

Strengthening Army Systems to Support Learning in the Affective Domain

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Abstract

U.S. Army soldiers execute missions in increasingly complex operational environments (OE) that tax their abilities and skills across all human domains. Affective competencies, such as resilience, fortitude, and emotional intelligence, are vital to today's soldiers and leaders. Yet current Army training and education efforts do not adequately address affective domain learning, to the detriment of soldiers and of the Army as a whole. The roots of today's deficiencies in affective domain learning are founded on very real historical and theoretical realities that shaped the initial vision around the formation of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). Changing conditions in the OE as well as in Army personnel suggest that the Army needs a revised approach to affective domain learning that is in keeping with recent research and with the initial strategic vision of TRADOC as a learning organization.


The U.S. Army is working to create a culture of comprehensive fitness (U.S. Department of the Army [DA], 2014). The Army's "People First" campaign highlights the value of individual soldiers and the importance of their health across all domains (DA, 2022). Initiatives such as Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness (DA, 2014), Holistic Health and Fitness (DA, 2021), and Master Resilience Training (MRT) (DA, 2014, para. 4-3) are vital; they seek to support the well-being and readiness of soldiers across the soldier's career life cycle. Yet these initiatives will not make lasting change unless the values they represent become more broadly established in Army institutions and culture (Neumann & Forsyth, 2008). While some domains of wellness have received significant attention, the emotional (or affective)

domain has generally garnered less emphasis. Several individuals, as diverse as a U.S. Military Academy professor (Cutright, 2022), a U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) faculty member (Sewell, 2009, 2014), and a CGSC student (Taylor-Clark, 2015), have identified deficiencies in the Army's approach to the affective domain (see also Penrod, 2010; Walters, 2018; Waxler, 2020). But deficits in the affective domain development of soldiers have yet clearly to be traced in relation to U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) doctrine and practice. Affective domain development needs additional emphasis in Army learning contexts, but many Army learning systems are not currently well set up to support this need.

Past Revolutions; Promising Possibilities

The challenges identified here in relation to the Army and the affective domain are surmountable. The most difficult aspects of change may be changing culture. "Suck it up and drive on" is a common truism that encapsulates an aspect of the cultural mindset in the Army that downplays the importance of the affective domain. The ramifications of this attitude in the contemporary Army are many and various (Steele, 2011). Yet this dynamic within Army culture, especially as it relates to training and education, has not always existed, and it arose from specific historical realities. A clear understanding of the past can give insight into future possibilities.

The Vietnam-era draft Army influences the Army's relationship regarding the importance of the affective domain. This influence continues to be felt in the Army today. During Vietnam, Army training and education focused on preparing draftees, who by-and-large did not want to be there, for the horrors of combat. Affective motivation or development seemed both unnecessary and undesirable for a population who just wanted to get the job done, get home, and get out of the Army.¹ This attitude largely differed from that of the soldiers who fought in the Army's most recent conflicts at that time, Korea and World War II.² Gen. George C. Marshall said on the eve of the Second World War, "The soldier's heart, the soldier's spirit, the soldier's soul, are everything. Unless the soldier's soul sustains him he cannot be relied on and will fail himself and his commander and his country in the end" (Marshall, 1986, p. 535).³ Though the realities of Army training efforts did not always live up to this ideal during the World War II era (Stouffer et al., 1949, pp. 71, 78), similar emphases by senior Army leaders during past eras broadly indicate acceptance of and greater competency in the affective domain throughout American society.⁴



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Reforms after Vietnam in how the Army trained soldiers created, even inadvertently, very different emphases (Brownlee & Mullen, 1988, pp. 182–189; DA, 1976, para. 1-3-1-5; Hebert, 1988, pp. 54–56). The creation of TRADOC itself in 1973 was in response to senior Army leaders' frustrations with the Army's preparation of soldiers for the Vietnam War under the legacy Army Training Program that had been in place since World War I (Chapman, 1994, p. 3; TRADOC Military History Office, 2003, Preface). The beginning of TRADOC coincided with the rescission of the draft, and a related new approach to Army training that used time-to-task as a primary consideration for training a brand-new conscript force in the event of another large-scale conflict. Army senior leaders saw the Army Training Program model as ineffective for an anticipated future; a new "systems approach to training" replaced it (Chapman, 1994, p. 5). Central to this effort was

a new concept of performance-oriented training and a concept of a systematic way to go about the setting of training objectives through the careful determination of tasks to be trained, conditions under which certain training would be required, and the setting of standards. (TRADOC Military History Office, 2003, Chapter V)

