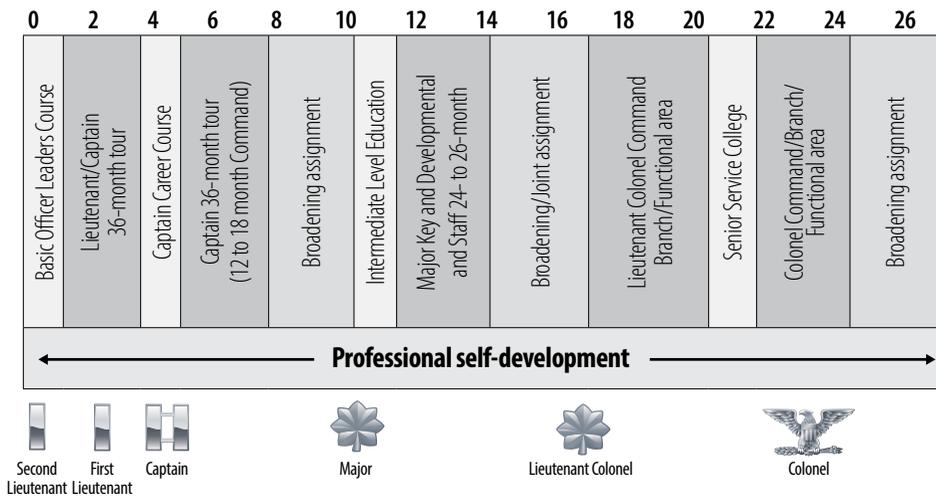
Army University's ambitious strategic agenda touches all four Army cohorts (non-commissioned officers, warrant officers, officers, and civilians) and encompasses all three "learning domains": institutional training and education, organizational training and education, and self-development training and education. Ensuring that everyone in the Army has a sequential and progressive continuum of learning is the essence of getting the "right education and training at the right time."

Jack D. Kem, PhD, is the associate dean of academics and a professor at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He holds a BA from Western Kentucky University, an MPA from Auburn University at Montgomery, and a PhD from North Carolina State University. He previously served as a supervisory professor in the Department of Joint, Interagency, and Multinational Operations and as a teaching team leader for the Command and General Staff School. Kem deployed as a member of the senior executive service to Afghanistan as the deputy to the commander, NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan (NTM-A)/Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A). A retired Army colonel, he has authored three books on campaign planning and has published over thirty articles in various publications. Kem has served as a discussant and invited lecturer for fifteen different organizations, including the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Atlantic Council, the Atlantic Council of Finland, the National Defense University, the Air War College, the Marine War College, and U.S. Strategic Command.

William E. Bassett, MA, is the chief of the Accreditation Coordination Division at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC). He holds a BA in public management from the University of Kentucky and an MA in history from the University of Michigan, and he has done doctoral work at the University of Kansas in education policy and leadership studies. He previously served at Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Missouri, as an instructor of leadership and management, MBA program director, assistant dean in the Helzberg School of Management, and director for planning and assessment. Bassett also served in a variety of assignments in the U.S. Army until retiring as a lieutenant colonel. While in the military, he developed curriculum at the Armor School, taught American history at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and taught military history and led staff rides in CGSC's Combat Studies Institute. In 1996 he was CGSC's military instructor of the year.



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(Figure from Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, December 2014)

Figure 1. Officer Career Timeline

This article proposes a conceptual framework for Army learning management that uses the language of our profession to explain educational concepts. Specifically, we use the doctrinal components of commander’s intent to identify the particular elements of a curriculum or program of instruction essential in synchronizing learning along a cohort learning continuum. Although we focus on officer professional military education (PME), we believe that the conceptual framework is a model that can be used for all cohorts and domains. We will also focus on three of the components of Army University’s charter: (1) developing intellectual habits of mind, (2) improving the quality and rigor of the curricula, and (3) creating new business practices to implement policies and new governance models to improve assessment practices and learning performance.

Officer Professional Military Education

The December 2014 edition of Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA Pam) 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, included a chart titled “Officer Career Timeline—Growing Leaders.” This chart, shown in figure 1, depicts how officers are professionally developed “through a deliberate, continuous, sequential, and progressive process including training, education and experiences nested with counseling and mentoring.”² The updated version of DA Pam 600-3 (2017) states, “Leader development is achieved through the career-long synthesis of the training, education, and experiences acquired through opportunities in the institutional, operational, and self-development domains, supported by peer



and developmental relationships.”³ Interestingly, the updated DA Pam 600-3 does not include the Officer Career Timeline chart; however, the chart is a good depiction of the development of an officer through a sequential and progressive series of institutional and operational assignments, with professional self-development as a continuous effort throughout an officer’s career.

Figure 1 (on page 5) depicts a typical assignment path for a commissioned officer, which includes a balance of institutional assignments (training and education) and operational assignments (including broadening and joint assignments), while professional self-development occurs continuously throughout an officer’s career.

There are four major institutional assignments throughout the career. The first is the Basic Officer Leaders Course (BOLC), which is taken as a new lieutenant. This course has the objective “to develop technically competent and confident platoon leaders, regardless of branch, who are grounded in leadership, basic technical and tactical skill proficiency, are physically and mentally strong, and embody the warrior ethos.”⁴ The next professional development course, the Captain Career Course (CCC), includes the objective to prepare “company grade officers to command Soldiers at the company, troop, or battery level, and to serve as staff officers at battalion and brigade levels.”⁵

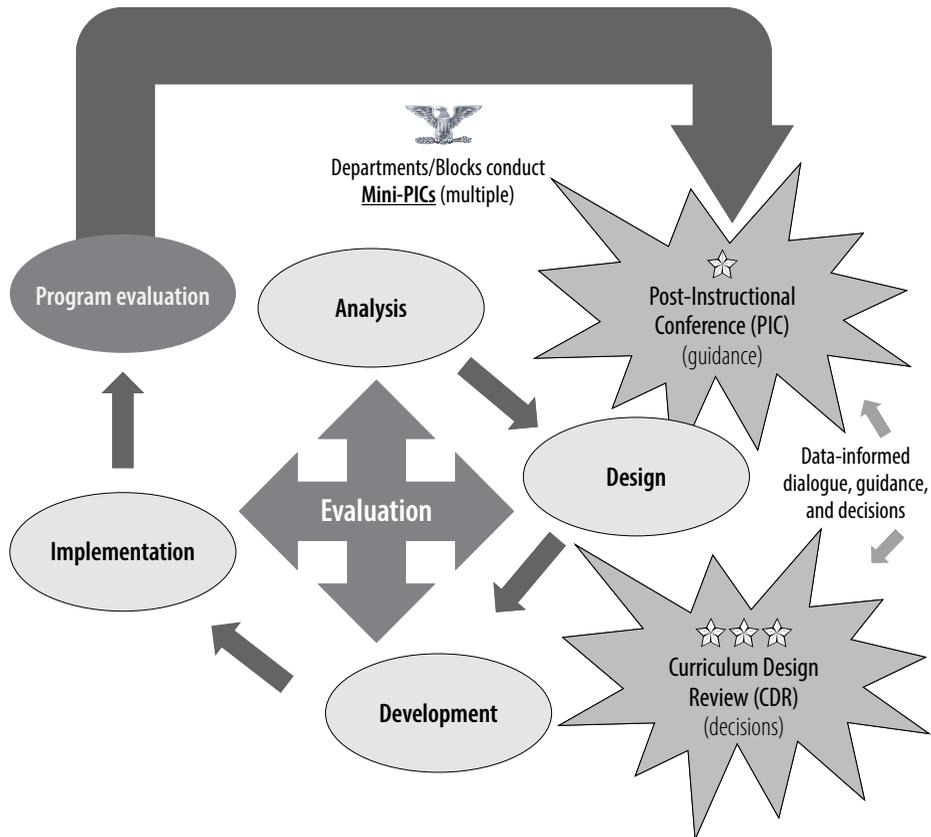
Upon selection for major, officers attend Intermediate Level Education (ILE), which is “designed to prepare new field grade officers for their next 10 years of service” and “produces field grade officers with a warrior ethos and Joint, expeditionary mindset, who are grounded in warfighting doctrine, and who have the technical, tactical, and leadership competencies to be successful at more senior levels in their respective branch or FA [functional area].”⁶ Finally, officers may attend the Senior Service College (SSC), which “provides senior level PME and leader development training” and “prepares military, civilian, and international leaders to assume strategic leadership responsibilities in military or national security organizations.”⁷

These four different institutional training and education assignments anchor the sequential and progressive continuum of learning for officers. The schools are intended to prepare officers for future assignments and are intended to complement operational (unit) assignments, as well as professional self-development. As discussed earlier, Army University has the charter to synchronize across the entire learning enterprise to ensure that learning is indeed sequential and progressive—that is, to ensure the right education and training occur at the right time in an officer’s career. To accomplish this charter, it is necessary for all in the learning enterprise to understand how their institutional training and education fits within the overall *intent* of officer professional development.



The Commander’s Intent

Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command*, describes the concept of the *commander’s intent* as “a clear and concise expression of the purpose



(Figure from U. S. Army Command and General Staff College Bulletin No. 930, *Curriculum Development: The Accountable Instructional System*, August 2017)

Figure 2. The Accountable Instructional System Model

of the operation and the desired military end state that supports mission command, provides focus to the staff, and helps subordinate and supporting commanders act to achieve the commander’s desired results without further orders, even when the operation does not unfold as planned.”⁸ The ADRP further describes the commander’s intent:

The commander’s intent becomes the basis on which staffs and subordinate leaders develop plans and orders that transform thought into action. A well-crafted commander’s intent conveys a clear image of the operation’s purpose, key tasks, and the desired outcome. The commander’s intent provides a focus for subordinates to coordinate their separate efforts. Commanders personally prepare their commander’s intent. When possible, they deliver it in person. Face-to-face delivery ensures mutual understanding of what the commander wants by allowing immediate clarification of specific points.



Individuals can then exercise disciplined initiative within the overarching guidance provided in the commander's intent.⁹

There are three components of a commander's intent: the purpose (the overall reason and broader purpose of the operation), key tasks (what specific actions the commander directs must be accomplished), and the desired end state or outcome (the conditions that should exist at the completion of the operations). These three components give subordinates a clear understanding of what the commander wants and provide some general boundaries on the amount of discretion subordinates have in accomplishing the mission. This same process of receiving the commander's intent (purpose, key tasks, and end state/outcomes) is very similar to the academic process that results in guidance from the school commandant.

The Accountable Instructional System

At Army University and the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), curriculum is designed using the Accountable Instructional System (AIS). The AIS follows the five phases of the ADDIE model: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. Each of these phases address a specific step in curriculum design: (1) analyze and determine instructional needs, (2) design curriculum to meet the identified needs, (3) develop instructional materials and courseware to support stated goals and objectives, (4) implement developed courseware, and (5) evaluate effectiveness of the educational process and product.¹⁰ Figure 2 (on page 7) depicts the CGSC AIS Model.¹¹ (Note: The CGSC AIS is a "system" in the sense that it connects CGSC's curriculum development process with other CGSC academic governance processes. Specifically, the AIS ensures faculty and senior leaders' engagement in curriculum development and program improvement decision-making as required in Higher Learning Commission's Assumed Practices and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's (CJCS's) Officer Professional Military Education Policy.¹²

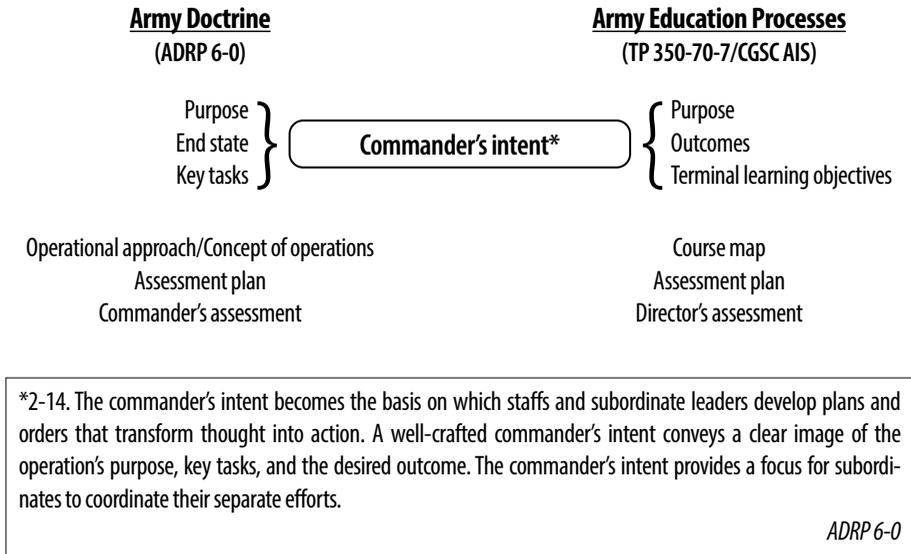
Immediately after the completion of a block of instruction or course, instructional departments hold a series of after-action reviews to capture impressions from the classes. Following this process, departments and schools conduct a series of *mini-post-instructional conferences* (mini-PICs) to discuss the results of the analysis of previous instruction with the respective school director. These mini-PICs are the "first impressions" of the curriculum and focus on the initial analysis resulting from direct and indirect assessment of the student learning results.¹³

A key component of the AIS is to receive academic guidance from the leadership of the college. Between the analysis and design phases, the *post-instructional conference* (PIC) is held, with faculty, curriculum developers, and the leadership of the college. The PIC presents the purpose of the course, how the course links to educational outcomes,



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Command and General Staff College (CGSC) curriculum design is grounded in Army Doctrine and sound educational principles.



(Figure developed by Kem)

Figure 3. The Accountable Instructional System and the Commander's Intent

how the terminal learning objectives of the course link to learning outcomes, and the assessment plan for the course. The PIC is normally presented to the CGSC deputy commandant, who provides guidance on the continued design of the curriculum.¹⁴

A second key component of the AIS is to receive decisions from the leadership of the college. Between the design and development phases, there is a *curriculum design review* (CDR). The CDR is the approval process for the course, gaining the approval of the purpose, course outcomes, and the terminal learning objectives. The CDR is normally presented to the CGSC commandant, who provides the approval of the course design so that the course can be developed by curriculum developers.¹⁵ During the CDR, the leadership of the college also reviews the overall course map (how the course flows) and the assessment plan (how the school will ensure accomplishment of course outcomes and learning objectives), and it will be presented with the school director's assessment of the overall course.

The AIS is an iterative process, focused on managing change within the curriculum and ensuring that the curriculum is focused on the appropriate purpose for the course, the educational outcomes to be achieved, and the learning objectives to drive curriculum development. The AIS is a disciplined approach to enable leaders to make evidence-based and data-informed decisions to manage change in the curriculum.



Table. Mapping Purpose, End State, and Key Tasks

| Purpose | |
|---|--|
| To educate and train field grade leaders to serve as staff officers and commanders with the ability to build teams, lead organizations, and integrate unified land operations with joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational partners in complex and uncertain environments. | |
| Common core outcomes ("end state") | |
| 1 | Have met JPME-1 qualification standards |
| 2 | Possess the knowledge and skills to be an effective joint and Army staff officer |
| 3 | Are officers who can understand war, the spectrum of conflict, and the complexity of the operational environment (history, culture, ethics, and geography) |
| 4 | Can meet organizational-level leadership challenges |
| 5 | Are critical and creative thinkers who can apply solutions to operational problems in a volatile, uncertain, complex, or ambiguous environment. |
| 6 | Can communicate concepts with clarity and precision in both written and oral forms |
| 7 | Are self-aware and motivated to continue learning and improving throughout their careers |

(Table from Command and General Staff Officer's Course C400 Mini-PIC presentation, slide four, 8 December 2017)

Linking the Accountable Instructional System to the Commander's Intent

The conceptual bases of the military approach to the commander's intent and the academic process of AIS are quite similar. For military operations, the commander personally approves the commander's intent, consisting of purpose, key tasks, and end state. These three components of the commander's intent provide purpose and direction for the planners and operators, and enable the accomplishment of the military mission.



Table. Mapping Purpose, End State, and Key Tasks (continued)

| Terminal learning objectives (TLOs) ("key tasks") | | Level learn | Outcome |
|--|---|-------------|-----------|
| 1 | Explain how field grade officers lead the development of ethical organizations and leaders to achieve results | Syn | 3,4,5 |
| 2 | Incorporate critical and creative thinking skills | Syn | 5,6 |
| 3 | Analyze historical context to inform professional military judgment | Analysis | 3,5,6 |
| 4 | Analyze the nature of war and the causes, consequences, and contexts of change in modern warfare | Analysis | 3,5,6 |
| 5 | Analyze the considerations, functions, capabilities, limitations, and doctrine of joint forces/unified action partners in joint, multinational, and interagency operations. | Analysis | 1,2,3,5,6 |
| 6 | Apply solutions to operational problems using operational art and joint doctrine | Analysis | 1,2,5,6 |
| 7 | Apply U.S. Army doctrine | Apply | 2,5,6 |
| 8 | Demonstrate the process to develop, resource, and integrate Army capabilities for Combatant Commanders | Comp | 1,2 |
| 9 | Demonstrate how military forces, in conjunction with other instruments of national power, further U.S. national interests in the international security environment | Apply | 1,2,3 |
| 10 | Incorporate effective communication skills | Syn | 6 |

(Table from Command and General Staff Officer's Course C400 Mini-PIC presentation, slide four, 8 December 2017)

As the planning for a military operation is developed, the commander will also be directly involved in the approval of the operational approach and the concept of operations, the assessment plan for the operation, and the continual assessment to anticipate and adapt to changing circumstances as part of the operations process.¹⁶



The process is similar in the AIS. In the AIS, the school commandant personally approves the purpose, outcomes, and terminal learning objectives for a course, which occurs formally in the CDR. These three components provide purpose and direction for the development of curriculum, and enable curriculum developers and faculty to transform the school commandant's thoughts into action. During the CDR, the commandant will also be briefed on the course map, the assessment plan, and the school director's assessment.

Figure 3 (on page 9) shows the relationship between the concept of the commander's intent and the AIS process. The concepts used in curriculum design draw upon both of these similar approaches, bridging Army doctrine and the Army education process. As a result, the commander/commandant drives the design for curriculum by providing purpose and direction.

The table (on pages 10–11) shows an example of an initial slide during the curriculum design review that shows the crosswalk between the purpose, outcomes/end state, and terminal learning objectives/key tasks.

Synchronizing Across the Continuum of Learning

The AIS works extremely well for developing curriculum within a school for a particular course; however, the system also has the added benefit of providing useful information for synchronizing across the entire learning enterprise. For officer PME, each of the four major institutional courses (BOLC, CCC, ILE, and SSC) have stated purposes for their curriculum. Each of the four courses have objectives that are tied directly to operational assignments and specific timeframes in an officer's career. For example, the CCC has the objective to prepare "company grade officers to command Soldiers at the company, troop, or battery level, and to serve as staff officers at battalion and brigade levels."¹⁷ ILE has the objective "to prepare new field grade officers for their next 10 years of service."¹⁸ As a result, the purpose for the major institutional courses is already well established and confirmed in each of the CDRs for the respective courses.

The second piece of the puzzle to synchronize across the continuum of learning is the identification of the specific course outcomes, or the conditions that should exist at the completion of the course. In the AIS, these are normally depicted in a statement such as, "At the conclusion of the course, graduates are able to" This provides a specific measure of the competencies that are achieved for every graduate of a specific course. This information can also establish the foundation or "starting point" for officers when they enter the next level of professional military education.

Finally, the terminal learning objectives provide specific demonstrated knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that have been achieved by graduates of a particular course. Learning objectives also provide a measure of the cognitive level



achieved in each of these competencies (for example, whether a student has achieved a demonstrated level of comprehension of a particular concept or has achieved a demonstrated level of application of the concept).

Knowing the specific components of the purpose, outcomes, and terminal learning objectives in each course is critical to ensure that learning across the continuum is indeed sequential and progressive. The courses are designed in a proper sequence and build on each other in a progressive manner, complemented by operational assignments and professional self-development.

Assessment and Program Evaluation: Ensuring Learning Happens

To ensure that PIC and CDR discussions and decisions are data-informed, there must be an assessment of student learning to provide evidence that students have indeed achieved requisite learning objectives. The first consideration is whether the learning objectives and course outcomes are properly nested. By necessity, achieving all of a course's enabling learning objectives should ensure that all of the terminal learning objectives are achieved. Likewise, achieving all of a course's terminal learning objectives should ensure that the course outcomes are achieved.

There are two processes necessary to ensure this takes place; the first is in curriculum design, to ensure that the course is designed with a "building block" approach to nest and link enabling learning objectives meet terminal learning objectives, and finally learning outcomes. This requires a crosswalk of the curriculum, especially for topics (such as critical thinking and written communications) that may be represented throughout the course design.

The second process is to ensure that an appropriate assessment plan is developed that addresses both outcomes and learning objectives. This assessment should include both direct and indirect assessment evidence. Direct assessment (consisting of clear and compelling evidence of what students are learning) should be the primary approach. Examples of direct assessment include student's written papers scored using a rubric with clear standards, direct observations of student behaviors by expert faculty, or "capstone" experiences such as research projects and presentations scored using a rubric with clear standards. Direct assessment measures should also be explicitly tied to specific learning objectives and course outcomes.