This model, which is the basis for the system in use today, was a part of a "train-evaluate-train" program that would require soldiers to perform to established standards" (TRADOC Military History Office, 2003, Chapter V). These methodological changes were accompanied by organizational changes. TRADOC "reoriented so that it had a larger training, as opposed to educational, aspect" (TRADOC Military History Office, 2003, Chapter V). Something significant may have been lost by streamlining Army learning; calculated efficiency provides many benefits, but human complexity often resists its analysis. The "train-evaluate-train" cycle works well in relation to discrete task training, but falters in areas (such as education) where evaluation is more onerous, time-consuming, or requires more complex methodologies. Difficulties associated with measurement slow down the entire cycle, which is a significant issue for a process that was originally designed for speed and efficiency. Complexity in measurements also bucked against the guidance of TRADOC leadership who desired "not only realistic training but an instrumented environment that could take advantage of rapidly advancing technology to provide data that could be analyzed to evaluate the effects of training" (Chapman, 1994, p. 10). These policies, ever since their implementation, sidelined the ability of the Army to train and educate in the affective domain.

Many who are part of Army learning systems do not know the historical origins of processes and procedures that limit use of the affective domain within TRADOC and the Army more broadly. Many of the processes, procedures, and values of contemporary Army learning bear a striking resemblance to those of the Army almost 50 years ago. Even though the actual people who comprise the Army are different in both ob-



jective and more intangible ways, many learning frameworks remain unchanged in the five decades since these large-scale changes were implemented. Despite, and perhaps because of, this distance between these historical factors and today's personnel, continued analysis is needed. An all-volunteer force in the post-Vietnam draft era has different learning needs than the Army that arose out of that conflict, and the conflicts that followed it.

Affective Domain Functioning

Humans are affective beings (Krathwohl et al., 1964). Emotions are fundamental to soldiers precisely because soldiers are human beings (Ong et al., 2011; Ortner & Pennekamp, 2020; Pressman & Cohen, 2005; Sherman, 2011). While this reality is ever-present, there are important historical and societal reasons for considering it now, especially given recent dynamics in the Army named above. Properly regulated emotion is powerful in its ability to elicit self-reflection and self-discipline, to stir others to courageous action, to establish empathetic emotional bonds, and to support effective leadership (DA, 2019b, 2021; Hudson, 2016; see especially DA, 2021, para. 3-3, 9-7, 9-27). Immature emotional development, conversely, degrades human competency and can even erode achievement in other domains (Cohen & Pressman, 2006; DA, 2019b, para. 8-45). The competency of emotional intelligence (EQ) is vital to proper human functioning and is comprised of “self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management” (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017; see also DA, 2019b, para. 3-10, 4-11, 4-25, 5-9, 5-57, 6-7, 6-14, 6-31, 8-6; Goleman, 2005; Mayer et al., 2008). These areas encompass both healthy internal emotional functioning and healthy external relationship to others (Contreras-Huerta et al., 2020). The impact of EQ is demonstrable across a variety of realms. A lack of development in EQ leads to deficits in fundamental aspects of human functioning. EQ is significant in relation to trauma and stress responses (Austin et al., 2010; O'Connor et al., 2017), positive leadership capabilities (Garcia Zea et al., 2020; Koh & O'Higgins, 2018; Mills, 2009; Valor-Segura et al., 2020), and holistic health more broadly (Anand, 2021; Thomas & Zolkoski, 2020).