Indirect assessment (consisting of signs that students are probably learning but exactly how what or how much they are learning is less clear) include grades without an accompanying rubric or scoring guides and student self-ratings in surveys on how much they have learned. These indirect assessment measures are useful for gaining insight into learning but are not sufficient to ensure that the learning actually took place. As such, indirect assessment measures should be considered as a supporting effort to the primary effort of direct assessments.



There is, however, a distinction between learning assessment and program evaluation. Assessment of student learning is focused on individual student achievement of learning objectives and outcomes; program evaluation is focused on the effectiveness or value of the program. Program evaluation is achieved when individual learning assessments are aggregated to show the overall effectiveness of the course.

When civilian and military accrediting bodies (such as the J7's Process for the Accreditation of Joint Education, or PAJE) evaluate member institutions' assessment processes, they are most interested in program-level assessment, or program evaluation. The Joint Institutional Research and Evaluation Coordinating Committee (JIRE-CC)—a subcommittee of the CJCS's Military Education Coordination Council (MECC)—maintains a set of guidelines for PAJE teams' use when evaluating an institution's assessment of student learning processes. These guidelines include the following statement: "Effective assessment programs are useful, planned, systematic, sustained, and make use of existing processes as much as possible while limiting the amount of additional effort required of faculty and students."¹⁹ The guidelines state:

An effective assessment program is useful. Data gathered through direct and indirect assessment measures should be meaningful and directly aid in curricular decision-making processes.

An effective assessment program is planned. Assessment of students' learning for the coming academic year is carefully determined, documented, and communicated with all stakeholders. Institutions should include discussions of assessment results in published agendas and minutes for appropriate governance bodies.

An effective assessment program is sustained. This occurs by grounding the assessments plan in the institutional culture, educating all stakeholders, building staff and faculty support, collecting feedback, and continuously improving processes. Sustainability occurs when everyone in the institution acknowledges the existence of the assessment program, understands its intent, and supports its processes and goals.

Finally, an effective assessment program leverages existing processes. Assessment activities should minimize the burden placed on students, faculty, and staff. Organizations develop assessments that are focused, deliberate, and systemic while taking advantage of the institution's culture and existing processes and governance structures. Appropriate automated processes can be a significant part of assessment programs.²⁰

Student assessment of learning and program evaluation are critically important in ensuring that the purpose of a course is met, that the outcomes are achieved,



and that the course has been effective in achieving overall course terminal learning objectives. This process ensures that what we say we have taught has indeed been learned. The AIS process ensures that we teach the right things at the right time and that we are focused on sustaining the overall rigor and quality of the course.

Pulling It All Together: The Right Education and Training at the Right Time

As stated in the first section, Army University, drawing upon recognized educational best practices, has the charter to synchronize across the entire learning enterprise to ensure that learning is indeed sequential and progressive, to improve the quality and rigor of the curricula, to integrate and synchronize faculty and curriculum development, and to create new business practices to implement policies and new governance models to improve assessment practices and learning performance.²¹

As discussed above, the AIS is a way for Army University schools, colleges, and academies to execute program-level ADDIE cycles. Post-instructional conferences and CDRs assure leaders that program outcomes were met, and that a program's curriculum continues to meet the needs of the Army. Curriculum design reviews produce commandant-approved program purpose statements, outcomes, and terminal learning objectives, which, together, serve two essential roles: (1) they focus course learning and assessment activities for the coming academic year, and (2) they enable Army University to better integrate and synchronize learning across the enterprise.

The “secret sauce” to synchronize learning across the enterprise is no real secret—it is a disciplined approach to curriculum design that starts with each lesson, progressively addresses blocks and courses, and then aligns student learning outcomes along each cohort's career continuum of professional military education.

The draft U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet (TP) 350-70-7, *Army Educational Processes*, provides the following:

Army educational institutions are adaptive learning organizations. They employ outcomes-focused processes—based on sound education principles—to sustain relevance and ensure effectiveness. Army educational institutions and schools cannot stay static, as their educational product changes with the Army mission set and the operational environment. Army educational institutions and schools must establish and maintain systems that produce the necessary data for decision-making based on an assessment of student learning and the evaluation of overall institutional performance.²² 



Notes

1. Maj. Gen. John S. Kem, Brig. Gen. Eugene J. LeBoeuf, and James B. Martin, "Answering the Hottest Question in Army Education: What Is Army University?," *Journal of Military Learning* 1, no. 2 (2017): 3–10.
2. Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA Pam) 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office [GPO], 3 December 2014), 11, 17.
3. DA Pam 600-3, *Officer Professional Development and Career Management* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 26 June 2017), 5.
4. *Ibid.*, 7.
5. *Ibid.*, 8.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 17 May 2012), para. 2-12.
9. *Ibid.*, para. 2-14.
10. United States Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), CGSC Bulletin No. 930, *Curriculum Development: The Accountable Instructional System* (August 2017), 3.
11. *Ibid.*
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The Veteran-Student Experience

Lessons for Higher Education

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Abstract

Institutions of higher education are seeing more veteran and military-connected students as increasing numbers of students take advantage of the tuition assistance options available for those who served in the armed forces. These adult learners are unique in that they come to higher education with challenges and strengths that differ from traditional college students. Putting into place best-practice approaches to promote veteran-student success is crucial for transitioning those who have served our country into post-military careers. This article outlines the student's perspective of a program option designed to meet the needs of military medics seeking a bachelor's degree in nursing. Their experience provides implications for higher education seeking to promote veteran-student success.

Universities often use military service members' and veterans' benefits such as tuition assistance to entice military service members to enroll in their programs. While these benefits serve as effective recruiting tools, they do not ensure success for veteran-students who may find the world of academia a stark contrast to the orderly life of the military. To promote the success of the increasing number of veterans entering higher education, educators must understand the unique needs of the veteran student. This article explores the veteran-student experience in a program option created to promote the success of military medics seeking a bachelor's degree in nursing. Lessons learned provide higher education with insights into best-practice approaches to promote veteran success and may inform the development of similar programs in other fields of study.

Background

Since the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, military members who patriotically serve, who are prepared to sacrifice their lives for our country if necessary, have been provided post-military service educational opportunities through benefits that include tuition assistance for higher education. These benefits now include the Post-9/11 GI Bill as well as state-based and other tuition assistance opportunities. Never before have veterans' education benefits been as comprehensively or widely utilized as they have been through the current Post-9/11 GI Bill.¹ The numbers of veterans using just these Post-9/11 benefits have increased dramatically since the bill's inception, from approximately 34,000 in 2009 to over 750,000 in 2013.²

Despite the fact that military members are being provided the financial means to seek higher education, many barriers may affect their success. The needs and challenges of veteran-students have been well documented in the United States since the beginning of the War on Terrorism in 2003. Veterans returning to campuses must deal not only with their recent battlefield experiences, but also with the transition to a new and unfamiliar academic environment. Veteran-students may struggle with issues such as posttraumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and depression. In addition to the psychological challenges that can affect learning, com-

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VETERAN-STUDENT EXPERIENCE

bat-related physical challenges and disabilities may also affect the student's ability to be successful in an academic environment.³

Additional struggles include difficulty accessing veterans' benefits and adjusting to an environment that contrasts sharply with their more familiar structured military environment. The lack of structure may be further exacerbated for veterans who are first-generation college students and lack familiarity with the university environment and lifestyle. Veterans may be less likely to seek assistance when struggling in the classroom as the military emphasizes self-reliance, which may lead to a belief that they need to "figure it out for themselves" rather than seek academic or student support services. For students whose last significant academic experience was in high school three or more years previously and who have not enrolled in courses that would have helped them maintain or develop good study habits, success in higher education may be especially challenging. Without recent academic opportunities, they also may not have the necessary knowledge base to draw on for success. Those who have taken classes while serving may have lower GPAs because of deployments or long duty hours that prevented them from attending classes or from devoting as much time to studying as they needed.⁴ Students may also feel "disconnected," with little in common with traditional students who do not share their military service and deployment experience.⁵ Even though these students have had extensive military training and education, students find that while the military training transfers to college credit, it does often not provide credit toward an actual program of study or degree.⁶

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Despite these barriers, veteran-students have the advantage of life experiences and characteristics that come with military training such as perseverance, discipline, and integrity.⁷ At a time when the number of high school graduates entering colleges is decreasing, military veterans provide an ideal adult population for recruitment.⁸ However, once recruited, resources to promote retention that assist with overcoming

barriers while building on the strengths of veteran-students are a must. This article examines the student perspective of a unique project designed to promote student success of veterans with a military medical background to achieve a bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) degree and transition to a career as a professional nurse.



(Figure by authors)

Figure. Veterans' Education Project Partners

Methods

Setting and intervention. The project to promote veteran success took place at Wright State University, a midsize public university in the Midwest. Based on federal funding from the Health Resources Service Administration, a new program option was developed to recognize the training and experience of military medics in achieving a bachelor's degree in nursing. The project incorporated an interprofessional collaboration of members from both within and outside the university (see figure).

The program option was designed with three areas of emphasis: (1) faculty development designed to prepare them to meet the needs and promote the success of veteran-students; (2) modifications to the traditional BSN program of study to accommodate and recognize prior health-care training and experience of veterans;



and (3) successful transition to the collegiate environment and a professional nursing career facilitated through veteran-centric resources offered by the university, the college, and the local community. *Faculty development activities* included three two-hour continuing education sessions developed by the university Veteran and Military Center that reviewed military education and training, common physical and psychosocial issues of military-connected students, and teaching strategies for these same students. *Modifications to the curriculum* included a shorter sequence with a bridge transition course, credit for military training and experience, and options to test out of nursing and general education courses. *Success* was facilitated by use of a cohort model, a dedicated part-time nursing tutor providing individual and small-group tutoring sessions, a dedicated full-time advisor, and access to university and community support resources.

Participants. Eight veteran-students enrolled in the grant-supported veteran program option designed to help military medics achieve a BSN were recruited to take part in a focus group to evaluate the project. All students had a health-care background and had either served or were currently serving in the armed forces. These students were enrolled in their first semester of nursing and were part of an accelerated cohort of students that also included other health-care professionals with health-care experience such as emergency medical technicians and licensed practical nurses. The university institutional review board granted an exempt status to the project. All eligible veteran-students were invited to participate; one female and four male students agreed to take part in the focus group interview.

Data collection. Prior to the start of the focus group, one of the two facilitators reviewed the purpose of the focus group, the participants' rights regarding answering questions and participation, and the protection of participants' anonymity, and then assigned numerical identities for use during the audio recorded focus group. One facilitator led the discussion and a second facilitator assisted. The focus group interview was recorded with student permission. Institutional review board approval was granted to conduct the study by the affiliated university.

Instrument. The focus group interview guide developed by the researchers included the following questions, which were based on program goals and literature related to veteran education. Follow-on questions were used by the facilitator to provide clarification as needed during the focus group interview:

1. What were your experiences during the application process for the accelerated BSN program option? What worked? What didn't?
2. How would you describe your experiences in transferring college credits?
3. How would you describe the support services you have received in the program?
4. Literature indicates that when available, veterans benefit from accessing psychological support services. What type of psychological support do you think would be beneficial for individuals like you in the BSN program? What would that look like? What would be the barriers to accessing that support?



Table. NVivo Analysis Codes and Student Quotes

| Code name and description | Quotes | Number references |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| Admission process Frustrations with the admission process experience | "The time frame of everything that we had to get submitted (for admission) is where I think the problems happened" | 7 |
| Challenges Frustration, difficulties, and challenges experienced various topics such as technology resources | "Compliance (on-line) system does not work very well" "We were lost in the independent study (on-line modules) in terms of knowledge we were supposed to gain" | 23 |
| Civilian and military experience Disconnect between civilian and military skills that are not accounted for in college credit | "There just isn't real world application outside the military that you can just be like, okay, this matches" | 6 |
| Cohort 'We thinking' indicating a collective identity | "We all pretty much immediately started building relationships and talking to each other, reaching out to each other, helping" | 11 |
| Credits Lack of recognition of military experience for academic credit | "Not all my stuff transferred" "Principles of marine marksmanship—that just doesn't apply to anything and I get that" "There is no good avenue now that is as seamless as this training is for college credit" | 16 |
| Future recommendations Changes students would like to see | "Select a group of people that are going to be responsible enough for the challenge" "Technology textbook resource was just a waste of a bunch of time I could have used elsewhere" "Start admission interviews sooner" | 13 |
| Military Prior military experience | "Just dealing with the stress in the military has prepared me for anything else I will do as far as stress goes" | 13 |
| Accommodating military Accounting for military experience/ obligations | "They understood military obligations and they work around you" | 2 |
| Military self or group identity Defining the self-identity of military personnel; drive to succeed | "The military experience that each of us have has helped us" "Stress management discipline translates into nursing" | 6 |

(Table by authors)



Table. NVivo Analysis Codes and Student Quotes (continued)

| Code name and description | Quotes | Number references |
|--|---|-------------------|
| Successes Positive comments about the program | "Everything has been really fantastic" "I just want to say my appreciation for the faculty here" | 26 |
| Support Types of support that students received or wish to receive | | 36 |
| Academic support | "Help has been there when you need it" | 11 |
| Faculty support | "Every teacher has a very open policy" "They (faculty) were like come on in, let me help you. It has been fantastic" | 10 |
| Other support | "Not just the professors, but the staff, the support, and the veterans center" | 10 |
| Peer support | "Not only do we have support from the staff, we have support collectively from our cohort" | 5 |

(Table by authors)

5. How has your training in the service helped you in any of the classes this semester?
6. What are your thoughts about working in the small cohort/group?
7. How can the program option be improved to better serve veterans like yourself?
8. Is there any topic I have not mentioned that you would like to talk about?

Data analysis methods. After the focus group was completed, the facilitators transcribed the audio recording verbatim. Nonverbal behaviors and possible interpretations were discussed and related to the responses. The transcript was uploaded into NVivo 11 for analyses.⁹

The unit of analysis for the code-based analyses was each student’s responses. Participants’ nonverbal and verbal behaviors demonstrated respect and familiarity with each other through use of names and acknowledgment of common experiences.

The transcript was analyzed for two purposes: classical content analyses to summarize responses to each question from the interview guide and a theme-based constant comparison analysis investigating student attitudes and beliefs overall.¹⁰ *A priori* themes were established as codes prior to the analysis (support, cohort,



credit transfer, and stress management). Word frequency data analyses based on NVivo output and individual and collaborative project team coding contributed to the removal of the theme “stress management.” Statements related to students’ stress management were coded within other codes. Also, during the project team review and collaboration, an additional nine codes and subcodes emerged (admission process, civilian/military experiences, military, accommodating military, military-self, future recommendations and academic support, faculty support, peer support, and other support). The additional codes added a finer level of detail for each of the remaining *a priori* codes. All project team data analysts agreed on the final coding, yielding a strong inter-rater reliability.

The table (on pages 22–23) represents the final set of codes used in the analyses, the related code definitions, the number of times statements were assigned to the code, and student quotes related to the code.

Discussion

The analysis of the focus group data provided important insights related to implementation of the project for veterans with military medical experience. Final coded findings were found to fall into three major categories: processes, civilian-military dichotomy, and psycho/social impacts. Process concerns were focused on awarding of credit and admission processes. The group was able to offer insights and recommendations for improving processes for future cohorts such as identifying the need to develop crosswalks between military training/work and college credit. Suggestions such as providing information earlier to provide more time for admission processes was one of the strongest recommendations.

The second major category of responses was related to the civilian/military dichotomy. This category included crossover from the processes category such as concerns regarding the lack of translation between military work and training and the civilian work and academic environment. Participants had a strong sense of military identity/self and characterized themselves as being strong and resilient. The group viewed their military experiences as a strength. The participants strong military identity was expressed in the use of the word “we” when referring to the cohort identity as a collective. Although the group was made of different military branches, military service was seen as a unifying identity.

A third category of themes was related to the psycho/social aspects of their experience. The participants described high levels of support from faculty and peers, despite the stressful nature of academia. This category also included crossover from the military/civilian category. Military identity and grouping with others from the military into a cohort was seen as very positive. The strong support from peers was helpful to the cohort and they acknowledged that their military training prepared them to be resilient despite the stressful nature of their classes. The group felt well supported by faculty, staff, and the campus Veteran and Military Center.



Implications for Higher Education

Research related to veterans in higher education is growing, but at this point in time still lacks in studies of the student voice or description of the student experience in a way that would help educators know the veteran-student.¹¹ This study attempted to address that gap by soliciting the student's perspective of a veteran program option for nursing students based on recommendations in the literature for recruitment and retention of military students. Although the sample was small, the findings indicate that there were many positive and supporting aspects of the program option, but there were also concerns relayed by students related to the challenges the students experienced. These findings provide insights for those in higher education.

Identifying how to translate military training into academic credit has been identified as a barrier for veterans, including those seeking health-care careers.¹² Despite a developed program of study to recognize military training and experience, students still expressed frustration with the amount of credit awarded and the process for awarding credit. A more effective and student-friendly process must be developed for granting credit based on military experience and training, especially for students who have training that may have less applicability to a college program of study such as infantry training. This may need to be done at a state, if not federal, level with collaborations between educators in higher education and the military. The Student Veterans of America recently identified business; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)-related; liberal arts; and health professions as the top majors of military students. Therefore, universities and veteran-centered organizations should begin examining their local populations to determine educational pathways related to these degree areas.¹³ An example of work being done to address this issue is the Multi-State Collaborative for Military Credit in the Midwest to facilitate transfer and awarding of military credit.¹⁴

Another finding was that students identified a clear sense of identity as military members and commented positively on the cohort-based model developed for the program option. While it has been noted that some universities are moving away from cohort-based models for military-connected students, it appears that this type of model was a strength for the students in this project.¹⁵ There were numerous positive comments about the small cohort group. The team-based approach to health care may facilitate this feeling among this particular group of students in a nursing program, but the students also expressed how teamwork was an important component of success in the military—not just as military health-care team members. Despite the positive comments, concerns were raised about integration into larger classrooms with a hundred or more students as the students' transition through the rest of their program. Although the veterans will be in small cohorts for clinical courses, cost constraints prohibit continuing the small cohort of military students for classroom courses after the first semester—these students will be incorporated into larger classes with a mix of veteran and nonveteran students as they progress over the next three semesters.



As public institutions of higher education experience significant budget cuts, finding creative opportunities to provide veteran-students opportunities for working together may be challenging but necessary to promote student success.¹⁶ In addition, this project implemented an approach with clear support structures in place that included faculty training, a dedicated advisor and tutor, a director with military experience, and partnerships with the local military hospital, the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and the university Veteran and Military Center. While the support services were effective, they were possible because of grant funding that may not be available across all educational settings in today's environment of limited budgets. Despite these expenses, providing affordable support services will be a key factor in promoting veteran success in higher education. While this group of students did not particularly highlight any disability-related support service needs, those supports are available and should also be considered in any academic setting servicing veterans.¹⁷

Though students did indicate that they were resilient and had persevered as military members, they did find aspects of the program frustrating, including processes like admission, online compliance processes, and technology resources used in the classroom. There is a steep learning curve related to the university system and the various technology programs that can be very different from those in the military arena. Giving students ample resources and time to complete the required processes in academia will be helpful to ensure students feel ready for the first day of class. In addition, students require time and support services to be able to use the latest in educational technology.

Limitations. Limitations of the project included the small sample size (N=5) and the fact that the entire cohort was part of group that comprised both veteran and nonveteran students, yet only the veterans were interviewed. Therefore, differences between veterans and nonveterans cannot be determined. Participants were interviewed in a group and not individually, which may have limited the comments and stifled variability of responses among students.

Recommendations for future research. Continued work is needed to understand the experience of the student veteran in higher education. These veteran-students are living as students, veterans, and a combination of the two that makes them unique from other student populations. Further work examining the use of cohort-based models of education or other interventions used to promote student success from the student's perspective are needed to help inform best practices in higher education. Given students must learn the role of "student," are student outcomes better if cohorts are veteran only or mixed?



Conclusion

Veteran-students have unique backgrounds and skills that make them a welcome addition to college campuses. As more veterans take advantage of tuition assistance

opportunities and pursue higher education, faculty and administrators must be aware of best-practice approaches to promote student success and provide our veterans opportunities they are seeking through higher education. The voices of these students provide thoughts for educators to better know this student population and their needs. Despite veteran-specific challenges, veteran-students have many strengths that, if capitalized upon, can lead to high levels of student achievement and create win-win opportunities for our veteran-student population as well as the colleges and universities that serve them. ☞

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The Effects of Combat Stress on Women in a Military Academic Environment

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Abstract

This research describes how combat experiences affected female Army officers who attended the Command and General Staff Officer College (CGSOC) in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The female Army officers' combat experiences were found to affect their academic learning, classroom experience, and coping mechanisms in a graduate-level professional military education. The themes identified included combat-related gender specific experiences and additional gender themes related to learning in a male-dominated military education environment. Nine female active duty Army officers participated in this research, with each having a minimum of two combat tours. In addition, two active duty Army CGSOC military instructors and two behavioral counselors specializing in military patients were also interviewed.