Army policy and doctrine support this assessment of the importance of emotional intelligence. Army Doctrine Publication 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession*, states, “The physical demands of leadership during repeated deployments or continuous operations can erode how well one thinks and emotional stability, both of which are essential to the effective decision making required for sound leadership” (DA, 2019c, para. 3-6). But this capability is about more than leadership. Emotional health is important at all levels of Army organizations: “Teamwork increases when teams operate in a positive, engaging, and emotionally safe environment” (DA, 2015a, para. 1-22).



If these key areas of functioning remain underdeveloped, potentially devastating consequences may follow for individuals and formations. Emotional regulation is especially important for soldiers because their duties inherently involve stressful situations away from the normal support structures that most individuals rely on (such as family, stability of place, and long-term friendships). The “closed” system of the Army organizational structure also means that the effects of poorly formed EQ in a leader can have far-reaching impacts (DA, 2019c, para. 5-47, 8-45). EQ competency, even in a very individualized area such as self-management, can impact relationships, readiness, and morale throughout an organization. Even so, individual change is possible; EQ can be trained and developed in individuals, as many studies suggest (Barron & Rose, 2021; Kotsou et al., 2019; Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019).

Affective Domain Development

Despite widespread evidence for the significance of affective elements of human development, this emphasis is not yet fully reflected in Army learning efforts or the organizational structures that support them. Recent changes in Army doctrine, such as revisions to Field Manual 7-22, *Holistic Health and Fitness* (DA, 2021),⁵ as well as chief of staff of the Army campaigns such as the “People First” campaign, and other Army-wide efforts (Azimuth Check,⁶ MRT), indicate a serious concern for the importance of emotional and relational health for soldier well-being and Army readiness. Army efforts have an organizational component as well. The Army seeks to develop soldiers, including in the affective domain, across the lifecycle and through institutional, operational, and self-development learning (DA, 2017, para. 1-2). A deficit in affective domain formation is most evident in Army learning systems and doctrine. TRADOC doctrine, policy, and procedures currently do not adequately account for the importance of affective domain formation in soldiers. The actual processes and products of Army learning systems are not fully aligned with the stated goals of the U.S. Army in relation to holistic health because they often exclude affective domain development. The practice of undervaluing learning in the affective domain is worrisome because the affective domain is fundamental to human well-being at both individual and communal levels (Asma & Gabriel, 2019; Ong et al., 2011; Pressman & Cohen, 2005).

The Department of Defense directs that all military departments develop training and education outcomes in three domains of learning: psychomotor, cognitive, and affective (U.S. Department of Defense [DOD], 2022, para. 6-3). TRADOC doctrine also recognizes these same three learning domains (DA, 2017, para. 3-2b[2]). This recognition is consistent with widely accepted educational learning models and theories. Standard learning taxonomies identify levels of learning within distinct domains. Bloom’s (1956) learning taxonomy is a well-known description of levels of



learning in the cognitive domain, which is foundational to TRADOC's Army learning model (ALM) (DA, 2017, para. 3-5; see also the revision of Bloom's original cognitive taxonomy, Anderson et al., 2001). TRADOC doctrine is not as focused on the affective domain. It describes affective learning as largely occurring through experience, rather than explicitly through training or education (DA, 2017, para. 3-2b[3]).

The affective domain is nevertheless interesting to Army learning communities. TRADOC policy suggests using Krathwohl's affective taxonomy,⁷ in which "levels are situated within the emotions and feelings related to the acceptance or rejection of the educational content" (DA, 2018a, para. 5-5b). The Army's approach to the affective domain differs markedly from its approach to other domains. The Army is largely interested in the affective domain to motivate and facilitate learning in the other two domains, rather than as a learning domain itself.⁸ Emotion primarily has to do with student motivation, leading to better internalization of content in Army learning. Affective growth is rarely a stated objective of Army learning. TRADOC Pamphlet 350-70-7, *Army Education Processes*, suggests that developers should design instructional materials to "[d]evelop the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Determine the cognitive domain level of your lesson. Consider ways to introduce affective domain behaviors into you lesson" (DA, 2018a, para. 5-2b[2]). The cognitive domain drives learning here; the affective domain is a nice add on.⁹

Army definitions of the affective domain reinforce its use to support learning in other domains, but these definitions include other possible uses. TRADOC Regulation 350-70, *Army Learning Policy and Systems*, defines the affective domain as "[t]he domain that examines a student's ability to internalize what is learned in the form of feelings and attitude" (DA, 2017, p. 127). The affective domain "concentrates on emotions, beliefs, attitudes, values, and feelings" (DA, 2018a, para. 5-5a[2]). Affect is especially important in relation to attitudes that promote soldier learning and performance because attitude is one of three key elements that facilitate learning through targeted design and development work (DA, 2017, para. 3-19b[3]; see Green & Batool, 2017, for evidence of this conclusion). The ALM enshrines this use of the affective domain in TRADOC policy—the concrete experience within the ALM is the most visible example of this treatment. The concrete experience "appeals to the student's affective domain behavior of 'valuing' or a higher domain while providing a common 'experience' to which those students can connect the new lesson content" (DA, 2018a, p. 39). The affective domain becomes an enabling force rather than a discrete area of learning and growth.



Deficits in the Use of the Affective Domain in Army Learning

Programs of learning that do not fully leverage affective domain growth lose sight of fundamental aspects of soldier emotional health, expressed in concepts like EQ

and emotion regulation. Methodological realities constrain what the Army chooses to train. Critical training requirements in the Army focus on the performance of tasks that support the Army mission (DA, 2017, para. 3-14). Work in the Army is largely task-driven, with Army-identified tasks, or series of tasks, taking center stage: reading a map, cleaning a weapon system, or flying a helicopter, for instance. These tasks are discrete, observable, measurable, and achievable—all characteristics that TRADOC identifies as fundamental to the ability to train in support of the Army mission (DA, 2017, para. 3-14b[1]). For these reasons, Army learning centers on cognitive and psychomotor domains of learning—a soldier or group of soldiers knowing how to perform a task, and then performing it.

Observing and measuring learning is vital to Army training. If a soldier cannot read a map or clean a weapon, or if a pilot cannot fly a helicopter, these individuals are mission incapable. Army trainers, and ultimately commanders, must be able to validate that a soldier can adequately accomplish assigned tasks. These tasks are foundational to Army learning; each career field has an ICTL (individual critical task list) and a CCTL (collective critical task list) that define minimum basic functioning. These tasks and lists are drawn solely from the cognitive and psychomotor domains.

Terminal learning objectives (TLOs) are central to training and education. These specific learning objectives define learning goals for Army learning products through identifying task, condition, and standard (DA, 2017, para. 3-14b[2]). Yet the Army needs soldiers to do things that cannot be fully or solely captured through tasks. Army education centers on the development of professional competencies (DA, 2017, para. 3-2b[2]). Professional certifications, standards, and ethical principles define benchmarks of professional competence in the same way that critical task lists provide standards for tasks. Education tends to be more compatible with affective domain development than training, but the Army made a conscious decision to emphasize training over education for specific historical reasons (TRADOC Military History Office, 2003, Chapter V). The effects of this decision are still realized. The Army's focus on training addresses critical tasks in the psychomotor and cognitive domains that are necessary for mission accomplishment. Yet soldiers can become mission incapable for reasons outside of an inability to meet training standards in the cognitive and psychomotor domains.

The Army should therefore consider how an increased focus on affective domain development in soldiers might increase readiness. Deficits in soldier affective functioning in recent history (Suits, 2020) suggest that the Army could strengthen its training and education in the affective domain. Anecdotally, the author is aware that planned training relating to emotion has been scrapped because instructors felt uncomfortable or unqualified to teach with the material. This reluctance extends beyond instructors. Soldiers, it seems, are often reticent to engage with training related to the affective domain. This reality can push aside soldiers' human experience while at the same time fails to provide soldiers with tools to properly address affective



components of their experiences. Soldiers who do not have adequately developed EQ can act out in negative ways (Keeling et al., 2020): they may have trouble creating meaningful relationships (Contreras-Huerta et al., 2020) or they may become toxic leaders (Mills, 2009; Steele, 2011). Whether acknowledged or not, affective functioning affects almost every part of the Army's ability to accomplish its mission. To address these deficits, Army learning efforts must identify deficiencies to prevent and mitigate against them.