The findings of this case study indicated that combat experiences affect female students who served in the Army in Iraq and Afghanistan. This study contributes the continued research on effects of combat on adult learning, specifically adding to the limited works on being a female serving in the Army.

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 in New York City and the Pentagon resulted in the cumulative deployment of over 2.5 million American military troops in the last fifteen years to Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation New Dawn (OND), which is unprecedented in the history of an all-volunteer American force.¹ As of January 2018, more than 2,350 U.S. troops had been killed in Afghanistan, and 4,424 troops had been killed in Iraq, with over 52,644 troops returning

from combat zones with visible wounds.² The United States military was required to support multiple back-to-back combat tours; between deployments, troops had minimal time at home due to increased training requirements in preparation for upcoming combat tours. This frenzied pace reduced time at home with soldiers' families, resulting in an accumulation of combat stress on military troops in support of two global military campaigns.³

Although both full-combat military campaigns have concluded—Iraq in 2012 and Afghanistan in 2015—the resulting effects of combat on soldiers are still not fully understood. The consequences of combat experiences will continue to impact soldiers, both while they are in the military and well into their civilian lives.⁴ Recent combat stress research has indicated that women have an increased risk of interpersonal stressors, while adjustments of postdeployment assimilation of female veterans are comparable to male veterans.⁵

Background

War has always been a part of our human civilization, and it has resulted in burdening soldiers through its inherent psychological effects. Throughout our U.S. military history, there has been evidence of the effects of war on soldiers' psyche, and efforts to protect soldiers from it have been an important, enduring struggle.⁶

Since 9/11 and the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism, over 150,000 female soldiers have served in combat, 147 women have been killed, and 619 women have been wounded in combat during OIF/OEF/OND deployments.⁷ Thousands of women have combat-related experiences and combat trauma resulting from exposure to combat-related violence, sexual trauma, and other combat- and gender-related stress during their deployments.⁸ Since 2011, the number of veterans diagnosed with combat-related trauma conditions has almost doubled nationally, but this number does not reflect the total number affected, as many veterans have not been diagnosed.⁹ Additionally, women have been found to experience significantly

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higher rates of sexual harassment and assault than men, both within and outside the military.¹⁰ This, in turn, has contributed to their higher rates of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Also, female veterans experience higher rates of major depression and generalized anxiety than do male veterans.¹¹

The U.S. Army's Command and General Staff School (CGSS) facilitates the Command the General Staff Officer's Course (CGSOC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, which is the Department of Army's resident course for senior captains and junior majors with an average of nine to twelve years of military service.¹² Officers chosen to attend complete their Intermediate Level Education (ILE) requirement for professional military education (PME).¹³ This PME is also a requirement for Army majors to be eligible for promotion to the next rank of lieutenant colonel.

In the spring of 2015, the Department of Army ILE selection board selected 1,104 CGSOC resident students to attend the resident course who had also recently been selected to the rank of major (see table 1, pages 32–33). The selection rate for the residential CGSOC course at Fort Leavenworth was 55 percent (of applicants) for the academic class of 2015.¹⁴ The combat demographics of the class include 81 percent (850/1104 students) who served in combat, 44 percent (377/1104 students) who served in two combat tours, and 36 percent (360/1104 students) who served in three or more tours.¹⁵ Of the 1,104 students in the CGSOC class of 2015, 132 students were from the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force, and 16 students were from the Department of Homeland Security, Department of State, and other civilian government agencies. Women represented 14 percent (155/1104 students) of the 2015 CGSOC student population with one to two female students in each classroom.¹⁶

Research Question

How do female CGSS students perceive how their multiple combat experiences affect their learning experiences?

Methodology

This research used a qualitative case study methodology. Female students were purposely selected from the 2015 CGSOC class for the research, which provided them an avenue to describe their combat and learning experiences. Initially, the female student population selected came from the 155 total female students who enrolled in CGSOC. Subsequent screening reduced the number to 109 active-duty Army female students and the additional screening criteria of two combat tours reduced the number to 79 female students. Of the 79 female students available, nine female Army students (11 percent) volunteered to be interviewed for this study. Semistructured interviews with



Table 1. Start Data: 2015

| Ages (minus civilian) | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| | AC | RC | IMS |
| Average | 36 | 40 | 37 |
| Minimum | 28 | 33 | 24 |
| Maximum | 53 | 48 | 45 |

| Personnel demographics | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|
| | Female | Male | Minority |
| Active | 139 | 809 | 238 |
| Reserve | 13 | 58 | 18 |
| Civilian | 2 | 14 | 2 |
| IMS | 1 | 68 | — |
| Total | 155 | 949 | 258 |

| Basic year group (minus civilian and IMS) | | | |
|---|----|-------------|-----|
| | | | |
| 1992 | 1 | 2002 | 68 |
| 1993 | 1 | 2003 | 120 |
| 1994 | 1 | 2004 | 646 |
| 1997 | 3 | 2005 | 64 |
| 1998 | 3 | 2006 | 4 |
| 1999 | 14 | 2007 | 2 |
| 2000 | 21 | 2008 | 4 |
| 2001 | 65 | 2009 | 2 |

(Table from Command Brief, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 2015)

| Rank distribution | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Rank | AC | RC | IMS |
| COL/LTC/CDR | 2 | — | 13 |
| MAJ/LCDR | 737 | 71 | 50 |
| CPT/LT | 209 | — | 6 |
| Interagency/ DOD (GS 12-15) | 16 | — | — |
| Total | 964 | 71 | 69 |

| Source of commission (minus civilian and IMS) | | | |
|---|-----|---------------|----|
| | | | |
| AROTC | 533 | USNA | 11 |
| AROCS | 183 | NAROTC | 13 |
| USMA | 113 | NAOCS | 18 |
| Direct App | 44 | MAOCS | 14 |
| USAFA | 9 | MECEP | 5 |
| AFOTS | 39 | PLC | 4 |
| AFROTC | 31 | LDO | 1 |
| USMMA | 1 | | |

| Civilian education (except IMS)(CIS) | |
|--|-----|
| Master's degree | 331 |
| Master's degree in progress | 164 |
| Professional degree | 35 |
| PhD | 5 |
| PhD in progress | 5 |



Table 1. Start Data: 2015 (continued)

| Operations career field (active Army only) | |
|--|-----|
| Operations Division | 385 |
| Operations Support Division | 156 |
| Force Sustainment Division | 202 |

| Location (CIS) | |
|--|-----|
| Panama | 3 |
| Desert Shield/Storm | 9 |
| Southwest Asia | 27 |
| Somalia | 6 |
| Haiti | 12 |
| Bosnia-Herzegovina | 42 |
| Kosovo, Albania, Serbia-Macedonia | 32 |
| UN Operations | 15 |
| Counter drug | 16 |
| Afghanistan | 544 |
| Iraq | 791 |
| Kuwait | 79 |
| Other | 180 |

(Table from Command Brief, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 2015)

open-ended questions were used to document personal narration within the research methodology. The sample for this study included women of various ethnicities and minority groups. Two CGSOC female faculty members and two behavioral health counselors were also interviewed as a part of this research. Analysis of data in this research was peer reviewed and also reviewed by several CGSOC faculty members who have doctoral degrees in adult education.

Significance of the Study

Understanding the effects of combat-related stress on women’s learning in a military academic environment is significant in providing information to Command and General Staff College (CGSC) leadership, Army University, the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, and the Department of the Army.¹⁷ Additional research that contributes to gender studies and women’s experiences in a military educational environment will assist the Army in understanding how to improve women’s educational experiences within the Army. Due to the changes of military assignment policy in 2015, this study on females’ lived experiences is critically important to conducting research on the effects of combat on women, primarily because of the profound effect this study could have on future leadership opportunities for women in the Army.¹⁸

This research was the first exploratory case study conducted at CGSS focusing on understanding the effects of combat

on female students in a military academic environment. This research captured narrative and descriptive comments that represent the volunteered voices of these two-time combat veteran, female students serving in the U.S. Army and attending the ten-month resident CGSOC at Fort Leavenworth.



Sample

The student sample for this research was drawn from female Army majors within the CGSOC class of 2015 population. The student female sample was purposefully selected from 155 CGSOC female students. The first requirement for the sample was to screen female U.S. Army majors to exclude Navy, Marine, Air Force, civilian, and international military students, which reduced the available sample population to 109 active duty Army students. The secondary requirement was to only include female officers with two or more combat tours, which was completed during the invitation screening. The population of Army female students with two combat tours was seventy-nine students. The sample of volunteers for interviews consisted of nine female Army students, of whom two were Hispanic, two African American, and five white.

The second sample group for this research was CGSOC faculty members. There were 112 CGSOC total faculty members in support of CGSOC class 2015 but only nine female lieutenant colonel instructors. The researcher interviewed two female faculty members individually to examine perceived incidences of gendered combat stress, female students' dynamics in the classroom and the impact on their students' learning.

The third research population sample consisted of behavioral counselors who supported CGSOC students at Fort Leavenworth. The researcher interviewed two counselors to provide background, opinions, and comments with respect to combat stress in reference to CGSOC students.

Interviews and Data Collection

Personal thirty- to sixty-minute semistructured interviews were the primary method of data collection for this qualitative research study. When needed, follow-on questions were added or modified based on previous responses.

Data Analysis

The purpose of using a qualitative research design was to identify themes that emerged throughout the process; it was the most effective method for this exploratory inquiry.¹⁹ The patterns in this research only emerged once all the data was collected, grouped, coded, and analyzed.

The interview process allowed the analysis to start on the first interview and continue throughout the entire set of interviews. For each interview, the researcher took interview notes during the interview process, took field notes after each of the interviews, transcribed the voice recordings, continued field notes during the transcription process, and took additional notes on the transcripts for further analysis of each



of the interviews. The combination of the three note-taking practices increased the depth of the analysis of each interview.

Analysis and Findings to the Research Questions

Though the demographic profiles of these nine female CGSOC students give insight into their demographic and personal experiences, the interview questions provided more detailed and rich responses to how combat stress affected the female students' learning experience during their academic year at CGSOC. The comments from the two female CGSOC faculty members and two behavioral health counselors provided additional insight into responses.

Discussion

Ninety-five percent of the students in the CGSOC class of 2015 came into the Army during a time of war after 9/11, and 75 percent went into combat while assigned to their first duty station. This CGSOC class was the first class since 2003 chosen by a Department of Army selection board, resulting in a selection, on average, of the top 55 percent of the officer year group. This selection process of the resident course of CGSOC created a competitive environment within the CGSOC classrooms.

Participant Demographics

The researcher originally anticipated these students would suffer from both academic and combat stress, because this class had cumulatively experienced a great deal of combat. The researcher found that the impact of combat stress on learning depended on the nature of the combat experience. Specifically, combat tours varied both physically and psychologically, with combat experiences ranging from being shot at, seeing wounded or dead bodies, to working behind a computer screen twelve to sixteen hours a day. The female CGSOC interviewees who expressed having the most academic difficulty had been combat wounded or combat wounded with traumatic brain injury. Two of the nine students interviewed had traumatic brain injuries, and one student was injured in combat and received the Purple Heart. These students had the most trouble with memory and attention issues in class. Academic stress varied based on the prior academic background of officers. Three of the female students interviewed were doctors or lawyers and felt the academics were too easy, while two students who went to Officer Candidate School felt less prepared due to their abbreviated education at a local college and an expedited online four-year degree program.



Table 2. Participant Demographics

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|--|---|
| Military branch | Combat Arms—0 | Combat support—5 Ordnance—2 Intelligence—3 | Combat service support—4 Medical service—1 Judge Advocate General—2 Medical doctor—1 |
| Commission | U.S. Military Academy—3 | Reserve Officers’ Training Corps—4 | Officer Candidate School—2 |
| Combat tours | Two tours—5 | Three or more tours—4 | — |
| Ethnicity | Hispanic/Latino—2 | African American—2 | White—5 |
| Marital status | Married—6 | Single—2 | Divorced—1 |
| Children | No children—5 | One child—0 | Two or more children—4 |
| Master’s degree | Master’s—5 | In process—0 | No Master’s—4 |
| Professional degree | Medical doctor—1 | Physician’s assistant—2 | — |
| Geographical bachelor | 4 | — | — |
| Dual military | 4 | — | — |
| Prior enlisted service | Prior enlisted—3 | None—6 | — |

(Table by authors)

A key finding was that faculty (due to curriculum) could trigger combat-related thoughts, memories, and feelings in class. The majority of the students commented that the movie *Twelve O’Clock High* caused stress in the classroom, especially if the last scene was shown in class.²⁰ Another movie that was concerning to the students was *We Were Soldiers*, where particular scenes showed soldiers wounded and being loaded on helicopters to be evacuated.²¹ Many students reacted to those scenes, re-



experiencing and reflecting their own personal combat experiences, an emotional result that could affect their learning if not managed well by faculty.

Those interviewed appreciated the competitive achievement of attending the resident course and the richness of their education over the other two options, which were satellite courses (Common Core classes only) or distance learning (two-year course). The students enjoyed the challenge and could visualize the importance of their education for the next ten years of their military career. The visiting general officer lecturers repeatedly emphasized the students' future leadership responsibilities by comments such as, "the Chief of Staff of the Army for year 2030 is sitting in Eisenhower Auditorium right now."²² Due to the rigorous selection process of CGSOC students, academic probations were significantly lower in 2015 than the past three years. Just as the students' individual perspective was important, the instructors were also a key element in the learning process.

Table 2 (on page 36) provides a demographic breakdown of the sample participants. Of the nine CGSOC female students interviewed, four were geographical bachelors, meaning their spouses and/or families were not located with them at Fort Leavenworth. Geographical separations depended on a variety of factors such as a female student married to another military member who was assigned at a different location, or returning to their last duty station and not wanting to move the entire family. Because the separation was a thought-out, practical, and logical decision, the geographical distance did not cause as much academic or personal stress as expected in the research findings.

Five of nine female students interviewed did not have children. This is most likely due to the fact that selection to resident CGSOC happens in the first year of the rank of major; most students are promotable captains, thirty-two years old on average, and in the Army less than ten years with two or more deployments. The students have not had the actual time or opportunity in their career to have children. The researcher did not ask additional questions specifically regarding stressors of children in the protocol, or the type of stress children had on their personal routine. The four students with children were located with their children during their academic year at CGSOC. The assumption that children would add additional stress to students was not evident in the data. While this general discussion provides an overview of the research findings, more detailed analysis will be given by the research questions.

Perceived Effects of Combat Stress on Learning

How do female CGSOC students perceive how their multiple combat experiences affect their learning experiences?

Combat stress appeared to affect all soldiers in varying ways, determined by where they were working, their job position in combat, and what they experienced. How the prior combat experiences influenced their learning experience at CGSOC included four



themes: (1) the effects of combat experiences, (2) the impact of CGSOC faculty and classroom experiences, (3) the impact of prior education, and (4) gender-related factors. Each of these themes influenced how combat affected learning.

The effects of combat experiences. All of the interviewed female students had two combat tours (eighteen to twenty-four months of combat), but their combat experiences varied from never leaving the forward operating base to having traumatic experiences, seeing multiple dead bodies, or being combat wounded. Every student had some effects from their combat experience. Among the female students, three of the nine students interviewed never left the forward operating base for months at a time and five students worked on battalion-, brigade-, or division-level staff where they spent between twelve and sixteen hours a day in an office behind a computer. Overall, five of the nine students agreed they learned differently after combat due to changes in memory, attention deficit, and inability to retain new knowledge. This finding aligned with prior studies conducted by the National Center for PTSD and other researchers on patterns of behavior after combat. Due to the intent of this research and restrictions by the institutional review board and the Department of Defense, the depth of exploring combat stress was focused specifically toward improving adult learning at CGSS. After the interviews were completed, the researcher assumed that much more trauma (physical, psychological, and gender) occurred than what emerged in the interviews.²³ Due to the researcher's prior combat and leadership experiences, the researcher identified physical behavioral body signs by the students during the interviews of acute duress during certain questions regarding combat experiences. The researcher assumed the students could have more traumatic combat experiences or other female-specific combat experiences but did not explore to remain within the framework of the institutional review board guidelines.

Although all soldiers have the potential to experience varying degrees of stress, the effects of combat varied according to the individual. Prior psychological and combat research concluded that soldiers and civilians who went to a combat zone, whether exposed to combat or not, had some degree of combat-related stress (to include trauma).²⁴ These effects of combat occurred through the process of deployment, family separation, the living experience, and time exposed in a foreign country.²⁵ What these nine female students experienced in combat operations determined the impact of their combat tour on their learning experience, because the female students who were most affected in the classroom environment were combat wounded or personally observed the effects of war. This research demonstrated that students with more traumatic combat experiences in this small sample had the most difficulty academically in CGSOC. In addition, the intersecting ethnicity and socioeconomic demographics factors must be included in the totality of the female students' combat experience.²⁶ As the researcher collected data from the students on the effects of combat, the references of instructors in the classroom and behavioral counselors were used for triangulation.

Instructors interviewed claimed it was a challenge to know if combat stress was affecting learning. They commented that they did not know how combat had affect-



ed their students unless their students actually told them, especially students with no physical signs of combat (e.g., loss of limb, eye, or visible physical scars). Another factor that impacted this research was that some video clips caused reexperiencing combat in the classroom. The CGSOC instructors may not be aware of the prior combat experiences but could observe differences in discomfort during certain students' reactions to the videos. The researcher identified that some students re-experienced combat events during class, and multiple students commented on the triggering mechanism of visual cues that recalled their combat memories back to the smell of the Iraqi sand or cigarettes. As mentioned earlier, CGSOC instructors should be aware that the 1951 movie *Twelve O'Clock High* caused intense emotion regarding PTSD, especially if the final scene was used during instruction. The Tailhook case study also caused intense emotions among the female students regarding the prevention of sexual assaults and harassment in the military.²⁷

The CGSOC instructors and behavioral counselors acknowledged that many students who saw horrible things in combat may never share any of their experiences in class, because the students were not emotionally ready to share, the memory was too intense, or were still processing the experience. The CGSOC instructors stated that what happened in combat determines what their students bring to the classroom, provided the classroom is a safe environment. One of the behavioral counselors noted that resiliency affected the impact of combat experiences, because some "students are just mentally tough and able to adapt and cope, and even though they clinically might need behavioral help, their family, and their mindset, and faith is so strong that they are able to adapt to horrific war experiences and still act normal."²⁸ The counselors commented that students' combat experiences brought into classroom discussions were positive in the learning process if the classroom dynamics included the students' respect, and the instructors established a safe learning environment. It was unclear if the female students self-silenced or were only silenced when marginalized, but behavioral health specialists could conclude that the most sharing within cohorts happened in a safe classroom environment established by the instructor and enhanced by the cohort. In this research, the behavioral counselors discussed the effects of stress as individual characteristics, while faculty members assessed the effects due to the classroom environment. Even though personal psychological characteristics influence recovery and ability to adapt, the classroom effects were also an important factor in the adult learning process in the classroom.

The impact of CGSOC faculty and the classroom environment. Many factors affected a student's physical and psychological ability to deal with combat stress and the ability to learn in the classroom, including the student's relationship with the instructor, her relationship with the cohort, and the effects of the classroom environment. The most important finding was how deeply the CGSOC faculty and the classroom experience impacted the amount students shared regarding their combat experiences in class discussions. Many students reflected on combat



during class in different ways, which included zoning out, feeling anxious or alone, and simply losing track of time. The students who felt academically and personally safe in the classroom with mutual respect from their peers and instructors shared more personal combat experiences with their cohort. The female students who did not have a respectful classroom environment, or who did not have a way to share their experiences with their cohort, were marginalized or not respected and had to deal with their combat experiences in isolation without the benefits described of a positive learning environment.

The impact of prior education. The students with professional degrees prior to combat described lesser effects of combat experience on their learning in CGSOC than others, which was not expected. Having a prior rigorous graduate school experience especially influenced how combat affected learning. Females with professional degrees (legal and medical) experienced lesser amounts of traumatic combat experiences compared to other students based on normal military duty locations and assignments during combat tours.

Gender-related factors in combat. The researcher explored gender-related factors regarding combat experiences. Students explained additional combat stress was caused by being a woman in combat, with the constant threat of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape. These findings regarding gender emerged during generalized questions. At no time did the researcher ask follow-up probing questions due to research restrictions, but the topic came up repeatedly with all students. These findings coincided with prior research that women experience significantly higher rates of sexual harassment and assault (within and outside the military) than men.²⁹ The research suggested gender combat stress was more feared and caused more intense emotions during the interviews than when the students were discussing actual combat experiences against an enemy force.

Summary. The research interviews explored if female students appeared to perceive that their combat experiences affected their learning. Those who experienced combat stress were affected, but the variation depended on the individual person. Of the nine female students, five commented they learned differently after combat but not always better. The three students with only a bachelor's degree also had experienced more combat than the others and identified with attention problems, attention span ability, and inability to learn new concepts. The three students with professional degrees had the least combat experience and their combat experience did not affect their learning at CGSOC.