Ambivalence Around Soft Skills and Affective Assessments

Clear difficulties exist around these efforts, however, and affective domain learning is not currently emphasized in many TRADOC environments for some good reasons. Emotion cannot be directly assessed (DA, 2021, para. 9-2)¹⁰ and therefore, by definition, cannot be a learning objective in Army learning as policy currently allows (DA, 2018a, para. 5-5c). This requirement constrains training and educating about affect, emotion, and EQ in TRADOC learning contexts. Army TRADOC systems and processes constrain Army learning organizations from developing and training learning products that focus on the affective domain. Army schools and centers of excellence cannot create lesson plans or programs of instruction that center learning in the affective domain. TRADOC Regulation 350-70 has clear stipulations around learning objectives. For example, learning objectives must “[c]orrelate to an observable action so as to create measurable tasks (for example, ‘perform’ is an observable action verb, but ‘appreciate’ is not observable or measurable)” (DA, 2017, para. 3-14c[1][a]). This guideline, as well as the example that accompanies it, stipulates that affective domain learning is off-limits in TRADOC learning settings—to “appreciate” is, in fact, to say something about the affective state of the individual in question.¹¹ The absence of sustained training and education in the affective domain is pervasive in Army learning such that TRADOC's list of standard verbs for task titles (comprised of 195 total verbs and which defines what verbs are approved for use in TLO statements for lesson plans, see DA, 2019a) does not have a column for the affective domain. TRADOC's Combined Arms Center maintains an affective domain verb list, but this unofficial list primarily supports cognitive and psychomotor domain learning, rather than supporting affective domain learning as an end in itself (Zoch, 2020).¹² These realities mean that TRADOC policy does not allow for a single task or lesson plan (LP), of some 68,000 approved lesson plans housed in Training Development Capability and taught in 200 courses across dozens of schools, to center primarily in the affective domain.¹³ This seems like a large omission, given that this is one of three learning domains identified by DOD and the Army. It is also concerning because researchers increasingly recognize this domain as vital to human functioning (Ong et al., 2011).

The affective domain presents distinct difficulties in relation to assessment within Army learning systems. Assessment of whether a soldier has met affective learning standards is difficult for instructors to determine reliably and quickly. Self-reporting is the quickest and most readily used means of assessing affective domain competence, but it is also among the most unreliable. Emotional openness, on the part of an individual, and empathy toward others are significant affective goals with positive outcomes supported by research (Ratka, 2018; Wharne, 2020), but each is hard to validate externally. There are few, if any, external correlates to set reliably as learning goals or to use as standards against which to assess student learning. The difficulty of assessing affective domain growth makes affective domain learning challenging to conduct. The validity and necessity of affective domain learning, however, means that this cannot be the end of discussion. Growth (or lack thereof) in the affective domain has very real implications for individual soldiers and for the Army. Senior Army leaders have recently been receptive to strengthening affective domain learning, but more needs to be done through changes in policy and culture.

An additional difficulty with affective domain growth is that it is usually more easily seen in relation to its absence. External circumstances will often reveal a dearth of emotional regulation. Growth in the same arena, however, may only be recognized over time through observation in multiple contexts. This longitudinal individualized approach to assessment goes against TRADOC's historic desire for readily available cross-sectional information on a broad swath of trainees. The scope and methodology of assessment is quite different for each domain. Affective domain learning often occurs through indirect means rather than through the direct methods that are familiar to instructors more comfortable in the cognitive and psychomotor domains. This also speaks to the larger timescales required for affective domain growth, and for the measurement of this growth or regression. Affective domain learning, such as changes in beliefs or attitudes, generally takes much longer to occur than discrete knowledge accumulation or task competence. Affective domain learning, especially at advanced levels, may be best suited for operational or self-development learning contexts. TRADOC may most effectively influence learning in these contexts through the development of training support packages and other training products to facilitate this growth.

Growing in the Affective Domain

At stake here is a move to focus on subject matter in the affective domain itself, such as emotion regulation. This shift goes beyond merely identifying educational means of helping soldiers move up Krathwohl's affective taxonomy for the sake of increased student motivation or information retention. Concrete strategies (e.g., modeling, conditioning) exist for increasing affective domain functioning with effects in competencies



such as emotion regulation (Holt & Hannon, 2006; Neumann & Forsyth, 2008; Pagatpatan et al., 2020); the problem is that the Army is not systematically and comprehensively applying them to the specific subject matter of affective domain learning itself.

Affective domain learning is important even if it is difficult to quantify, measure, or observe (Hu et al., 2020; Witt, 2015). Affective competency matters both because soldiers function in the Army in their own rights as human beings and because soldiers interact with one another (Contreras-Huerta et al., 2020). It matters whether a leader can regulate emotion (DA, 2019b, para. 8-47–8-50). It matters whether soldiers feel a sense of loyalty to their country and to their teammates (DA, 2015a, Table 6-1). It matters whether a soldier can communicate empathetically with others (DA, 2015a, Table 6-1). None of these vital competencies can be specifically developed or measured within the affective domain inside many current TRADOC contexts. This reality does not diminish their centrality to soldier and unit well-being. Competencies in the affective domain are especially important for those whose roles in the Army depend on affective skills, such as leaders (DA, 2019b, para. 1-74; Friedman, 2017), behavioral health providers (Nelson et al., 2020), and chaplains (DA, 2015b, para. 3-3).

Existing Army learning efforts to address affective domain deficits in soldiers do not directly focus on affective domain growth or specifically employ affective domain learning strategies.¹⁴ Current attempts focus almost exclusively on cognitive learning at the expense of affective subject matter—for example, conveying information about topics related to emotion or changing thinking patterns that may affect emotion but nonetheless still targeting cognitive domain function and using cognitive domain tools. These efforts often can have tangible effects in the affective domain, as evidence regarding cognitive-behavioral therapy shows (Hofmann et al., 2012), but they are still not directly supporting affective learning (Olatunji, 2014).

Teaching to think about feeling is different than feeling. Growth in the cognitive domain, even growth in knowledge about emotion, is fundamentally different than affective domain growth itself and requires a different approach to learning. Lesson plans about EQ exist, for instance, but by the standards TRADOC itself sets, the goal of these lessons can never directly target increasing affective functioning. The lesson plan's TLO can only rise to the level of cognitively learning about EQ, not actually focusing on affective competence or personal emotional integration. Achieving affective growth is often much more difficult and prolonged than growing in psychomotor or cognitive prowess.

Emotional connection, relationships, and meaning making are all important to human wellness—and these capabilities must be developed, shaped, and formed. The Army cannot assume that soldiers have these capabilities. The Army should help soldiers learn to regulate emotion and develop healthy emotional connections. Positive steps toward portions of this goal are already underway. Existing Army efforts reliably measure holistic soldier fitness, including in the affective domain, through



efforts such as ArmyFit/Azimuth Check.¹⁵ The Army is measuring the effects of a deficit in affective domain functioning, but it is not systematically training or educating toward developing these competencies.

The ramifications of the Army's lack of education in the affective domain are increasingly clear. Soldiers' emotional health, overall, is poor, with negative consequences such as engaging in harmful behaviors and suicide (Keeling et al., 2020; Liberman, 2018; Sparrow et al., 2017). The Army is often not teaching soldiers the affective domain skills they need to be successful as human beings, even less as representatives of the federal government entrusted with power to take life and limb. These, it seems, are not competencies that soldiers have received elsewhere in their formation or during their time as civilians, and these affective domain deficits are having a negative effect on the Army (Suits, 2020). Soldier health and readiness may decline if the Army does not address this deficit in affective domain development (Ong & Thompson, 2019). Such changes require organization-level solutions, with associated alterations to structures, systems, and culture.