The key factor to learning for this sample of female students was the learning environment created by faculty skilled in effective adult-learning techniques. An instructor and cohort that facilitated an environment of dignity and respect during classroom dialogue enhanced deep discussion and critical thinking development in the classrooms. In this research, the instructors were identified as key (linchpin) in the development of a positive learning environment, especially for the female students.



Implications of Findings

This research data was complicated, contradictory, and not easy to analyze. Multiple factors impacted the women's learning, including prior education levels, family situations, ethnicity, effectiveness of instructors, classroom environment, and the military organization. This research only begins to touch on deeper matters due to research restrictions; however, the undiscovered factors that remain could potentially further the understanding of this research topic.

The U.S. Army trains under high academic stress to prepare officers for future combat stress situations, but female officers have additional gender-related stressors that can hinder their military training. This additional gender-related stress occurred in the military performance environment, the classroom, and in combat. The male-dominated Army culture caused women to have additional internalized stress because of having to outperform their male peers to be considered equal. Women serving in the Army have a double dose of stress, including the stress of serving in the military and the stress of being a woman serving in the military. These additional gender stressors can affect the educational and training level outcomes of the military, and other facets of military as an organization. These stressors might be ameliorated somewhat by a greater shift from predominantly white male-oriented (CGSOC faculty is 93 percent male) military training.

Other themes that surfaced in the interviews include that military combat arms branches were more privileged (in terms of prestige and promotion) than combat support and combat service support due to key leadership positions and number of general officers in the Army. Women felt discriminated against due to the disparity among military branches, and some branches excluded women until the past year when the policy changed on female roles in combat and the combat arms.

Summary: Implications for Practice

This research specifically explored female CGSOC students with two or more combat tours, their effects of combat, and their academic learning experience during the 2015 CGSOC class, which the following implies.

The first implication for practice was that what occurs in a combat deployment is more important than how many combat tours a student has; one can't make easy assumptions about women based solely upon the number of combat tours. Even though all nine female students had two or more combat tours, the effects of combat were dynamically different, which is parallel to current research from the National Center for PTSD.

The second implication for practice reinforced prior research that students who were physically combat wounded will more than likely have some effect on learning.



Instructors should know all aspects of their students through prior prescreening. A traumatic brain injury may result from explosions, being hit by mortars, motor vehicle accidents, or being too close to hand grenade blasts. These injuries cause physical damage to the brain, including the prefrontal cortex or the hippocampus, which could also impair their ability to remember and learn new material.³⁰ 

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Fostering Instructor Competencies through Army University's Faculty Development Program

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Abstract

The U.S. Army has made a concerted effort since 2011 to change the way it views training and education. The *Army Learning Concept* shifted the focus to a learner-centered approach based upon adult education principles and learning theory. Essential to this change is ensuring instructors and curriculum developers have a common understanding of adult learning; allowing curriculum to be developed within the guidelines of the theories and principles, and instructional methods are appropriate for the learning environment. To achieve this goal Army University, working with colleagues across the Army Learning Enterprise, developed the Common Faculty Development Program (CFDP) comprised of four areas. Foundational to the program are the instructor and curriculum developer courses, which are built upon internationally recognized competencies. The courses and the CFDP are described; followed by an example of how this may be realized in a traditional college or university setting.

The U.S. Army first published the *Army Learning Concept (ALC)* in January 2011, and subsequently revised and republished in April 2017.¹ The 2011 version introduced the key notion that the Army is a learning organization continuously training and educating soldiers across three domains—operational, institutional, and self-development.² This document changed the way Army instructors approached training and education by shifting to a learning-centric approach. Included in the *ALC* was evidence of adult education principles and theories grounded in John Dewey's reflective practice, Malcolm Knowles' tenet of andragogy, and David Kolb's experiential learning methodology.³ The *ALC* emphasized the faculty's role in creating the learner-centric environment and established a need for world-class faculty.

FOSTERING INSTRUCTOR COMPETENCIES

The discussion that emerged across the Army following the publication of the *ALC* led to the 2012 Army Learning Summit. Participants at the summit confirmed a suspicion that efforts and standards of practice across the Army's curriculum developer and instructor communities varied by installation, and they realized the need for a standardized approach to training development. The U.S. Army Command and General Staff College's Faculty and Staff Development Division was charged with developing an instructional design course that subsequently was taught at Army centers of excellence and schools during the summer of 2012.

Subsequently, in 2014, the Army published the *Army University Strategic Business Plan* outlining three lines of effort for the Army learning enterprise—increased academic rigor, greater respect and prestige, and improved management practices and institutional agility.⁴ These lines of effort provided the guiding principles for developing world-class faculty. Later that year, Headquarters, Department of Army released Execute Order (EXORD) 214-15 that established Army University.⁵ The EXORD defined seven Key Tasks for Army University, with the first key task of “Develop World-Class Faculty.” Included within the task was the creation and implementation of a faculty development program across the Army learning enterprise.

Developing World-Class Faculty

Army University leadership posit that its faculty is its center of gravity, and faculty developers could not agree more. Students see faculty as the face of Army education and training. The Army University is committed to developing, sustaining, and pro-

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moting world-class faculty who are critical and creative thinkers, subject-matter experts, and promoters of collaborative learning and reflective practice. To honor this commitment, Army schools have faculty development offices whose faculty developers have the formal education and experience to implement the required faculty development qualification/certification program.

The evolution and dynamics of faculty development at Army University anchors back to the mid-1980s when the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) adopted a small-group seminar methodology. This change to small-group instruction was the beginning of a faculty and staff development program that intended to focus on small-group methodology and small-group facilitation—adult classrooms where “everyone teaches and learns” and that mirror C. Roland Christensen’s perspective.⁶ The CGSC’s small-group seminar methodology pioneered and shaped what Army University’s faculty development program continues to build upon today.

The departure from the 1980s one-to-sixty instructional approach, largely dependent upon the direct instruction method of lecture, required a change to the curriculum, educational philosophy, and instructional methodology. The CGSC added small-group facilitation methods to its faculty development program. This initiative laid the foundation for today’s four-phase faculty development program that CGSC and other Army schools and centers of excellence model. With the establishment of Army University in 2016, its Faculty and Staff Development Division began to design the Common Faculty Development Program (CFDP) for all Army centers and schools. This new program is very similar to the successful faculty development program that CGSC implemented in the late 1990s and that has evolved into a four-phase program: foundation, technical, certification, and continuing professional development.

The *ALC* and its tenets were the catalysts for designing a CFDP that would support faculty who teach and develop curriculum in both training and education school settings. Its influence is found in the Common Faculty Development Instructor Course (CFD-IC) and the Common Faculty Development Developer Course (CFD-DC) where the purposeful change from lecture, PowerPoint-based methods to a learner-centered experiential base provides faculty with the confidence and competence to engage learners and to develop their critical and creative thinking skills.

Unique to the Army University is the wide spectrum of training and education venues and their associated variety of instructors and faculty. Soldiers first meet a drill sergeant during Initial Entry Training and progress to functional (technical) military occupational specialty training with a technical specialist, training that is a career equivalent to civilian education in trade schools. As the soldiers continue throughout their careers, the training shifts emphasis from technical training to professional military education (PME) focusing on leader development. PME also provides soldiers the option to obtain regionally accredited baccalaureate and master degrees, depending upon the PME institution. Army education policies require all soldiers assigned to an instructor position to complete a faculty development course prior to beginning their teaching duties.

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The experience of instructors varies widely from the drill sergeants and technical instructors to faculty members at graduate-level degree-granting institutions. Likewise, the educational background spans instructors with high school diplomas to faculty with doctorates, depending upon the school. The CFDP is designed to meet the needs and provide the skills necessary across the spectrum. Army University's Faculty and Staff Development Division developed the CFDP with four areas of emphasis to meet the needs of its instructors.

Common faculty development courses. Two foundational courses are required for instructors and curriculum developers, along with five additional courses and course-specific instructional workshops as part of a professional development path.

Faculty Development and Recognition Program. Self-developmental opportunities for instructors and faculty members are available with recognition of progression and milestone achievements through the Army's formal awards program.

Faculty selection, assignment, and promotion policies. CFDP policies seek to stabilize soldiers in instructor assignments for thirty-six months. The effort also proposes to identify prospective instructors and faculty early in soldiers' careers, allowing successful instructors to return to the classroom in follow-on assignments.

Continuing Professional Development Program. This program provides enterprise and local opportunities for instructors and curriculum developers to participate in continuing education. In the past, the program has included distance learning, instructional workshops, and "lunch and learn" brown-bag sessions.

Four-Phase Faculty Development Program

The Faculty and Staff Development Division provided the CFDP courseware, lesson plans, and additional teaching materials to faculty developers at other Army centers and schools. The curriculum for the foundational courses was developed collaboratively with colleagues from across the Army learning enterprise, and several taught the new courses as part of a validation phase with group trials. As recommended in Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 350-70-3, *Training and Education: Faculty and Staff Development*, schools may adjust the modules to meet local instructor experience, abilities, and preferred learning strategies.⁷

Phase I: Foundation Phase. This phase requires all military and civilian personnel who are assigned to teach or write curriculum in Army schools to successfully complete the eighty-hour CFD-IC or the eighty-hour CFD-DC before they teach.

The purpose of the required CFD-IC is to prepare new faculty to facilitate learning in an adult experiential environment. It is a competency-based course: the basis for the learning objectives are internationally recognized instructor competencies published by the International Board of Standards for Training, Performance, and Instruction.⁸ The course introduces new faculty to Army instructor roles and

responsibilities, teaching and learning models, and professional and ethical requirements. The course also introduces classroom management techniques, the process of building learning objectives and lesson plans, and characteristics of effective communication. The faculty developers who provide this course to the faculty model the various methodologies and learning strategies throughout the CFD-IC. Throughout the course, new faculty have an opportunity to discuss and wrestle with the theories and practices of adult education, and to practice teaching while working from short, simple practicum exercises to increasingly longer and more complex ones, culminating in an end-of-course lesson presentation.

Although the CFD-IC is required, as mentioned previously, it can be adjusted to the faculty audience at the various Army schools. For example, at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, faculty have at least a master's degree, many hold doctoral degrees, and many have taught previously. Therefore, less time may be spent on particular topics.

The purpose of the CFD-DC is to introduce developers to lesson plan development using the Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation (ADDIE) process. The course includes classes on Adult Learning Principles and Lesson Development Concepts. It includes both in-class and out-of-class requirements. Participants review, revise, develop, and prescribe instructional products supporting lesson-plan development. A Faculty and Staff Development Division instructor provides formative feedback at the completion of each phase of the ADDIE process and summative feedback at the completion of the lesson-plan development. Participant developers present their final project to the class. Like the CFD-IC, the CFD-DC is a competency-based course: the basis for the learning objectives are internationally recognized instructional design competencies published by the International Board of Standards for Training, Performance, and Instruction.⁹

Phase II: Technical Phase. After new faculty successfully complete their required Foundation Phase, they enter the Technical Phase. In the Technical Phase, they combine the foundational educational methodologies with the school's technical curriculum content that they are assigned to teach (the lessons) or content (curriculum) they are assigned to develop.

Phase III: Certification Phase. After successful completion of the applicable CFD-IC or CFD-DC, the new faculty members enter the Certification Phase, where they are assessed teaching a course as the primary instructor in a classroom or as a developer who writes curriculum to support classroom instruction. They must be observed once; however, schools can require more than one observation prior to certifying a faculty member.

Phase IV: Continuing Professional Development Program. This phase ensures the faculty have opportunities for continuing professional development to remain current in their subject-matter expertise and in the learning sciences. Faculty can enroll in classes offered through their designated government career

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program; attend and present at professional conferences; and attend workshops, symposia, and presentations. Oftentimes, faculty will offer a workshop or presentation to their colleagues. Fort Leavenworth's Faculty and Staff Development Division films guest speakers and, with permission, uploads the videos to Blackboard so that these sessions can be shared with other schools and centers across the Army. Presentations by notable educators such as Stephen Brookfield, Raymond Wlodkowski, and Rosemary Caffarella have provided Phase IV opportunities. In addition, faculty development offices will develop client-specific workshops for teaching departments or organizations upon request. This phase of the Common Faculty Development Program is ongoing to offer opportunities for faculty to keep current in the theory and practice of adult education.

Unique to CGSC is a Faculty Development Adjunct Program. The Army University's Faculty and Staff Development Division recruits faculty at CGSC to collaborate in faculty development. For almost two decades, faculty have willingly assisted with assessing practicum and tutorials during scheduled faculty-development classes. On many occasions, they have actually co-facilitated an entire class. This partnership between faculty developers and faculty from various academic teaching departments has helped produce a successful and effective program.

Since the majority of faculty at most Army schools is military, there is a significant turnover every two to three years. However, there are schools like CGSC at Fort Leavenworth that have approximately 60 percent civilian faculty. This allows for less turnover, and it has also been cause to require a recertification requirement. Before the completion of the fifth year of teaching, Army faculty must be recertified through an Advanced Faculty Development Course, a particular workshop, or another recertification option that the local Army school requires. Recertification is now required of the faculty at all schools throughout the enterprise.

Colleagues in traditional higher-learning institutions may question the feasibility of implementing a common faculty development program that goes beyond the lunch-and-learn format, small workshops, and grant-writing tutorials that seem to be commonplace. Army University acknowledges its good fortune to have supportive leadership and a governance structure to assist in meeting faculty development requirements. However, creating a faculty development program modeled after Army University's instructor course and developer course is possible with the support of chancellors, vice provosts, and department chairs.

First, it is recommended the Faculty Development Office be located within the Office of the Chancellor or the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. This provides the institutional leadership as well as the governance and oversight to ensure faculty in the colleges are meeting the faculty development requirements. The investment will require four to five full-time-equivalent faculty members to teach the courses. Army University supports CGSC, and due to faculty turnover, teach approximately 250 faculty annually in the instructor course and recertification

course with class sizes planned for no more than twelve students.

Creating a learner-centered culture requires faculty development to begin early in the faculty member's time with the institution. Participation in the faculty development course should occur prior to classes beginning to minimize disruption in teaching schedules. The CFD-IC is comprised of eighty academic hours, and with few exceptions, every new faculty member attends prior to teaching in the classroom. This may manifest itself in higher-learning institutions during the summer months with the colleges and schools con-

ducting faculty development courses for new faculty in collaboration with the faculty development office and the use of adjunct faculty. As new faculty arrive at the institution, the faculty development course becomes integrated into the onboarding process. The first iteration or two may seem awkward due to timing, but course attendance will quickly become the accepted practice for new faculty.

Table. Common Faculty Development Instructor Courses

| Schedule |
|---|
| <p>Day 1 Lesson 1: Course introduction Lesson 2: Fundamentals of Adult Teaching and Learning</p> |
| <p>Day 2 Lesson 2 continued: Fundamentals of Adult Teaching and Learning Lesson 3: Foundations of Adult Learning</p> |
| <p>Day 3 Lesson 4: Foundations of Instruction (experiential learning)</p> |
| <p>Day 4 Lesson 5: Formative Practicums (experiential learning model)</p> |
| <p>Day 5 Lesson 6: Applied Critical Thinking Tools and Group Think Mitigation Techniques</p> |
| <p>Day 6 Lesson 7: Foundations of Instruction (direct instruction)</p> |
| <p>Day 7 Lesson 8: Formative Practicums (direct instruction)</p> |
| <p>Day 8 Lesson 9: The Army Instructor as a Professional</p> |
| <p>Day 9 Lesson 10: Formative Practicums (collaborative/interactive instruction)</p> |
| <p>Day 10 Lesson 11: Final Practicum (summative)</p> |

(Table by authors)

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The CFD-IC is designed with eight lessons and three practicums interwoven into the curriculum. The curriculum may be tailored to the audience and institution, and the table (on page 50) depicts the layout of the course. It is recommended the course focus on the praxis of teaching, as too often administrative “requirements” compete with developmental opportunities.

The use of adjunct faculty developers for the formative and final practicums is a productive approach to gain support of colleagues. Faculty offering to serve as adjuncts for the practicums may be considered based upon their demonstrated ability to teach using the experiential learning model and their reputations within their departments. The advantage of adjunct faculty participation is the buy-in among peers, which is then carried back into the departments, offices, and classrooms.

A final consideration is the recertification of faculty. Faculty in the Army’s learning community have a requirement to recertify every five years. The purpose of the recertification is to ensure faculty members remain current and proficient with educational methodologies and practices. Locally, Army University’s recertification is a three-day class emphasizing the experiential learning model, facilitated discussions on classroom best practices, and a recent book examining the scholarship of teaching and learning.¹⁰

Conclusion

Feedback has been very positive over the years for the faculty development program. Faculty span the spectrum of educational experience and teaching experience. Of course, skeptics arrive in the classroom on occasion. However, over the last ten plus years, there have been very few that do not acknowledge the theoretical foundation of the course and the practical insights provided for faculty members. Even the “seasoned” and curmudgeonly faculty, who enter the course full of pessimism, often come away from the course with positive comments or at worst a neutral position toward the course and its value.

Army University’s four-phase CFDP uses common and unique competencies and learning objectives to develop, sustain, and promote world-class faculty. The program prepares all assigned faculty to engage the learners by implementing methodologies that are learning-centered, experiential, and effective. Army University faculty embody the scholarship of teaching and learning, and manage an educational environment that is collaborative and that promotes learning that lasts. The CFDP supports faculty so that they are more self-aware, have the requisite skills to perform their roles, and are increasingly more learner-centered in their philosophies and approaches. Its phases allow newer faculty and true subject-matter experts to discover (or rediscover) how learning happens and what role they can play in that process so that their students become more adaptive and more able to reason critically in an ever-changing operating environment. ❧

Notes

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Servant Leadership in the Classroom

Serving Adult Students While Maintaining High Academic Standards

Richard Olsen, DMin

Abstract

The philosophy of servant teaching is incorporating the concept of servant leadership inside the classroom. The concept of servant leadership was first developed by Robert Greenleaf, who maintained that leaders who are empathetic, helpful, and good listeners are more effective than individuals who are leader-first with little regard for the needs of his or her followers. Servant teaching involves caring for both the professional and personal needs of students. Current research points to a strong correlation between servant teaching and an overall positive learning environment. The servant teacher must be academically tough, yet caring and approachable; therefore, strategies for balancing high standards with compassion are laid out.

The concept of servant leadership, first developed over forty years ago by Robert Greenleaf, addresses the natural desire to help others. In his groundbreaking work, Greenleaf listed ten characteristics of servant leadership: (1) listening, (2) empathy, (3) healing, (4) awareness, (5) persuasion, (6) conceptualization, (7) foresight, (8) stewardship, (9) commitment to the growth of people, and (10) building community.¹ In his book, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, Greenleaf pointed out that a person who is a servant leader is vastly different from a person who is leader-first; namely, the servant leader cares about the needs of others and seeks to help those in his or her circle of influence.² On the other hand, the leader-first person is often driven by the power to succeed and rarely takes the time to listen to the concerns of others. Greenleaf maintained that servant leaders are trusted leaders who exhibit understanding and compassion, yet remain goal-oriented and proactive.

As evidence accumulates regarding the positive impact of servant leadership on teaching outcomes, servant-leadership ideas and frameworks have found their way into teaching literature.³ Current research demonstrates that servant leadership concepts

inside the classroom bring about desired classroom outcomes such as student retention and motivation.⁴ Several scholars have developed models using student feedback to test student perception of the value and effectiveness of servant-leadership attributes. The literature reviewed below provides evidence that servant teaching is positively associated with student engagement and indicators of learning.⁵ The purpose of this article is to discuss the on-the-ground process of integrating servant leadership into an adult learning community from the unique perspective of a retired military officer and professor of military leadership. Additionally, this article provides specific ways in which adult education practitioners can incorporate a servant-leader philosophy in the classroom so that the academic environment is conducive to candid discussion, critical thinking, and a higher level of learning. The ultimate aim is that students will gain the knowledge and skills needed to better impact their field of study.

Servant Leadership in the Classroom: Servant Teaching

Servant teaching is about putting a comfortable method of teaching aside and learning from the students which teaching methodologies work best for them. J. Martin Hays found that “students with servant teachers were more empowered, confident, and invested.”⁶ Richard Bowman described the teacher as servant leader:

Servant leadership as an idea or theme has a lineage as old as the scriptures. Yet, the principles that ground servant leadership mirror a universal ethic: humility, honesty, trust, empathy, healing, community, and service. On the other hand, servant leadership in the classroom speaks to the universal human longing to be known, to care, and to be cared for in pursuit of the common good. At its core, servant leadership involves creating and sustaining faculty-student relationships around a shared sense of purpose and accountability for the whole.⁷

The ten characteristics of servant leadership developed by Greenleaf continue to be the foundation for scholars investigating its utility and effectiveness in the class-

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room.⁸ Contemporary research has demonstrated that servant-leadership principles positively influence the learning environment. The practice of servant leadership in a learning community creates a supportive, respectful, and demanding environment, which is conducive to cultivating learners with grit and a growth mindset.⁹

These findings reveal the necessity of becoming competent in the characteristics of a servant leader, such as being a good listener, displaying empathy, and building a sense of belonging.

Incorporating a Servant-Teacher Mentality in the Classroom

The following practices, grounded in the literature on servant leadership and the broader field of adult education, focus on providing practitioners with tools and self-reflective habits. The central issue is that the adult learning environment is meant to be a lively, active atmosphere in which sophisticated thinking and deep professional learning take place. The goal of the following practices is to minimize strained and uncommunicative learning environments and enhance the teacher-student relationship while maintaining high academic standards.

Empower Through Motivation

Researchers, such as Jeanne Ormrod and Olusegun Sogunro, agree that motivating students from the onset is critical to a healthy classroom environment.¹⁰ Dale Schunk, Paul Pintrich, and Judith Meece define motivation as “the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained.”¹¹ From a psychological viewpoint, motivation involves processes that stimulate behavior, give meaning to behavior, maintain the behavior, and lead to a preference of the specific behavior.¹² One need only observe the body language and facial expressions of adult students to know whether they are motivated or not. Nonverbals (e.g., preoccupation with a cell phone) signify the learner is bored and uninspired.

In his study, Sogunro found that the top five motivating factors for adult learners in higher education were quality of instruction, quality of curriculum, relevance and pragmatism, interactive classroom and effective management practices, and progressive assessment and timely feedback.¹³ (More information regarding motivating factors can be found in Sogunro’s interesting article, “Motivating Factors for Adult Learners in Higher Education.”) While extrinsic reinforcement (e.g., good grades, feedback, desirable opportunities, and careers) certainly promotes learning, Ormrod insisted that intrinsic motivation is more conducive to academic success.¹⁴ This can be achieved in part, Ormrod explained, by assigning tasks that are challenging enough to instill a sense of competency once they are successfully completed.

Another way to increase intrinsic motivation, according to Ormrod, is to give students some measure of independence and control when it comes to their education.¹⁵ Small-group work, Ormrod maintained, gives students a sense of autonomy. Facilitators, as opposed to lecturers, allow students to take a more active role in their learning, which builds internal motivation.

When adult learners have a solid intellect, they need to be given a chance to demonstrate their communication skills and knowledge of the subject. Encourage students to do independent research of the topic being discussed, and give them the opportunity to facilitate the lesson material by incorporating whatever innovative means (e.g., showing a video or playing *Jeopardy*) they come up with to teach the material. The freedom to be original and creative in their presentations fosters a feeling of competence and fulfills a basic need for self-determination.¹⁶ Ideas for the next year's lessons can originate from the resourceful research and imaginative presentations carried out by previous students.

Servant teachers, Darren Linvill explained, should strive to create a highly collaborative learning environment.¹⁷ When the students are facilitating a discussion in front of the class, it is important that I, as the instructor, still be just as engaged. Give the students some reflective questions to start the conversation, if they choose to use them. If the students leading the discussion are unprepared or inept, I must take the class back. However, it is worth the risk to see the others flourish and create an active, dynamic learning environment.

How comfortable are you in giving up control of your classroom, even for a short time? What are some things you can do to get student buy-in and increase classroom involvement?

Explain Your Reasoning for Teaching the Topic

As mentioned, one of the leading, motivating factors for adult learners is relevance and pragmatism.¹⁸ Learning becomes more meaningful when learners are interested in the topic because of its usefulness. Dismissiveness on the part of an adult learner is bad for the classroom and can spread like a cancer. Occasionally, students who have been successful in the past see no reason to add any other perspectives. When I teach an organizational leadership class to military and civilian students, I usually start with a disarming preface, such as,

I am not here to teach you leadership, but I am here to challenge your thinking in regards to how leadership is applied. You are all proven leaders, or you would not be here. I want to prepare you for positions that will probably entail the leading of large organizations and hundreds, if not thousands, of employees. I see you as adult leaders that will soon have an enormous responsibility as you enter different organizations. What is the number one reason why chief executive officers and

military leaders are relieved or fired? It is almost never because of incompetence or lack of technical proficiency. It is because of poor leadership or unethical practices. Isn't it sad that smart, motivated, and highly capable people are fired for the inability to lead others? The study of leadership is more than management or telling people what to do. In this brief time, we have together, I hope you better understand why the study of leadership is so important. Students, show up to class as mature thinkers. Come armed and prepared for class with these three things: your professional and personal opinion of the assigned readings, your past experiences and lessons learned, and your proposed solutions for challenging problems by using your critical thinking skills.

The one idea I like my students to take away at the end of the first class is, "This is going to be better than I thought."

As you reflect on how you communicate your reasoning for what you teach, what are some ideas to better communicate your intent and set the expectations high?

Display Enthusiasm and a Positive Attitude

Patricia Comeaux pointed out that "a knowledgeable and enthusiastic instructor can make a difference in students' motivation and willingness to become actively engaged with the subject matter."¹⁹ Of course, some enthusiasm is more personality or temperament driven. Do not try to be someone you are not. Teachers do not need to have excitable personalities; they just have to be 100 percent emotionally invested in what they teach. Given that enthusiasm is contagious, Sean Bulger, Derek Mohr, and Richard Walls argued that if teachers love to teach it, students would probably love to learn it.²⁰ When a teacher is bored with the subject or generally dissatisfied with his or her working environment, enthusiasm is negatively affected.

According to Bulger and his colleagues, there is a strong correlation between a positive learning environment and student success.²¹ Thus, servant teachers should strive for high levels of student achievement, thereby cultivating enthusiasm in the classroom. Joe Nichols noted that "the best teachers were remembered as being skillful and enthusiastic, having such a solid command of the subject matter that students could 'pick up on their excitement' for the subject."²²

Even if you are a passive or laid-back type of teacher, what are some ways that you can demonstrate enthusiasm for your subject and a positive attitude?

Be Caring and Approachable

Teaching as a servant leader necessitates caring about your students enough to connect to what matters to them both inside and outside the classroom. Pay close attention

to personalities and mood changes throughout the semester. If a student is not him- or herself, ask why and see if you can help. Showing a genuine interest in your students not only models good leadership but also impacts opportunities for transforming them.

Establish a dialog and rapport with your students by asking questions that are not too personal but still convey a sincere concern for their well-being. Seek to be always interested but never intrusive. Servant leaders, Robert Russell and A. Gregory Stone maintained, should practice active listening: "Listening is a critical way leaders demonstrate respect and appreciation of others."²³ Make an effort to memorize your students' names before the semester begins or within a week of starting the first class. Of the five essentials of "emotional intelligence" delineated by Daniel Goleman in his 1995 book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, two essentials pertain to the notion of being caring and approachable. Goleman strongly believes that empathy (i.e., sensing others' feelings) and social skill (i.e., building rapport with others) are vital to the development of healthy relationships. (Goleman's other three essentials of emotional intelligence are self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation.)²⁴

It is well documented that teachers who interact with their students daily have the most impact.²⁵ Eventually, I will have the opportunity to cultivate deeper relationships, build further trust, and get past the surface-level conversations. Ultimately, the student will open up about real-life challenges, and this is where the real investment in the student begins. Educators can then speak into the lives of their students, refer them to get professional help if needed, or simply listen to a crucible moment that forever changed them. Carolyn Crippen noted that in servant teaching, students' problems are not interruptions; they are opportunities for healing.²⁶

Are there some things you can do to appear to be more personable and approachable? Are there stumbling blocks that prevent you from demonstrating your care and concern for students?

Feed Their Intellectual Appetite

All adult learners need to have their minds stimulated and exercised. Bernard Bass and Ronald Riggio maintained this is achieved by "questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways."²⁷ Kong Wah Cora Chan stressed that learning should be viewed as a journey, and "a servant leader believes that everyone can gain new understanding and skills, as well as produce greater achievement."²⁸

Make certain the readings and material are not so basic that students get bored and regularly present new concepts, models, and challenging case studies. I learned early in adult teaching that the quality of the questions asked will shape the direction the class takes. Servant teachers must be committed to the growth of their followers, which is a key component of servant leadership, and encourage them to step outside their intellectual comfort zone.

What new tactics to whet and feed the intellectual appetite of your students do you employ? Does your material have an intellectual edge to it, and what is the body language of your students when you present it?

Put the Needs of Your Students First

It is important that I read body language and facial expressions throughout the class period. If the class is distracted and disinterested, I may need to find a new approach. Not all groups or students are created equal. One must ask, “What will be the most effective way to meet the learning needs of these individuals”? Is the class full of extroverts who love to talk, or does the class mainly consist of introverts, who quietly contemplate and evaluate each discussion point and theory? Even when teaching the same topic, the method of teaching employed may vary depending on the makeup of the class. Linvill agreed that acknowledging the individual differences in students increases the prospect of student engagement.²⁹ Strong, extroverted, and independent thinkers must be allowed to express themselves and have an open debate, even at the expense of not covering all of the material. But with a class made up of primarily introverts, one must be comfortable with pregnant pauses and allow for thought and fewer words when responding.

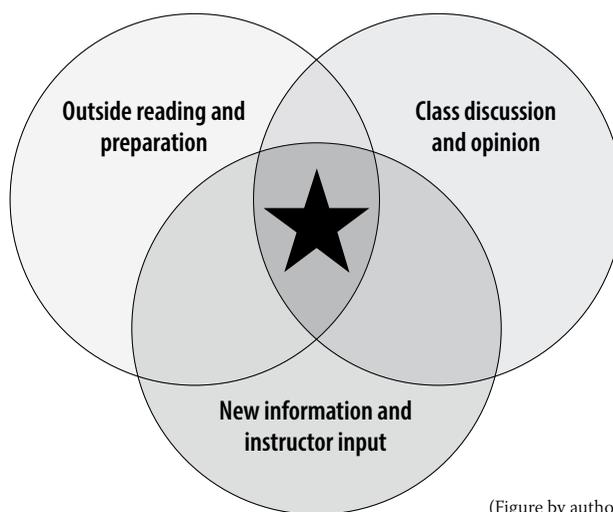
I teach an organizational leadership class to Army majors attending the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. I recently taught a class in which I initially misread the learning needs of the group. The students were extroverted and relaxed inside of each other’s small group but highly cautious of me, to the point of being insolent and belligerent. The students were energetic and talkative with each other, but as soon as I walked into the classroom and opened my mouth, the positive energy rocketed out of the class like a missile out of a launching pad. Additionally, four dominant personalities made the discussion time contentious and personal.

Upon observation of their dynamic, I changed my teaching strategy. I divided the sixteen students into four groups of four students according to their personalities and cliques. I gave them an assignment at the beginning of class, which they had forty-five minutes to complete. Then the four groups came together and openly discussed the salient points. I barely said a word except for the wrap-up, which went against my normal teaching style. I generally dislike this particular format because, for one thing, students tend to think that teachers who always break students into small groups do so because they are lazy, ill prepared, or insecure. Secondly, I like to engage my students, listen, and debate. But, in this case, the learning needs of the students were better served with a different teaching method.

Even the most successful U.S. Army generals understood the need to learn to operate effectively in different environments. General of the Army George C. Marshall wrote,

It became clear to me that at the age of 58 I would have to learn new tricks that were not taught in the military manuals or on the battlefield. In this position, I am a political soldier and will have to put my training in rapping-out orders and making snap decisions on the back burner, and have to learn the arts of persuasion and guile. I must become an expert in a whole new set of skills.³⁰

Personality weaknesses that interfere with effective servant teaching must also be addressed. For example, an overly talkative lecturer will inhibit balanced dialogue; therefore, the educator who is in tune with his or her shortcomings will be quick to adjust to the needs of the students, such as their need to have ample time to share. Equally important is the realization that



(Figure by author)

Figure. The Three Essential Parts of Adult Learning

some limitations must be accepted, and time is better served concentrating on the strengths one brings into the classroom. A true servant teacher will also apply this foundational principle to the learners in his or her classroom.

Do you have an established reflection practice in which you consider the effect of your style on the personality of the class?

Invite Disagreement and Debate

An old proverb says it best: “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”³¹ It is up to me to create an environment in which disagreement and debate are well encouraged. To keep discussions on course, I require that dialogue and debate center on the new information the students learned in their reading.

In any classroom, a lively debate has advantages for both student and instructor. It stirs up strong feelings and objections that cover all sides of an issue. Open disagreement with a good defense means the class is seeing other points of view probably not previously considered. According to Stephen Brookfield and Stephen Preskill, “When participants take a critical stance, they are committed to questioning and

exploring even the most widely accepted ideas and beliefs.”³² It is not enough to say, “If you disagree with something I say, speak up.” Educators must kick in the door of open debate and make it an admirable quality to speak truth to power. If a student practices this with an authority figure such as a teacher, they will be better prepared to speak truth to power outside of the classroom.

According to Nicole Fournier-Sylvester, teachers often evade controversial issues because of the unpredictability of student reactions.³³ While this type of facilitation does require ample preparation, debates have a direct and positive impact on students’ critical-thinking skills. Teachers must be secure in who they are, in their level of knowledge, and in their willingness to referee debates and disagreements, especially when they or their material is the target. Controversial debates, Fournier-Sylvester noted, can be a rewarding experience for both teachers and their students. A highly collaborative environment filled with free exchanges of ideas requires the full attention and focus of everyone in the classroom.

The servant teacher, however, must create psychological safety for learners, for nothing will shut down unguarded dialogue quicker than a hostile, judgmental classroom environment. If students do not feel safe to express their opinions and feelings, discussion and freethinking will be stifled.³⁴ If students believe they have a voice and their point of view has value, they will be much more apt to speak up. Teachers must privately confront students who, for example, roll their eyes at a classmate’s comment and let them know that disapproving reactions and nonverbals are not appropriate in a professional environment.

Are there some things you can do to increase the level of discussion in your classroom and make disagreement and debate more admirable? How will you kick down the door of trepidation and ensure your students are free to disagree, with a good defense of course? How do you deliberately create and maintain psychological safety in your classroom?

No Free Lunch

While servant teachers care for the whole person, they are not pushovers. A good servant teacher should set high standards and expect adult learners to walk into class prepared, having completed the required reading and writing so that he or she can contribute to group learning. The figure (on page 60) illustrates the three essential elements of preparation in adult learning: outside reading and preparation, class discussion and opinion, and new information and instructor input. The star signifies the best of all three areas, where the greatest amount of learning can take place if a student is conscientious enough to pay attention to all three.

As the figure makes clear, each element is equally important to the learning process. If a student is squeezed for time, the reading is often ignored, which is evidenced by a lack of input to the group discussion. When a student contributes nothing to the conver-

sation but personal stories and opinions, chances are he or she did not plan sufficiently for class. Chan holds the opinion that “a servant-leader teacher has high demands and expectations of students, who emulate their servant leader, and are becoming autonomous, responsive, and responsible servant leaders themselves.”³⁵ Be academically tough and demanding, yet helpful toward students lacking in verbal persuasion or effective writing. Be compassionate toward learners dealing with substantial personal issues. A combination of high standards and empathetic understanding serve to encourage adult students to learn and grow as thinkers.

How do you hold your students accountable? Besides exams and papers, how do you measure if your students are prepared for class? Do you cold call or just allow the prepared students to talk and the unprepared to be silent?

Feedback is a Two-Way Street

While adult students should be held accountable for their contributions to the learning environment, teachers should provide effective and timely feedback to assignments given to learners for them to adequately assess their progress. As already noted, progressive assessment and timely feedback are ranked in the top five motivating factors for adult learners in a study conducted by Sogunro.³⁶ Sogunro found that prompt feedback influences students’ motivation for success, which leads to enhanced performance. Generally, grades should be posted five to ten days after the assignment has been submitted, depending on the length of the assignment. Students usually understand that research papers, for example, require more time to grade. But when it comes to questions or concerns that a student brings to the attention of the instructor, a reply should be given in less than twenty-four hours.

I consider it equally important to receive feedback regarding my teaching style and techniques from the students. Although sometimes problematic, Eileen De Courcy pointed out that student ratings of teaching are still the most widely used methods to assess teacher performance.³⁷ After the first four or five lessons, give students a 3” x 5” card and ask them to provide you with three positive features of your teaching strategies, as well as three perceived shortcomings in your approach to teaching, along with concrete ways to improve your methods. Just recently, one of the cards that came back to me from one of my students read, “Repeats the same stories.” I had no idea, and to make matters worse, the class informed me that a story I just relayed minutes before was the fourth time I had shared it. The students and I all had a good laugh, and I learned that I need to start tracking the stories I tell. Be brave enough to solicit feedback and address the class after you review their evaluations, relaying appreciation for their comments.

What is the average amount of time you give to providing feedback? Do you allow your students to evaluate your effectiveness in the classroom?

Concluding Thoughts

A servant teacher takes a holistic, self-reflective, and practical approach toward earning the respect of his or her students. Presenting beneficial material is only a small part of effective teaching. The central issue of servant-leadership education is relationships and finding value in each student. Aaron Noland and Keith Richards best summed up the mission of servant leadership in the classroom with what they described as the “key attributes or dimensions of servant teaching: emotional healing, creating value for the community, empowering students, helping students grow and succeed, putting students first, demonstrating conceptual skills, and behaving ethically.”³⁸ Servant teachers care for the whole person, not just how well the student can think, write, and reason.

Resources abound for the practitioner desiring to learn more about student-centered teaching practices. While material taken from Ormrod’s book, *Human Learning*, was limited in this article to her discussion regarding intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, she provides invaluable information for educators.³⁹ Also noteworthy, but not addressed in this article, is Chan’s research into the relationship between servant leadership and the cultivation of grit (i.e., effort and stamina) in learners.⁴⁰ Chan’s suggestions for building grit through servant leadership can be found in his paper, “Servant Leadership Cultivates Grit and Growth Mindset in Learners.”

Larry Spears, who currently serves as president and chief executive officer of the Larry C. Spears Center for Servant Leadership, recognized over a decade ago that the philosophy and practice of servant leadership was a growing movement, and noted that “a particular strength of servant leadership is that it encourages everyone to actively seek opportunities to both serve and lead others, thereby setting up the potential for raising the quality of life throughout society.”⁴¹

Most educators do not teach for the money (that would be impossible) but for the love of influencing, challenging, and inspiring young people to succeed. As Ramajanki Doraiswamy Iyer so eloquently stated, “There is no big incentive for people to become teachers other than an innate desire to serve. No teacher has ever got rich or famous or powerful but there is always a simple teacher behind every big and famous individual.”⁴² There is no better return on investment than to invest in the professional and personal lives of students. To find out how strong you rate in the characteristics of servant leadership, take the online survey at http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/servant_leadership_survey.html. ☞

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A Staff Ride for the Modern Battlefield

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Abstract

The staff ride has long been a staple of Army instructors to educate current and future officers about the lessons of warfare. To keep the staff ride operationally relevant to modern warfare, we recommend staff rides of contemporary battlefields, or so-called warm conflict zones. These are conflicts, whether interstate or intrastate, whose hostilities have recently ceased. This allows students to safely traverse the terrain, interview field commanders, and discuss its key battles and lessons for the current character of warfare. We make the case that these staff rides should be treated more like for-credit courses than as extracurricular field trips, given the level of logistics, research, and student involvement required. We draw on evidence from recent staff rides carried out in Sri Lanka, Bosnia, and the Republic of Georgia.

As an educational tool, staff rides enjoy a long and storied history in U.S. Army circles. Prussian officers are credited with inventing the staff ride back in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1919, West Point cadets were brought to the battlefields of World War I to understand the complexity of trench warfare. Today, staff rides allow cadets to survey terrain, discuss decision-making at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels, and immerse themselves in military concepts that transcend time.

Given today's threat environment, however, there are few existing staff rides that can prepare future officers for, say, a vehicle-detonated car bomb or a cyberattack that wipes out a country's electronic infrastructure during wartime. There is no *Staff Ride Guide: Battle of Antietam* equivalent for, say, the battle at Elephant Pass in Sri Lanka or for the battle of Fallujah in Iraq.¹ Most historical staff rides have little to say about informational warfare or autonomous weapons.

While these "standard" staff rides still have a place—some lessons in leadership, decision-making under conditions of uncertain information, etc., transcend time and are just as relevant now as they were in the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries—there are also unique aspects to the modern battlefield that can only be gained by studying more recent conflicts. To keep the staff ride operationally relevant to modern warfare and pedagogically useful for strategic studies, we recommend staff

rides of *warm* battlegrounds (places where hostilities have just recently ceased). A survey of Sarajevo's terrain—which we carried out with cadets in summer 2015—can teach us more about modern sieges than one of Vicksburg. A visit to the Tamil administrative capital of Kilinochchi in Sri Lanka—like the staff ride we executed with cadets in summer 2016—can teach us more about rebel governance and the role of suicide bombing than perhaps any other battlefield, which is vital to enhance our understanding of the Islamic State. A terrain analysis of the administrative boundary line dividing the Russia-controlled South Ossetian capital of Tskhinvali and the Republic of Georgia—which we conducted in summer 2017—can demonstrate attributes of hybrid warfare fought across multiple domains.

This article makes the case that given the complexities of the contemporary battlefield, from cyberwarfare to information operations, staff rides are becoming more relevant for understanding modern war. However, we suggest ways in which they should expand and evolve to shed light on more contemporary issues, from new doctrines like multi-domain battle to advanced technologies like unmanned aerial vehicles. We also suggest ways in which they can appeal to nonmilitary audiences—for example, students of strategic studies or international relations. Namely, we

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introduce the concept of a contemporary staff ride: an in-country tour of a warm battlefield, just as one would survey the Round Tops of Gettysburg, replete with role playing, *stands* (places where the group stops to discuss key points or events) of battles, and in-depth discussions of terrain and tactics.