A Way Ahead

Changes to Army learning begun in 1973 brought about many beneficial effects but also highlighted areas of concern. The move during this era to focus on discrete and measurable tasks has borne much fruit, even as it has limited the scope of what the Army can train or educate. It is true that very real difficulties exist relating to measurement in the affective domain. Affective domain measurement tends to require more individualized, longitudinal, and qualitative measures than the instruments that the Army has grown accustomed to use for quantifying psychomotor and cognitive domain growth. If the ability to quantify the effectiveness of Army learning efforts is one of the main hindrances to substantive inclusion of this domain, then this would seem to be a relatively low bar to meet. The cost and time associated with affective domain measures is worth the investment in the holistic health and wellness of soldiers. To meet this requirement, the Army could focus on the development of a specific theoretical assessment for the affective domain that draws upon current research to meet the needs of the Army as a learning organization.

Changing Army learning culture also requires further education about the importance and appropriate use of the affective domain, first for training developers and instructional support specialists, second for Army leaders such as school commandants, and third for the force at large. This effort would set the stage for developers to use the affective domain in all relevant learning products, supported by appropriate revision to Army learning policies and procedures.

The U.S. Army Chaplain Corps is developing one model for its internal professional development training and education that aims to close the gap in affective domain learn-



ing (U.S. Army Institute for Religious Leadership, 2022). The Chaplain Corps is ideally suited to pilot efforts to help bridge this gap. Because the affective domain “concentrates on emotions, beliefs, attitudes, values, and feelings” (DA, 2018a, para. 5-5a[2]), this would seem to fall in the realm of Chaplain Corps competencies to “Nurture the Living, Care for the Wounded, and Honor the Fallen” (DA, 2015b, para. 2-3c). The Chaplain Corps can play a vital role in the affective domain development and growth of Army personnel, as well as in their spiritual health (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2013, para. A-3-E; Cook & White, 2018; DA, 2015b, para. 2-3b[2], 9-9, 16-6).


Yet, chaplains themselves do not always possess adequate EQ competencies. In 2020, Chaplain Corps leadership sought to address a gap in professional competency functioning through establishment of professional, including affective domain, benchmarks. The chief of chaplains, Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) Thomas Solhjem, approved a slate of proponent learning objectives called chaplain professional objectives that identify areas of professional function across three domains of function and across the life cycle (U.S. Army Institute for Religious Leadership, 2022). These competencies drive standards of education for chaplains. They complement, rather than replace, critical task lists and are not primarily about training. Capturing these professional objectives in Army learning systems is tricky because the systems focus primarily on tasks. These professional objectives are integrated across training, education, and personnel systems in the Chaplain Corps. They have been put into TRADOC’s training development capability as skills and knowledges rather than attempting to capture them in TLOs. In other words, these can be identified as supporting goals of a lesson plan but are constrained from being the primary goal. Curriculum developers across the Army could work in a similar manner with their proponents to identify relevant affective domain learning areas to integrate into learning products as skills and knowledges. This begins highlighting the importance of the affective domain across the Army learning enterprise by using existing Army systems. Developers and instructors should make use of the affective domain beyond simply aiding learning in other domains; affective domain content deserves to be addressed in its own right.

Army training systems work well for what they were designed to do—teach discrete and measurable repeatable tasks. The question is whether this is enough. The Army should assess its learning systems considering the outcomes-based education guidance given by the Department of Defense (DOD, 2022). It should also evaluate whether these systems still adequately meet the needs of the complex multi-domain operations environment of the future (DA, 2018b), within a mission command framework (DA, 2019c), and in relation to the holistic approach to soldier well-being toward which the Army is moving (DA, 2021). Past revisions of approaches to Army learning show that such change is possible, but it is yet to be fully realized in relation to affective domain development.