Put simply, we argue that contemporary staff rides should “go big,” insofar as they should be treated more as a for-credit course than an extracurricular event. Make no mistake, this will involve an extra layer of logistics, time-intensive preparation, readings, and hands-on ethnographic fieldwork away from the battlefield. But, the payoff is greater in terms of the lessons learned, and the ability to link theory with practice is worth the time and effort. Done well, no other pedagogical exercise is more useful to teaching strategic studies.

What Makes a Contemporary Staff Ride Different

It is important to distinguish a contemporary staff ride from other exercises that leverage the use of terrain as a learning tool: tactical exercises without troops (TEWT), battlefield tours, and staff rides (see table, page 69). “A tactical exercise without troops uses terrain, but not history, as a teaching vehicle.”² During a TEWT, a hypothetical scenario is played out using current doctrine on actual terrain. The scenario could take place at a historical battlefield or anywhere else. The purpose is to use the terrain to facilitate learning in a way that cannot be achieved to the same effect in a classroom or tactical operations center (TOC) using maps or imagery. TEWTs almost exclusively fall under the domain of the military.

A historical battlefield tour, by contrast, uses both terrain and history as a teaching vehicle. Like a TEWT, it is primarily a field study, but it may include a limited preliminary study phase, so that participants are familiar with the battle and where it fits into the larger war. A historical battlefield tour is conducted in a lecture format, where a tour guide, professor, or other expert primarily lectures and the participants simply listen and ask questions.

The staff ride also uses terrain and history, but what sets it apart from the historical battlefield tour is the depth of study. In addition to the field study phase, the staff ride also includes a preliminary study and integration phase. The preliminary study requires “maximum student involvement before arrival at the site to guarantee thought, analysis and discussion.”³ The staff ride concludes with an integration phase where participants have the opportunity to integrate the lessons derived from the preliminary and field study phases. “A staff ride thus links a historical event, systematic preliminary study, and actual terrain to produce battle analysis in three dimensions.”⁴ Without effective preparation, a staff ride becomes more of an enhanced battlefield tour than a staff ride.

The military uses staff rides to drive home tactical or leadership lessons. Schools and universities use them to gain a better understanding of the history, leadership lessons,

Table. Tactical Exercise without Troops, Battlefield Tours, and Staff Rides

| | Tactical exercise without troops | Battlefield tour | Staff ride | Warm battlefield staff ride |
|----------|----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Audience | Military | Military academic corporate tourist | Military academic limited corporate | Military academic |
| Phases | · Field study | · Limited preliminary study · Field study | · Preliminary study · Field study · Integration | · Preliminary study · Field study · Integration · Research report |

(Table by authors)

or other lessons that are being taught in the class. Finally, companies use staff rides as team bonding experiences to drive home leadership lessons.

A staff ride of a contemporary war also relies on terrain and history as a teaching vehicle. Likewise, it has a preliminary study phase, a field study phase, and an integration phase. But, what sets it apart from a traditional staff ride is that it is fundamentally a research trip with the purpose of generating new knowledge or understanding of the battle or conflict itself to better understand contemporary conflict. It often seeks to answer the following questions: What was the root cause of the conflict? Why was violence conducted in the manner that it was? How can we understand conflict termination and winning the peace? This is what gives such staff rides wider appeal to nonmilitary audiences, such as strategic studies departments and policy programs.

Best Practices

The U.S. Army Center of Military History divides its planning module for staff rides into three phases: preliminary study, field study, and integration.⁵ For a contemporary staff ride, much of the legwork occurs during the preliminary phase. The time and energy required to conduct a contemporary staff ride effectively for both the instructor and student often exceeds that of a three-credit-hour college course. Thus, for professional military education schools or universities looking to conduct them, it should be possible to treat it as a course and give students credit for their work. In terms of preparation, treat the staff ride more like research fieldwork than an organized tour of a battlefield. Much of the learning that goes on is away from the actual battlefield. It is in the local people your students meet, the cultures they immerse themselves in, and the discovery

process students experience in unpacking a modern conflict and its infinite variables. A contemporary staff ride is really an exercise in ethnography.

Preliminary Study Phase

In a staff ride, “the purpose of the preliminary study phase is to prepare the student for the visit to the site of the selected campaign.”⁶ The study can take the form of lectures or self-study, or a combination of both. In the preliminary study, students must accomplish four basic tasks: (1) understand the purpose, (2) be actively involved, (3) acquire basic knowledge of the campaign (e.g., weapons used; terrain; climate; chronology; organization, strength, and doctrine of the forces; personality and biographical information on significant leaders), and (4) “develop an intellectual perception of the campaign.”⁷ For students of strategic studies, the tactical details of an individual battle or campaign may be less relevant to the big-picture strategic questions. These kinds of decisions should be made by the instructor beforehand.

A staff ride of a contemporary battlefield is more research intensive because there is no staff ride guidebook that can be pulled off the shelf. Thus, it includes additional tasks: (1) review the academic literature related to conflict in general, (2) determine the research goals, and (3) develop the research plan to accomplish those goals. In addition to developing the content for the staff ride, you must plan the logistics and the daily itinerary.

This phase also should include brief (at least a few days to a whole week) preparatory classroom time to provide students some background of the conflict, a primer on qualitative research methods, and some theory to set up the staff ride. This should be broken into various sections.

Determine research goals. It is not possible to study everything related to a chosen conflict. If you plan to do a research report, you must identify how your research contributes to a greater understanding of the conflict. If the target audience is cadets studying the tactical level of conflict, then a contemporary staff ride will focus more on terrain and individual battles and less on the larger strategic picture or international implications: How does one conduct an urban siege in a dense city? For an internal conflict, it may focus on a certain part of the conflict: Why did the insurgent organize the way it did? How did outside support influence the outcome? Why was the counterinsurgency strategy effective? Why was disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration so difficult? When we went to Georgia, we wanted to understand Russia’s use of cyber warfare, so our questions included: How is a cyber campaign coordinated with the conventional battle? How did Russia apply psychological and information warfare? Your research goals should be consistent with your discussion questions. Try to make the research as student-driven as possible, partly to alleviate work on your behalf but also to allow them to experience how one conducts fieldwork in a postconflict zone.

Develop a research plan. Again, a staff ride is not only a tour of a contemporary battlefield or role playing of key characters. It also involves a level of inductive research and ethnography, including interviews with military officials, combatants, activists, journalists, and others in the local populace. It involves observation of places where key events took place or remnants of the war (e.g., refugee camps). It involves a careful reading of as much primary material available (public testimony, memoirs, truth and reconciliation files, speeches by public officials). Who do you need to interview to accomplish your research goals? Who can facilitate your visit? Ideally, you will want to talk to combatants, local leaders, politicians, nongovernment members, and even family members. Talking to one Tamil widow whose husband was snatched and thrown into a white van by Sinhalese officials and remains missing was particularly impactful on the cadets. Realizing that time is limited, we recommend giving students a one-day crash course in ethnographic methods that includes best practices in interview techniques, ethics, observation, and oral history. Logistical considerations must go hand-in-hand when developing the research plan.

Identify relevant theory. The foundation of a successful staff ride is theory, not history. All modern war is relevant to military theory. Grounding the staff ride in theories of international politics and strategic studies will help students understand the important lessons of the battle, as well as the larger strategy behind the overarching campaign. This should be tailored to the specific conflict. For internal conflicts, it is important to introduce insurgency and counterinsurgency theory so students understand the root causes of violence. For an ethnic or religious civil war, it is more important to understand the theoretical and empirical literature on ethnic conflict and failed states. Without theory, a staff ride will feel academically unmoored, a set of stands serving no larger intellectual purpose. Theory will also help students and cadets make sense of the decisions made by commanders and policymakers. It will also help them apply the lessons to ongoing conflicts they may one day face firsthand.

Build the syllabus. Provide a detailed syllabus of readings ahead of the trip, including whatever preparatory coursework or class time is required. Students should be advised to download or print all articles ahead of time, given the limited internet of some places. (We recommend using tablets for easy accessibility.) The preparation session should not only introduce the participants of the staff ride but also introduce the war and different theories on conflict. Start general and provide basic information about the country and the conflict, including maps, outlines of the main characters, the international context, and other features of the conflict (role of religion, ideology, ethnicity, etc.). The best sources for this are secondary (e.g., newspaper articles, history books). Once the war has been outlined, then work in more primary documents (e.g., memoirs, speeches, etc.). The syllabus is shaped by the research goals of the project.

Develop the logistics plan. Most contemporary battlefields are not like Gettysburg or Antietam. There are no guides or signposts, no observatory towers or copse of trees to orient visitors. This makes it difficult, but not impossible, to plan one's staff ride and

determine the best locations to discuss the terrain. First, we recommend hiring a local driver, a local guide and interpreter, and take along a subject-matter expert—either a researcher or, preferably, a postdoctoral researcher—who can provide greater context on the war. Second, there may be visas and paperwork to contend with. For military organizations, it is recommended to make contact with the appropriate U.S. embassy's Defense Attaché Office. Finally, extreme caution should be taken when traversing these battlefields. In a staff ride of, say, the Balkans or Lebanon, there are still parts of the country pockmarked with unexploded ordnance.

Finalize the itinerary. An itinerary should be highly structured so there are no large gaps in the schedule, yet flexible enough to account for delays (which are inevitable)—traffic, meetings running late, or late additions to your itinerary. For a typical day, we recommend an hour of classroom in the morning, followed by interviews or meetings with officials, academics, journalists, or local representatives, with immersion or observation in the afternoons or evenings. Cadets or students should be assigned either a battle to discuss or a character to role play. Keep it focused on learning objectives, but it should also be fun. On a recent staff ride of the 2008 Russia-Georgia conflict, we had a participant take off his shirt to role play Vladimir Putin.

Determine the stands. A stand is a battle or event location at which the group stops for discussion. A normal staff ride can include several dozen stands. We recommend narrowing it down to under ten, depending on the conflict. Each stand should last thirty to sixty minutes. Let these be student-run but staff-guided as much as possible. Be sure students orient the group to both the operational terrain and time. For role-playing characters, try to avoid students just reciting a biography cribbed from Wikipedia. Encourage them to bring lots of energy to get over the jet lag and to get into character; some may even bring props. The more in character, the better. On one staff ride to Germany, a student was playing Helmuth von Moltke the Younger so well, it encouraged the other students to get into a debate with him as if he really were Moltke. Also, advanced reconnaissance is recommended to case out one's surroundings, but it is almost impossible when carrying out a staff ride abroad. Reliable local maps are essential for any staff ride. Survey the terrain online beforehand. Check the weather, as conditions can fluctuate throughout the day, month, or year. When determining stands, allow for some flexibility in your itinerary and build into your agenda time for traffic, restroom breaks, and other obstacles that inevitably arise.

Field Study Phase

The second phase of any staff ride is the field study phase. For the staff ride, this serves to drive home the relevant lessons for professional development by reinforcing the analytical conclusions developed during the preliminary study phase. The staff

ride is designed to visit significant sites and designed in such a way to be chronological while attempting to minimize backtracking. At each planned stand, the facilitator leads the discussion, orienting the students chronologically and spatially and then having the students in designated roles describe what occurred and what their character was thinking, followed by the facilitator-led discussion. The main difference between a contemporary staff ride and a standard staff ride is that the field study phase for the contemporary staff ride is much more resource intensive, insofar as it involves interviews and somewhat trial and error to figure out where to stop on the ground because there is no existing staff ride book telling you to stop at a specific intersection to have a discussion. We still recommend supplying students with character packets, visual aids, and readings to minimize classroom time in country. And, we recommend the field study portion include a robust mix of classroom time, interviews, observation, immersion, and staff ride of battlefields.

Classroom. It is important to include some level of in-country classroom time but not too much, as this defeats the purpose of traveling halfway around the globe. But, it is vital to have time to discuss among the students the sites you see, the interviews carried out, the students' impressions, and so forth. This will contribute to their level of understanding of their character's role, their stand, and the larger significance of the battle under study. We recommend no more than two hours of lecture time per day (one hour preferred) while in country; this can be accomplished by holding class on the bus or van, holding less-structured discussions over dinner, or bringing in local guest speakers. Bring handouts, as the hotel's conference room facilities may have spotty wireless or lack multimedia facilities. We recommend class in the morning to set the day's battle rhythm and prepare your students for who they will be meeting and what they will be seeing for the rest of the day. To that end, you should bring along detailed instructor notes that include information on stands and that lay out each day's itinerary (addresses, biographies of interviewees, etc.).

Interviews. Interviews are a vital part of a warm-conflict staff ride. Invariably, these are semistructured and open-ended. If they are too scripted, they can yield little beyond canned answers or talking points. Be prepared by reading up on your interviewees. We recommend assigning each day a "rapporteur," or note taker, to avoid students needlessly duplicating each other's efforts, or worse, a collective-action problem with no one taking notes. One consideration is that sometimes it is best to "divide and conquer." Depending on the size of the group, there is the real potential to intimidate the interviewee if too many people attend.

Observation. In many ways, a contemporary staff ride is an ethnography of place. This requires getting out and observing one's surroundings as well as the local customs, norms, and behaviors. This will help students put the conflict into a larger cultural, social, and demographic context. A good example from the Balkans might be the observation that the three warring groups show very few discernible ethnic features to distinguish them from one another. For observation, we recommend ei-

ther breaking into smaller groups or giving students an assignment to describe a place they observed and how it captures the local culture.

Immersion. Immersion should also be used to complement interviews wherever possible, and can take many forms. On a recent staff ride in the post-Soviet state of Georgia, for example, we went for a hike in the Caucasus Mountains. If you are doing a staff ride to Normandy, you may not want to start the formal class at six in the morning, but that is a perfect time to go for a run on the beach followed by a quick dip in the channel to get a feel for what it would have been like during the initial invasion.

Integration Phase

The final phase of the staff ride is maybe the most important, as it allows staff and students to reflect on their experience and synthesize the lessons learned to apply them to their own operations. Integration can take many forms. It can occur directly on the battlefield, in the classroom, on the bus, or as part of a group or individual assignment. When possible, it should be immediate and interactive. Focus on the following when crafting discussion questions:

Space and terrain. Note details of *where* interviews and meetings are conducted. In a meeting with a European ambassador in Tbilisi, for example, it was pointed out that the portrait of the president was buried along a cluttered side wall, out of sight to most visitors. The hidden meaning of this could be interpreted as a lack of support for the president. The terrain of a warm conflict staff ride is more likely to resemble what it did on the day of battle. How does modern terrain shape our understanding of war and tactical decision-making?

Discussion questions. Depending on the intended audience, these can include questions related to leadership (Did the officer make the correct decision?), tactics (If you were in the officer's position, what would you have done?), strategy (Did the battle achieve its objective?), theory (Did the campaign uphold our theories of how wars end?), morality (Is suicide bombing justifiable for a weaker opponent?), or civil-military relations (Was the civilian leadership interfering with the military operations?), among other topics.

Assignments and presentations. A staff ride can encompass one central question or theme, or it can tackle a number of sub-themes. We recommend assigning written assignments each night to let students internalize the lessons of the day and then share with the wider group (we also do this over dinner). We also recommend formal in-class presentations as a way of letting the students or cadets "own" as much as possible of the research and information collected. This also will provide greater structure for the non-staff ride portions of the trip. The assignments should all inform the larger objectives of the staff ride.

Conclusion

Staff rides are the ideal teaching tool for today's soldiers and civilian strategists to appreciate and understand modern or multidomain battle, to visualize complex terrain, and to draw lessons from faraway conflicts relevant to their future careers. They allow cadets to bridge the theory of the classroom with the operational lessons of an actual battle in a way no classroom text or PowerPoint presentation can replicate. This applies to both military and nonmilitary students. In this article, we made the case for contemporary staff rides and proposed a set of best practices to assure success in their design and execution. Like the West Point cadets discovered after World War I, the most engaging and pedagogically effective way to study the modern battlefield is to experience it first-hand. 

Notes

1. Ted Ballard, *Staff Ride Guide: Battle of Antietam* (Washington, DC: U.S. Center of Military History, 1987).
2. William G. Robertson, *The Staff Ride* (Washington, DC: U.S. Center of Military History, 1987), 5, accessed 19 March 2018, [https://history.army.mil/html/books/070/70-21/CMH_Pub_70-21\(2014\).pdf](https://history.army.mil/html/books/070/70-21/CMH_Pub_70-21(2014).pdf).
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 11.
7. Ibid., 13.

Insights for a Committed Learning Environment

Richard M. Meinhart, EdD

Abstract

When educating adults, it is critically important to create a committed versus compliant learning environment, which inspires one to learn very deeply on wide variety of complex subjects and their associated challenges. A committed learning environment creates insights that will be deeply ingrained into one's thinking so they can be implicitly or explicitly applied to address these complex challenges students will face upon graduation. This chapter broadly examines ways to build a committed learning environment from curriculum, student, and seminar perspectives. In doing this, it draws upon a wide range of education subjects associated with the following: applying adult learning concepts; proper use of different stages of Bloom's learning taxonomies; enabling different types of discourse to fully examine complex and uncertain issues with a strategic perspective; applying team building concepts within a seminar to create trust and commitment; and the importance of and ways to encourage reflection to enable one's learning. This chapter provides insights on the synergistic application of these education subjects from the academic literature and the author's perspectives associated with educating future senior leaders at the United States Army War College for almost two decades. This chapter's overall focus is to help shape students and faculty thinking on how best to approach and complete an educational journey with a committed learning focus.

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... we shall teach each other: first, because we have a vast amount of experience behind us, and secondly, in my opinion, it is only through free criticism of each other's ideas that truth can be thrashed out during your course here no one is going to compel you to work, for the simple reason that a man who requires to be driven is not worth the driving. ... thus you will become your own students and until you learn how to teach yourselves, you will never be taught by others.

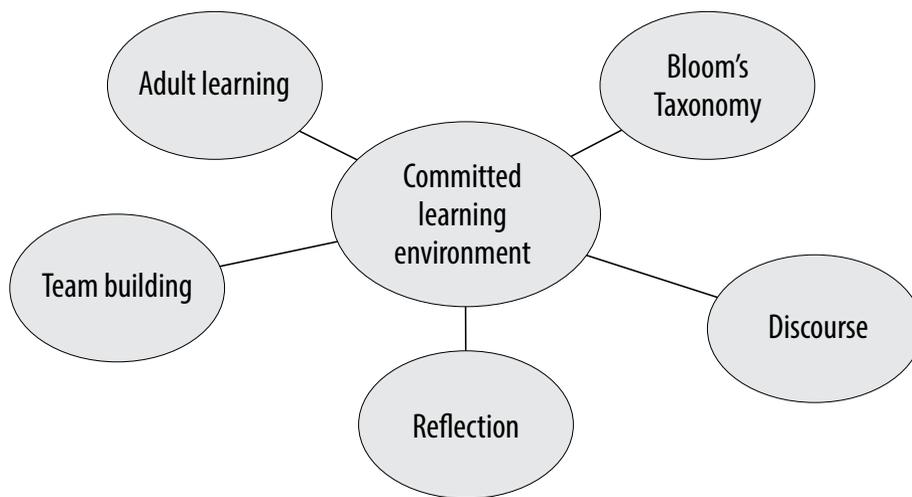
– J. F. C. Fuller

Introduction

The above quote from a 1923 lecture by J. F. C. Fuller, a well-respected British military historian and educator, is on the wall of every seminar room at the United States Army War College (USAWC).¹ These words provide broad insights to an expected interaction among students and faculty that is associated with a committed seminar learning environment. To amplify the thoughts in Fuller's quote and provide insights on how faculty can help develop a committed learning environment from curricula, student, and seminar perspectives, this chapter examines five key educational subjects that support the inquiry-driven model of graduate study that is the basis of the college's education philosophy.² This chapter also provides the reader insights on different ways to establish a committed learning environment using examples from the college's curriculum and seminar dynamics associated with a student's ten-month residence educational journey, where they can earn a master's degree in strategic studies.³

This chapter describes broad differences between a committed versus compliant learning environment to provide context to apply five key education subjects associated with developing and executing curriculum. The first two educational subjects are properly applying the theory associated with adult learning and Bloom's learning taxonomy to collectively influence curriculum design and execution that creates an intellectual foundation for a committed learning environment. The third educational subject is associated with three different types of seminar discourse related to conversation, discussion, and dialogue. The proper use of these varied discourse types will help build a more committed student and seminar learning environment as it encourages the collective intellectual capacity and willingness to explore complex issues from multiple perspectives. The fourth educational subject is applying team-building principles to develop a more trusting seminar learning team, which is essential to enhancing a committed learning environment. Finally, the last educational subject is the importance of reflection, a key part of a student's commitment that helps frame their future thinking from synthesizing academic and practical experiences on curriculum subjects.

There are five key education subjects associated with a committed learning environment: adult learning, Bloom's taxonomy, discourse, team building, and reflection. These are chosen because properly applying them will directly influence developing a commit-



(Figure by author)

Figure. Committed Learning Environment

ted learning environment from curriculum, student, and seminar perspectives. Each of these subjects is significant in their own right, as numerous scholarly books and articles have been written about them. This chapter briefly examines each subject from an academic perspective and then provides practical examples on how a faculty member should apply them to create a committed learning environment when developing and executing a curriculum. These examples are from the author’s experience in educating students for almost two decades at the USAWC and recent discussions with faculty and students on commitment. These five educational subjects, if applied properly, combine synergistically to help create a committed learning environment from curriculum, student, and seminar perspectives. The figure provides a way to visualize the synergistic relationship of these educational subjects.

Committed Versus Compliant Learning Environment

The educational, as well as the business literature, makes distinctions between creating and maintaining a committed versus compliant learning environment to enable a student/employee to become self-motivated. It describes these distinctions from both faculty/leader and student/employee responsibilities. An underlying thought in many of these articles is developing one’s emotional or self-motivated component to influence overall learning. Some articles use the word “heart” in the article’s title when making the distinctions between being committed versus compliant.⁴ The most straightforward way to articulate the difference between a truly committed versus compliant student is

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that a committed student wants to learn versus being told what to learn, as they make the emotional attachment to the subject, faculty, or seminar.⁵ While a student may be unfamiliar with a particular subject, the manner in which the subject is taught will create a committed learning environment over time. Faculty observations suggest that students with emotional attachment work much harder, since they feel responsible for others' learning within a seminar in addition to their own learning. This intrinsic motivation is often obvious in the creative ways students complete their assignments, and the additional research they willingly do during their studies.⁶

Commitment is not just a student responsibility, as some have argued that student commitment to some or a great degree depends on the faculty's commitment to helping all students learn.⁷ The faculty has the responsibility to develop the curriculum that is relevant to the students' future challenges and is focused on insights and ways to use what is learned. Key aspects of this faculty commitment are associated with being approachable, how you interact within and outside of formal classroom sessions, and the ways you show enthusiasm for the curriculum.⁸ In addition, the manner by which faculty respectfully and reflectively listen to students, ask thoughtful questions, and encourage positives further contributes to a committed seminar environment.⁹

Before discussing how these five educational concepts are related to a committed learning environment from curriculum, seminar, and student perspectives, a short examination of the USAWC's seminar composition, faculty teaching team, and curriculum is warranted. This will enable the reader to better apply insights from this chapter to his or her own educational experiences.

Seminar Composition and Curriculum

To appreciate how these five education subjects are applied at the USAWC, one must first understand the college's seminar composition and curriculum. The college's resident class has approximately 380 students divided into 24 seminars of 16 students

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each. The students are generally in their late 30s or early 40s, and have approximately 20 years of military or federal civilian service. Military officers are in the rank of lieutenant colonel or colonel, and civilians are in grades GS-14 or 15. Each seminar is selected deliberately to be diverse with students from different occupational backgrounds that range from infantry to intelligence to logistics to aviation to special forces. The average seminar has one GS-14 or 15 civilian, and officers at the rank of lieutenant colonel or colonel (or equivalent) from each of the services, with 1-2 coming each from the Air Force and sea services, 3-4 from our international partners, and 8-9 from the U.S. Army. Further, one or two students have National Guard or Reserve experiences. This seminar composition adds to a vibrant intellectual diversity as one's thinking is shaped in some way by one's prior experiences.

From each of the three academic departments there is one teaching faculty member assigned to each seminar, and collectively they have a mixture of practical and academic experiences to teach the college's core curriculum. In addition, a historian may be assigned to each seminar to ensure history is properly integrated throughout the academic year. Finally, other members of the college may affiliate with a seminar to provide their functional expertise when needed. In summary, there is considerable work that goes into developing the seminar's faculty team, with a balance between civilian and military officers and recent and veteran professors to further enhance a seminar's intellectual diversity.

The seminar stays intact for seven months from August through February to examine subjects described by the following core course titles: Strategic Leadership, Theory of War and Strategy, National Security Policy and Strategy, Theater Strategy and Campaigning, and Defense Management. During this seven-month period, students also take a regional studies course of their choice that examines one of seven geographic global regions. An average class day consists of approximately three hours of contact time with four lessons each week. This class is usually done in seminar format, though some instructional periods have a lecturer who speaks to the entire class prior to the seminar discussion. On occasion, the students engage in more interactive course exercises or war-games, and these are generally full-day classes.

The next three months, the seminar is no longer learning together. This timeframe begins with the oral comprehensive exams, where students are asked comprehensive questions by a different faculty team as they must demonstrate an ability to integrate core curriculum concepts, which is a requirement to graduate. Students then take ten credit hours of electives based on their specific interests. The college takes the students on field studies to New York City and Washington, D.C. to engage with leaders in business, media, the defense industry, and congress. For the final week, the seminar comes together for a short, high-level forum with civilian leaders from across the United States where national security issues are discussed. With this brief description of the seminar composition and curriculum focus, the chapter will now cover how adult learning is applied in curriculum design and execution with a committed learning focus.

Adult Learning

The educational focus associated with adult learning is based upon research in the beginning of the twentieth century that was documented in the 1928 book appropriately titled *Adult Learning*.¹⁰ The adult education paradigm and associated teaching methodology gained additional traction from work by Malcolm Knowles, and in 1973 he published the widely read book *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*.¹¹ He articulated the differences between educating adults, described as andragogy, and educating pre-adults, described as pedagogy. Adults, because of life experiences, are motivated to learn in different ways than younger students, which must be considered when designing and executing the curriculum. Knowles identified the following five broad assumptions to underpin this andragogy philosophy: (1) adults increasingly become self-directed in their learning approach; (2) their life experiences are a rich resource for learning; (3) their learning needs are closely related to changing social roles; (4) their time perspective to apply what is learned is more immediate; and (5) their learning orientation is more problem centered.¹² From this brief description of adult learning, a critical question that will now be answered is: *How do adult learning assumptions affect curriculum and faculty responsibilities associated with developing a committed learning environment?*

Knowles's first adult learning assumption related to self-directed learning is perhaps the most important to develop a committed learning environment. This self-directed approach is leveraged by a faculty advisor working with students to help them develop an individual learning plan during the first month of studies and execute it throughout the year with faculty mentoring. Hence, the students help design their educational journey within the college's overall educational framework. Another way this self-directed approach can be leveraged by faculty to increase student commitment is to provide them the opportunity to write about subjects that they want to conduct research on versus assigning students an exact writing topic. A colleague once said to me that "writing is a window to the mind" to emphasize this approach.

Knowles's second adult learning assumption of a person's experiences being a rich learning resource is realized by encouraging and leveraging relevant student experiences to create a committed seminar learning environment. Consequently, more often faculty need to facilitate subjects in seminar to bring out these rich experiences rather than directly teach subjects through lecture. Knowles's third adult learning assumption that learning needs are related to changing social roles is that students want to focus more on subjects that address their future leadership roles (their changing social role). Upon graduation, students will be interacting across higher organizational levels with greater responsibilities to include those at the strategic level. The college's curriculum focus at the strategic level and students' future leadership challenges address this assumption.

Knowles's fourth adult learning assumption related to a more immediate time perspective and fifth assumption of a problem-centered approach are very related in that

students want to study subjects and problems they are expected to address upon graduation. Hence, curriculum exercises or papers should focus on real-world challenges and what advice students should provide to senior leaders to address these challenges. For example, in the warfighting part of the curriculum, students conduct an exercise to address current strategic challenges in Southeast Asia when studying how to employ war planning concepts and processes. In the leadership part of the curriculum, students write papers on mission command or sexual assault prevention and response, which are examples of potentially relevant issues they will address upon graduation.

Research by other scholars in the educational community somewhat disagreed with Knowles's approach that broadly specified differences between andragogy versus pedagogy. They believed Knowles's learning differences and associated assumptions between pre-adults and adults were too general in nature and did not reflect an individual's learning approach. Instead, they applied adult-learning research to espouse an education philosophy under a framework called self-directed learning (SDL).¹³ In this framework, adult learners gain greater learning independence, as they progress through different learning stages and accept greater responsibility for their learning. This greater interdependence more smoothly addresses an individual's personal learning process. Educational expert Dr. Gerald Grow articulated this SDL philosophy by developing a straightforward, four-stage learning model where the learner's motivation and self-direction changes from low to moderate to intermediate and finally to high.¹⁴

Grow's four-stage learning model identifies not only a learner's motivation and associated behaviors but resultant faculty perspectives, both of which are relevant to appreciating the characteristics of a committed learning environment. In Stage 1, the student is not interested in or familiar at all with the subject being discussed and is fully dependent on explicit faculty directions. In Stage 2, the student is interested in the subject and may be motivated to learn the material, which can occur from an inspiring lecture and guided faculty discussions. In Stage 3, the student is fully engaged and shows initiative and confidence when exploring subjects as the faculty primarily facilitate the resultant seminar discussion and dialogue. In Stage 4, the student takes ownership for learning and conducts independent research under faculty mentoring.¹⁵

Based on faculty experiences at the USAWC, Stage 1 is rarely encountered among the graduate student population. Stage 2 occurs from either Bliss Hall lectures, given by distinguished scholars and our nation's senior leaders, or by faculty in seminar describing complex Defense Department systems and processes used by senior leaders to make decisions such as the Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution process. Stage 3 is the most common seminar condition, as faculty often facilitate students' experiences and insights on a wide variety of subjects to achieve higher-level learning objectives. To develop a committed learning environment, an open-ended questioning approach should be used during this stage to gain insights by applying or evaluating what is taught. Stage 4 occurs when students

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complete their Strategy Research Project, which is a 5,000 to 6,000 word paper on a strategic issue with a faculty member in an advisor role.

Whether an educator prefers using Knowles's assumptions or Grow's four-stage SDL model to describe motivations and interactions between students and faculty, a key point for a committed environment is that students must take responsible ownership for their learning. The faculty must positively respond to that ownership with a facilitating and mentoring rather than a directing approach. The college's curriculum and associated learning environment are different from most students' earlier experiences from undergraduate studies or intermediate-level service colleges in two main areas. First, the curriculum explores issues at the strategic level that often have characteristics associated with being *ill-structured* or of a *wicked* nature within a strategic environment broadly described as volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity.¹⁶ Second, the curriculum has to meet Joint Learning Areas that are predominately focused at the higher learning levels of Bloom's taxonomy; levels that require analysis or evaluation of subjects vice knowledge or comprehension.¹⁷

Another way the college addresses the self-motivated learning approach is in course assessments. Faculty formally assess students individually in each course on how well they achieved or exceeded standards in meeting course objectives in the three categories of seminar contribution, writing, and overall. The standards are quite substantial with the assessment criteria specified in a Course Directive and Communicative Arts Directive. Upon graduation, a number of students are recognized as distinguished graduates based on their ability to consistently exceed standards on core academic courses, research project, and comprehensive exam. Further, about twenty-five writing and research awards are presented at graduation to recognize significant individual work that adds to the academic body of knowledge. The college also provides numerous noontime lectures on a variety of subjects that are optional, but often widely attended. In total, this assessment approach develops a more self-motivated learning experience that encourages commitment. This learning focus is also enabled by how Bloom's taxonomy is applied as curriculum is developed and executed, which will now be covered.

Bloom's Taxonomy

One needs to understand Bloom's taxonomy within the cognitive domain to gain a greater appreciation of how lesson and course learning objectives are related to a committed learning environment.¹⁸ Within the cognitive domain, Bloom specified six levels of learning, which sequentially go from the lower knowledge level, to comprehension, to application, to analysis, to synthesis, and finally to evaluation. Since lesson authors and course directors use verbs associated with these six different cognitive learning levels to specify lesson and course objectives, understanding and applying this taxonomy helps

one better integrate adult learning assumptions. In the college's core course learning objectives for Academic Year 2014, five were at Bloom's first two levels, ten were at the second two levels, and seven were at the highest two levels. This overall stratification reflects the college's graduate-level education focus and the joint chiefs of staff's learning criteria for joint professional military accreditation at senior service colleges.¹⁹

The first cognitive level, called knowledge, focuses on knowing something, such as a definition or raw data. Learning objectives use verbs such as define, describe, or know to identify this basic level. The next level, called comprehension, focuses on grasping the meaning of the information presented or being able to describe it in your own words. Learning objectives use verbs such as explain, comprehend, or understand to identify this level. Some of a lesson's readings, and when faculty introduce a subject to first start the seminar discourse, are mainly at these two basic cognitive levels. The link to a committed learning environment is that this allows everyone in the seminar to have a common knowledge or comprehension level on a subject before proceeding to the higher levels of learning as a lesson and course progresses.

The words application and analysis describe the next two Bloom's taxonomy levels. Application is the ability to apply that lesson's knowledge or concepts to actual problems or issues. Verbs that identify learning objectives for this third cognitive level are use, apply, or solve. Analysis is the ability to break down the whole into component parts and see how they are interrelated or interact. Verbs that specify this fourth cognitive level are analyze, appraise, or examine. The link to a committed learning environment is that, as students and faculty discuss the readings and integrate their experiences and insights, the seminar is at these middle two learning levels. More course learning objectives focused at this level are in line with adult learning assumptions.

The words synthesis and evaluate describe the last two higher cognitive levels. Synthesis involves creating a new meaning or rearranging the ideas covered into new paradigms. Verbs that identify this cognitive level are combine, develop, or synthesize. The highest cognitive level of evaluation results in informed judgments about the value of ideas or concepts. Verbs that specify this level are evaluate, conclude, or appraise. These highest learning levels require a mastery of the other learning levels and the ability of a student and even the seminar to reflect. Individual lessons generally do not address these two higher levels unless they involve case studies or an exercise. The integration of the various lesson material and seminar discourse from all of the lessons enables the achievement of the higher course learning levels, which are essential to a learning environment appreciated by committed adult learners.

In total, achieving different learning levels defined by Bloom's taxonomy depends to a great deal on the type and quality of seminar discourse. To achieve different learning levels associated with lesson and course objectives requires an understanding and application of the characteristics associated with different seminar discourse types, a subject now examined with a committed learning environment perspective.

Discourse

Conversation, discussion, and dialogue are three distinct types of communication that comprise seminar discourse.²⁰ Furthermore, discussion can be further categorized in two different ways by the words *persuasion* and *democratic*.²¹ Each one of these discourse types has different characteristics and purpose, but when properly used, they all contribute to developing a committed learning environment and achieving learning objectives at different levels of Bloom's taxonomy.

The first and most basic discourse in seminar is conversation. This occurs from the first day as seminar members first start to learn about each other. Conversation helps start the implicit bonding process where diverse individuals begin to engage with each other to develop into a team. Generally, conversation seeks equilibrium and is a pleasant exchange or bantering of thoughts and feelings about an issue that is less formal and structured. Conversation evolves as seminar members get to know one another better and continues all year with different levels of human interest where the "best conversations maintain a tension between seriousness and playfulness."²² Overall, conversation focuses primarily at Bloom's lower two learning levels. A link to a committed learning environment is that faculty should have conversations with students before or after a lesson as this begins the processes to develop committed interactions with students and their learning, as it helps identify a faculty's needed approachability.²³

Discussion is the next type of seminar discourse that is more structured than conversation, which enables the seminar or student to get closure on an issue. Discussion focuses on an intellectual give-and-take when analyzing issues or applying concepts from varied perspectives. Peter Senge, in his book *The Fifth Discipline*, compares discussion with the words percussion and concussion due to root word similarities and argues that in discussion "you fundamentally want your view to prevail."²⁴ In essence, this perspective implies a type of discussion that primarily builds on other's ideas to support your views. Overall, the adjective *persuasive* best describes this type of discussion. While discuss is a verb initially recognized under the comprehension learning level, seminar learning that most often reflects persuasive discussions are Bloom's middle levels of apply and analyze, but it can go to the next higher levels depending on that discussion's underlying purpose. To enable student commitment, faculty should facilitate discussions of students in seminar versus being persuasive in providing their views so as not to anchor students' thinking with a "right" answer. Further, faculty must ensure when discussing an issue that all views are fully valued and examined, even if most in the seminar disagree with a particular view. This can minimize the potential adverse impact that too many persuasive discussions may have on a committed learning environment.

Others, who do not agree with discussion's underlying persuasive motivation described in the preceding paragraph, describe discussion as being a more open exchange of ideas and use the adjective *democratic* to describe it. Brookfield and Preskill in their book, *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*, described nine different classroom

discussion dispositions under the heading, *Discussion in a Democratic Society*. These nine different dispositions are hospitality, participation, mindfulness, humility, mutuality, deliberation, appreciation, hope, and autonomy.²⁵

These dispositions can be useful and more effective than persuasive discussions in creating a committed learning environment that focuses on achieving Bloom's two middle learning levels, while allowing learning to smoothly transition to the next two highest levels. Hospitality occurs within a seminar when everyone feels invited to participate, which enables one to take risk and share strongly held views. Participation involves sharing views that add to depth and subtlety, while realizing that not everyone need say something, as respectful silence is valued. Mindfulness is associated with paying close attention to what precisely is said and being aware of the overall context. Humility builds on mindfulness when one acknowledges his or her limited knowledge and values learning from others' different views. Mutuality occurs when seminar members realize that everyone's learning is important to create a spirit of goodwill. Deliberation involves offering arguments and counterarguments supported by evidence and logic to convince others. Appreciation involves expressing gratitude to another for their insights that raises the level of respect for other perspectives. Hope involves reaching a new level of understanding or perspective. Finally, autonomy involves being willing to take strong stands or have the courage to hold views not widely shared.²⁶ Again, faculty need to facilitate seminar discussions in an open manner that enables all of these discussion dispositions to occur to develop both student and seminar learning commitment.

Dialogue is the final type of seminar discourse that tends to be more exploratory in nature than discussion and focuses more on inquiry. Dialogue causes one to be more inclined to ask "why" when exploring an issue, and this takes learning beyond one's own understanding to have a freer flow of exploration from multiple perspectives as one becomes an observer of their thinking.²⁷ In essence, dialogue enables students in seminar to gain deeper insights on complex issues that could not occur from individual work. As such, seminar dialogue focuses more on the higher learning levels to first fully analyze and then evaluate issues.

To develop a team-learning discipline associated with dialogue, which allows students and seminars to reflect upon their individual and collective thinking, requires three basic conditions.²⁸ The first condition is the willingness to suspend assumptions. This is the key difference when comparing dialogue with discussion's persuasive or democratic characteristics. Suspending assumptions means explicitly being aware of your assumptions, being aware of how they influence thinking, and holding them up for reexamination. While difficult to do, suspending assumptions does not mean discarding them. The second condition for dialogue to occur is that seminar members must see each other as colleagues, be fully open, and create the positive energy in properly questioning others or ideas. The last condition for dialogue to occur is the need for a facilitator, who holds the issue's context and flow and asks the right questions to spur positive inquiry. Being a facilitator is an important faculty responsibility. Achieving and

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maintaining these three conditions for dialogue are hard work that requires disciplined intellectual thought, which enables a committed student and seminar by the willingness to explore others' perspectives before determining your own.

All three discourse types exist within a seminar with conversation starting the initial contact, discussion in either persuasive or democratic forms that is more structured and enables closure, and dialogue that is more inquiry and exploratory focused. Depending on where you are when examining an issue, there may be times for all types of seminar discourse to synergistically enhance one's overall commitment and seminar learning. However, more of the seminar discourse needs to be focused on democratic discussion and dialogue to enable student and seminar commitment. Understanding and applying characteristics associated with all discourse types provides one the ability to better reflect on and take responsibility for a committed student and seminar learning environment. Further, knowing the sign posts for each type of discourse helps with applying team-building insights to enable a committed seminar learning environment, a topic now covered.

Team Building

The previous section examining different types of seminar discourse is one aspect for gaining insights on ways to develop committed learning habits and techniques and build a seminar team. A seminar, like other small groups, will grow and evolve as the year progresses. Small groups, according to research by Bruce Tuckman in the 1960s, develop through sequential stages described by the following four simple words: forming, storming, norming, and performing.²⁹ He and others a decade later added a fifth stage called adjourning, which signifies completion. Organizational insights and behaviors associated with these stages are useful to help create a committed learning environment.

The forming stage of team building at the USAWC begins when the seminar initially meets with members introducing themselves, learning about others' backgrounds, becoming acquainted with the college's opportunities, and clarifying expectations. At this stage, people are normally polite, operate somewhat independently, and cover issues superficially. The collective seminar learning that occurs at this stage is predominately at Bloom's lower two levels, although individuals based on their internal motivation can achieve a higher level. Generally, the seminar quickly moves beyond this forming stage, which is needed to begin to develop a committed seminar learning environment.

The storming stage of team building, as the word suggests, is characterized by intra-group conflict. This occurs as different ideas or students actively compete for their views to be accepted, disagreements over decisions are passionately voiced, and frustrations are visible, all of which may cause one to shut down. This can occur if

persuasive discussions routinely dominate seminar discourse, which occurs if members are mainly focused on wanting their individual views to prevail and become leaders within the seminar. Furthermore, some issues may have emotional connotations that are not readily apparent based on the topic, but can elicit an unexpected personal response from someone. A helpful seminar technique when emotions rise is to “talk to the center of the room,” so a response is not taken personally but examined collectively. A technique when an issue generates emotion is to ask students to “count to three” before responding, so their response is not overly reactive and allows time for thinking. As indicated in some of democratic discussions’ dispositions, it is “ok” to share strongly-held views, disagree after carefully listening, and hold views not widely shared. However, if seminar behaviors are focused too much at the storming stage then a committed learning environment will begin to degrade.