This article seeks to be part of the process of continual analysis of the Army’s learning needs that is essential for the success of the Army. This includes assessment



of where doctrine and focus need to be adjusted to meet potential shortfalls. Gen. Paul Gorman, TRADOC's second deputy chief of staff for training, expressed this same sentiment in 1994:

I truly believe that now, as DePuy [TRADOC's first commander] stressed often to me then, the ultimate service TRADOC can perform for the Army is analysis, for without sound concept, no undertaking was likely to prosper—especially one as daunting as providing the doctrine, force structure, weapon systems, and training technology for the future U.S. Army in a world of uncertain dynamism. (Gorman, 1994, p. vii) 

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Notes

1. Understanding the “will to fight” as having a large affective dimension is insightful in considering soldier motivation; it is also interesting to consider in light of changes in approaches to affective domain learning during Vietnam, an all-draft Army, and withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam, in part, due to a lack of continued “will to fight” (see Connable et al., 2019).
2. Early Army leaders, such as George Washington, also made significant use of emotional intelligence in their leadership (Koyan, 2022).
3. While Marshall’s interchangeable use of “heart,” “morale,” “soul,” and “spirit” may lack definitional clarity, his use does place these concepts solidly in the affective domain.
4. Concerns were also present in the World War II-era Army about the ability to measure affective domain competence: “Even when we confine our attention to Army morale viewed as cooperative effort toward a goal set by the Army command, we find such behavior exceedingly difficult to observe and measure. Particularly crucial is the absence of suitable objective criteria” (Stouffer et al., 1949, p. 84).
5. The latest revision includes extensive sections on mental readiness (chapter 9—including a section on emotional capability), and on spiritual readiness (chapter 10).
6. Azimuth Check specifically assesses soldier health in five pillars of fitness: emotional, social, spiritual, family, and physical (see U.S. Department of the Army [DA], n.d.).
7. Significantly, Bloom also was instrumental in developing Krathwohl et al.’s (1964) affective domain taxonomy, but this taxonomy is often less well known and used. The Army also makes use of a psychomotor taxonomy (Dave, 1970).



8. Note, for instance, these further comments: “Why should the lesson author care about the affective domain? Simply put, an examination of the affective domain may be more important to the lesson author than a similar treatment of the cognitive domain. This is because the affective domain offers the means for the student to internalize the new material. Internalization refers to the process whereby a person’s affect toward an object passes from a general awareness level to a point where the individual internalizes the affect which then consistently guides or controls the person’s behavior” (DA, 2018a, para. 5-5e). This is very much in line with suggestions by some learning theorists, such as Posey (2018).

9. So, too, in the glossary entry in TRADOC Pamphlet 350-70-7: “The affective domain deals with the emotional or feeling aspect of learning and offers the means for the student to internalize the new material that the teacher is presenting” (DA, 2018a, p. 37).

10. Some researchers have developed tools for measuring affective domain development, which hold promise for wider application. For example, see Camelia et al. (2018) and Stephens and Ormandy (2019).

11. This raises the question of how the Army can inculcate affective constructs like the Army Values (DA, 2015a, para. 1-2, 5-2, 5-5, 7-24 and Tables 6-1, 7-14, and 7-16) in soldiers given the identified constraints around training and educating in the affective domain.

12. It should be noted that there is some overlap between these lists, with some verbs (such as “receive”) having meanings across multiple domains, to include the affective.

13. This does not discount that affective domain verbs may be used in enabling learning objectives, but as the name clearly indicates, this use of the affective domain is only subservient to a measurable cognitive or psychomotor domain task. It is possible that lesson plans exist in the Army, and even in TRADOC, that focus on affective domain development, but their existence would be outside the guidance of TRADOC doctrine.

14. MRT is built around the positive psychology work of Martin Seligman. Its efficacy has been questioned in peer-reviewed work by other scholars (cf. Wong & Roy, 2018). The positive psychology that MRT is built on has certain weaknesses, such as needing integration of emotional processing. MRT, while having emotional content as its focus, addresses this material from largely a cognitive processing viewpoint. Even the efficacy of these programs is evaluated in terms of cognitive outcomes (cf. Gutierrez et al., 2021). Research suggests, however, that affective competencies are most closely associated with resilience following trauma (cf. Cook & White, 2018; Wingo et al., 2010).

15. The author served on the advisory board that redeveloped ArmyFit/Azimuth Check assessments for the emotional and spiritual dimensions.