The norming stage of team building occurs as seminar members adjust their behaviors, begin to work more smoothly and effectively together, share learning, and begin to create a greater collective trust, and leadership within the seminar is sorted. Simply, collective trust is needed for a committed learning environment.³⁰ Students’ and faculty’s professional characteristics and motivations enable this stage to occur smoothly and quickly at the USAWC. A negative condition of a norming stage is that sometimes members will not offer contrary views, and a condition called *groupthink* may occur from a desire for harmony.³¹ Another expression often heard to describe decisions when conformity is desired over proper dissent is: *We are on the bus to Abilene*. A way faculty can address groupthink is to encourage an opposite perspective and ask to identify its strengths and weaknesses in an open manner. While an individual’s learning can be at different Bloom’s taxonomy levels, the collective seminar learning at this team-building stage is most often at the middle two levels.

The performing stage occurs when productive teamwork is evident, as members willingly take initiative and responsibility while balancing autonomy with interdependence, all of which is reflective of a committed learning environment. A performing stage results from the dedication and hard work of all team members—students and faculty. Collectively, the seminar has the capability to achieve the highest learning levels at this stage, as there is an appreciation of everyone’s intellectual contributions and achievements. Dissent can occur during this stage, but it will be positively resolved, sometimes with humor or with an open-ended questioning approach. The one caution is that once a seminar achieves this performing stage, and my experiences reveal USAWC seminars will achieve it, internal monitoring must still take place. This internal monitoring ensures the seminar stays at this stage, since a natural tendency toward complacency or a norming stage may try to assert itself.³²

The adjourning stage occurs when a group is no longer together, and this can create an element of anxiety or sadness. A way to describe this at the USAWC is graduation day. However, seminars often stay in contact through a variety of electronic means to keep updated on member’s actions or even have reunions, reflecting those

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strong bonds developed during the year. Some seminars set up groups on Facebook and LinkedIn just before graduation to enable learning to continue. These strong bonds are the result of a committed learning environment. Hence, collective seminar insights and learning can continue well beyond graduation.

Seminars go through these team-building stages with some stages more quickly passed through than others depending on interpersonal and institutional dynamics, as well as shared learning cultures developed from other educational or operational experiences. Furthermore, seminars sometimes go back and forth among these stages. This can occur when major changes affect the existing learning rhythm, such as different group tasks, new course material, or different faculty. However, when a seminar is at the performing stage it is more likely to stay there. The travel through these stages identifies an important individual and seminar responsibility, which is the need to self-monitor either implicitly or explicitly, to ensure needed cohesiveness and trust for a committed learning environment. This last point of self-monitoring brings to the forefront this article's last point, the importance of reflection.

Reflection

The subject of reflection was included because many senior leaders, when addressing USAWC students in Bliss Hall, have spoken passionately about their senior service college experience a decade or more earlier as a valued opportunity to view issues from many different perspectives and shape their thinking.³³ In essence, they had the opportunity to reflect on complex national security issues rather than make time-critical decisions or lead organizations associated with their previous responsibilities. While reflection has many different definitions, a useful one is: *the thought, idea, or opinion on a subject from consideration or meditation.*³⁴ Reflection requires hard work, as rigorous, disciplined thought is required, which is related to an individual's commitment.

A reflective learning approach can be organized into the three categories of subject, personal, and critical.³⁵ The subject category deals with specific insights one gains for future use from lesson or course material on a particular subject. This occurs as students gain insights from the wide variety of material in core courses and electives. The personal category deals with the concept of what you are learning about your own thinking or insights. This occurs as one's thinking is challenged or insights are gained about the habits of the mind from varied seminar discourse during core courses and after class in other social or academic settings.³⁶ The critical category deals with the learning associated with challenging one's assumptions and beliefs, even if those beliefs and assumptions do not change. Reflective learning associated with each of these three categories have different outcomes, but they are synergistic in nature in enabling a student's commitment as one considers issues within different contexts and they combine to shape future decisions.

Adult learning assumptions, Bloom's taxonomy, seminar discourse types, and team-building stages address these three broad reflection categories, all of which influence one's learning commitment. Subject reflection occurs as the adult learner considers and evaluates relevant curriculum subjects. Personal reflection occurs more often when achieving lesson and course learning objectives at the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy, which are helpful to spur reflective inquiry. Seminar discourse associated with discussion that combines openness, careful listening, and logical give-and-take contributes to reflection on both subject and personal categories. Seminar discourse associated with dialogue, which requires one to suspend assumptions, deals more with the critical reflection category. Faculty can enable reflection by asking more "why" versus "what" questions and exploring "how one could" use curriculum concepts in the near future. Achieving the team-building stage of a performing seminar contributes to all three reflection categories, both individually and collectively, to help develop students' commitment.

Individual techniques that enable reflection in all three categories include asking questions of yourself, keeping a journal, updating a learning plan, and doing independent research. Ask yourself questions such as: *What did I really learn today?* or *How did this experience change my thinking?* Another way to develop reflective judgment is to keep a journal focused on what was learned versus what was taught. Insights written down stay longer in one's collective memory, and these insights can later be explicitly reviewed. While the USAWC requires students to develop an individual learning plan within the first month, updating this plan as the year progresses helps spur reflection and one's commitment to learning. Writing and research experiences, especially the college's strategy research paper and the opportunity to write a personal experience monograph, provide different opportunities to reflect more deeply in all categories.

Conclusions

This chapter broadly examined education subjects associated with adult learning, learning taxonomy, discourse types, team building, and reflection, all of which in different ways contribute to a committed learning environment from curriculum, student, and seminar perspectives. Informed by the author's educational experiences at the Army War College over almost two decades, the chapter broadly applied these education subjects to identify the conditions for a committed learning environment from curriculum, student, and seminar perspectives.

In summary, when developing curricula, faculty need to integrate adult learning assumptions and focus on higher levels of Bloom's learning taxonomy to help set the foundation for a committed learning environment. When executing a curriculum, faculty need to facilitate seminar discourse that seamlessly transitions from conversation to discussion to dialogue as the issue is being examined at higher Bloom's taxonomy learn-

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ing levels, but there should be a greater focus on democratic discussions and dialogue. In doing so, faculty must ensure that all students' views are valued, multiple perspectives are encouraged, and an open-ended questioning approach is used. Faculty need to encourage team-building behaviors to get to the performing stage, while creating the collective trust and mutual respect for other's views needed for a committed seminar learning team. This committed seminar team environment enables the student and seminar to collectively examine an issue at higher Bloom's taxonomy learning levels, while encouraging the student to reflect on issues from personal, subject, and critical categories by asking more "why" versus "what" questions. While developing and executing the curriculum, faculty also need to be available to students outside of seminar and create flexibility in course assignments focused on topics students want to research to continue to enhance a committed learning environment.

The chapter's overall intent was to provide insights to help shape student and faculty thinking on how best to approach and complete an educational journey with a committed learning focus. While these insights are from the author's teaching experiences at the Army War College, many of them are applicable at other educational institutions and classrooms. Finally, reflecting on this article's concepts will provide additional insights into what J. F. C. Fuller's opening quote implies both individually and collectively in a seminar learning environment. ❧

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. government. It builds upon an earlier faculty paper by the author used for faculty development at the U.S. Army War College.

Notes

Epigraph. Peter G. Tsouras, *Book of Military Quotations* (Minneapolis: Zenith Press, 2005), 274.

1. *Ibid.*, 274.

2. "Academic Programs Academic Year 2016," U.S. Army War College, 12, accessed 7 March 2018, <https://www.carlisle.army.mil/kmn/home/AcademicProgramsAY2016.pdf>.

3. The college is accredited by the Middle States Commission of Higher Education.

4. The heart is mentioned in Mac McIntire, "Commitment vs. Compliance: Ten Reasons Why You Need Your Workers Hearts Not Just Their Hands," Innovative Management Group (website), accessed 5 March 2018, http://www.imglv.com/articles/Commitment_vs._Compliance.pdf; Kathleen Stinnett, "Compliance vs. Commitment: The Heart of the Matter," Zenger Folkman (blog), 29 September 2010, accessed 5 March 2018, <http://zengerfolkman.com/compliance-vs-commitment-the-heart-of-the-matter/>.

5. Author's insights from seminar teaching experiences and articles on committed environments.

6. Michael Beck, "Compliance vs. Commitment," Michael Beck International (website), 11 March 2014, accessed 5 March 2018, <http://www.michaeljbeck.com/leadership/4784>.

7. Ben Johnson, "Student Commitment Depends on Teacher Commitment," Edutopia (website), 14 July 2011, accessed 5 March 2018, <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/student-commitment-depends-on-teachers-ben-johnson>.

8. Center for Excellence in Teaching, University of Southern California, "Showing Commitment to Teaching and Learning," *The TA Handbook 1997-98* (Los Angeles: Center for Excellence in Teaching, University of Southern California, 1998 [now obsolete]).

9. Tom Drummond, "A Brief Summary of the Best Practices in College Teaching," Tom Drummond Resources and Writings (website), accessed 7 March 2018, <https://tomdrummond.com/helping-other-adults/best-practices/>.

10. Sharan B. Merriam, ed., "Andragogy and Self-Directed Learning: Pillars of Adult Learning Theory," chap. 1 in *The New Update on Adult Learning Theory* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 3–4.

11. *Ibid.*, 3–5; Malcolm Knowles, *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*, (Houston: Gulf Publishing, 1978), ix.

12. Knowles, *The Adult Learner*, 108–110; Merriam, *The New Update on Adult Learning Theory*, 5.

13. Merriam, *The New Update on Adult Learning Theory*, 9–10.

14. Gerald Grow, "Teaching Learners to be Self-Directed," accessed 15 May 2015, <http://www.longleaf.net/ggrowsSDL/Model.html>.

15. *Ibid.*

16. For more information on ill-structured problems, see Patricia M. King and Karen Strohm Kitchner, *Developing Reflective Judgment* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994). For more information on wicked problems, see John C. Camillus, "Strategy as a Wicked Problem," *Harvard Business Review* (May 2008). For more information on the strategic environment, see Stephen J. Gerras, ed., *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 3rd ed. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College [USAWC], 2010).

17. Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 1800.01E, *Officer Professional Military Education Policy* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office [GPO], 29 May 2015). A review of joint learning area objectives at service intermediate level college showed that 37 out of 43 objectives were at the comprehend level. For Senior Service college, there were no joint learning objectives at the comprehend level and 16 out of 26 objectives were at the evaluate level.

18. Donald Clark, "Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains," Big Dog & Little Dog's Performance Juxtaposition (website), last updated 12 January 2015, accessed 7 March 2018, <http://www.nwlink.com/~Donclark/hrd/bloom.html>; "Bloom's Taxonomy: Learning Objective Verbs at Each Bloom Taxonomy Level," Air War College, accessed 7 March 2018, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/edref/bloom.htm>. Material on the taxonomy and verbs in this paragraph and others come from these sources and the author's experiences. There is now a seventh level of taxonomy called creating.

19. The Bloom's taxonomy joint learning taxonomy specified in CJCSI 1800.01D, *Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP)* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 15 July 2009 [now obsolete]). For senior service colleges, 4 were at apply, 6 at analyze, 1 at synthesize and 12 at evaluate. The USAWC passed Joint Chief of Staff Accreditation that reflects these July 2009 learning levels. The most recent CJCSI 1800.01E (19 May 2015), has similar joint learning taxonomy levels.

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20. Stephen D. Brookfield and Stephen Preskill, *Discussion as a Way of Teaching* (San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons, 1990), 1–7.

21. *Ibid.*, XV–5; Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1990), 240. Senge used the adjective persuasion while Brookfield used the adjective democratic to describe discussion.

22. Brookfield and Preskill, *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*, 4–6.

23. Center for Excellence in Teaching, University of Southern California, “Showing Commitment to Teaching and Learning” in *The TA Handbook 1997-98*.

24. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 240. Senge attributes most of discussion and dialogue’s characteristics to physicist David Bohm, a leading quantum theorist.

25. Brookfield and Preskill, *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*, XV–8. The authors used the word democratic to broadly categorize these classroom discussions that reflect the principles of civil discourse associated with a democratic society that “emphasizes the inclusion of the widest variety of perspectives and a self-critical willingness to change what we believe if convinced by the arguments of others.”

26. *Ibid.*, 8–18. The nine dispositions in the above paragraph are summarized from ten pages in the first chapter of *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*.

27. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 241–242.

28. *Ibid.*, 243–247. The three conditions covered in this paragraph are summarized from Senge.

29. Bruce W. Tuckman, “Developmental Sequence in Small Groups,” *Psychological Bulletin* 63, no. 6 (1965): 384–399. The linkage to discourse types and Bloom’s taxonomy covered in the following paragraphs are the author’s views.

30. Beck, “Compliance vs Commitment.”

31. Glenn M. Parker, *Team Players and Teamwork* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 141.

32. *Ibid.*, 143–144.

33. Author’s insights from listening to Bliss Hall lectures over the past decade and a half.

34. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed. (1994), s.v. “reflection.” This definition combines two of nine different definitions.

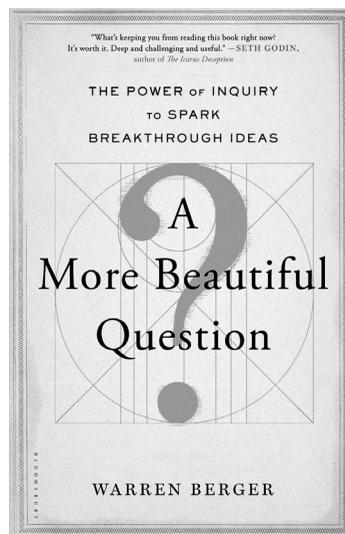
35. Patricia Raber Hedberg, “Learning Through Reflective Classroom Practice,” *Journal of Management Education* 31, no. 1 (February 2009): 10–12.

36. *Ibid.* Habits of the mind are discussed in this article.

A More Beautiful Question

The Power of Inquiry to Spark Breakthrough Ideas

Warren Berger, Bloomsbury USA,
New York, 2014, 272 pages



Questioning enables us to innovate, solve problems, and move ahead in our careers and lives. It also improves and informs our judgment, allows learning, sets the stage for change, and creates dialogue. Because questioning is a key leader competency required to establish a learning organization, leaders need to model asking good questions and foster an environment where others feel safe to ask questions and learn. *A More Beautiful Question* teaches how to do so, and I recommend it.

The author, Warren Berger, introduces a three-part framework for asking questions, “Why/What If/How.” The initial “Why” stage deals with seeing and understanding, “What If” concerns imagining, and “How” is about doing. It is a framework designed to guide one through the stages of asking. He applies this framework to the art of asking innovative questions and weaves in several good examples to illustrate its use.

Berger examines why people stop asking questions. Few organizations teach or even encourage questioning in any substantive way. Questioning is not taught in most schools, nor is it encouraged, while “correct” memorized answers are. Questions challenge authority and disrupt established structures, processes, and systems, forcing people to think about things differently. Questioning can cede power to employees, which is contrary to cultural norms in hierarchical organizations or typical classrooms.

A paradox in becoming an expert in one’s field is that questioning often has an inverse relationship to expertise. Within their own subject areas, experts tend to be poor at inquiring about their expertise. They stop asking because they think they know. However, expert knowledge may be limited, outdated, or even wrong. Having a sense of knowing can make us less curious and less open to new ideas and possibilities. Conversely, the mind of the beginner is unencumbered and free of the habits of the expert. Such a mind is more open to new possibilities, while the expert’s mind tends to close off possibilities.

In order to make questioning a habit or part of an organizational process, leaders need to make the time to fit it into their busy schedules. Part of building a culture of inquiry is teaching people to defer judgment while exploring new ideas. Many of us react to questions by trying to answer them too quickly or by countering them “devil’s advocate” style, which stifles innovation. The humbling question is, what if I am wrong? This question can put a check on our natural tendency to be certain of our views. As a leader, a key question is, how do I stay inspired so I can inspire others? Sometimes questioning involves stepping back and giving oneself time to reflect and think to come up with good questions.

A More Beautiful Question is a good book for anyone wanting to learn more about themselves and the world around them. It specifically addresses teachers, leaders, and business people, as well as taking a personal look at self-inquiry. Questioning is essential to learning and staying viable in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world. ❧

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Upcoming Conferences of Note

April 6–10, 2018: Higher Learning Commission Conference

Chicago, Illinois

<https://hlcommission.org/Programs-Events/conference.html>

The 2018 conference will highlight the theme of “Innovation and Transformation,” addressing major changes in higher education brought on by new technologies, new credentials, new providers, and new public policy priorities. The conference will provide forums to explore how institutions can embrace the opportunities presented by transformative change, and how accreditation can facilitate this evolution while continuing to assure quality and promote student success.

April 13–17, 2018: American Educational Research Association

New York City, New York

<http://www.aera.net/Events-Meetings/Annual-Meeting/Future-Annual-Meetings>

The American Educational Research Association (AERA), a national research society, strives to advance knowledge about education, to encourage scholarly inquiry related to education, and to promote the use of research to improve education and serve the public good.

June 2–4, 2018: *The Teaching Professor Conference*

Atlanta, Georgia

<https://www.facultyfocus.com/conferences/>

The Teaching Professor Conference provides a thought-provoking forum for educators of all disciplines and experience levels to share best practices that advance college teaching and learning. The three-day conference features preconference workshops that provide hands-on learning, provocative plenary presentations, carefully selected concurrent sessions on a range of relevant topics, poster presentations highlighting the latest research, and ample opportunities for conversations with fellow attendees.

June 7–10, 2018: *Adult Education Research Conference*

University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

<http://newprairiepress.org/aerc>

The Adult Education Research Conference is an annual North American conference that provides a forum for adult-education researchers to share their experiences and the results of their studies with students, other researchers, and practitioners from around the world.

August 7–9, 2018: *Distance Teaching & Learning Conference*

Madison, Wisconsin

<https://dtlconference.wisc.edu/>

This conference emphasizes evidence-based practice, educational innovation, and practical applications of theories and research findings in the field of distance education and online learning. There are also many opportunities for you to network, share, and collaborate with peers from around the world. You will head home with new skills, fresh knowledge, and the motivation to apply what you've learned.

October 2–5: *American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE)*

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

<http://www.aaace.org/page/2018SOE>

This is the annual conference of one of the nation's largest organizations for adult and continuing education. AAACE is the publisher of three leading adult education journals, including the *Adult Education Quarterly*, *Adult Learning*, and the *Journal of Transformative Education*. This year's theme is "Adult Education in an Era of Accelerated Technological Innovation."

Call for Papers

The *Journal of Military Learning (JML)* is a peer-reviewed semiannual publication that supports efforts to improve education and training for the U.S. Army and the overall Profession of Arms.

We continuously accept manuscripts for subsequent editions with editorial board evaluations held in April and October. The *JML* invites practitioners, researchers, academics, and military professionals to submit manuscripts that address the issues and challenges of adult education and training, such as education technology, adult learning models and theory, distance learning, training development, and other subjects relevant to the field. Submissions related to competency-based learning will be given special consideration.

Submissions should be between 3,500 and 5,000 words and supported by re-

search, evident through the citation of sources. Scholarship must conform to commonly accepted research standards such as described in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th edition.

Do you have a “best practice” to share on how to optimize learning outcomes for military learners? Please submit a one- to two-page summary of the practice to share with the military learning enterprise. Book reviews of published relevant works are also encouraged.

Manuscripts should be submitted to usarmy.leavenworth.tradoc.mbx.journal-of-military-learning@mail.mil by 1 April and 1 October for the October and April editions respectively. See below for detailed author submission guidelines. For additional information call 913-684-9331 or send an email to the address above. ✉

Author Submission Guidelines

Manuscripts should contain between 3,500 to 5,000 words in the body text and be double-spaced in a standard font. Documentation must conform to the endnotes style in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th edition, chapter 14, but no bibliography is needed. Because of complications with layout software, papers are not to contain any automatic endnotes; replace all coded endnotes with manually formatted notes before submission.

Manuscripts should be submitted as a Microsoft Word file. They must include a one-paragraph abstract.

Do not submit manuscripts that have been published elsewhere or are under consideration for publication elsewhere.

The *Journal of Military Learning (JML)* will not consider for publication a manuscript failing to conform to the guidelines above.

The editors may suggest changes in the interest of clarity and economy of expression; such changes will be made in consultation with the author. The editors are the final arbiters of usage, grammar, and length of article.

Authors are encouraged to supply relevant artwork with their essays (e.g., maps, charts, line drawings, and photographs). Artwork is limited to that which supports the major points of the manuscript. Illustrations may be submitted in the following formats: PDF, PNG, EPS, SVG, JPEG, PowerPoint, or TIFF. The author must obtain permission to use any copyrighted material.

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