

Cultivating a Coaching Culture

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Maj. Don Kim (*right*), operations officer, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, listens to advice from Col. Scott Knight while participating in a combined arms rehearsal during the brigade's leadership training program 23 July 2019 at Fort Polk, Louisiana. During the combined arms rehearsal, lead planners talked through their unit or staff section's involvement during each phase of an operation in relation to the rest of the units. (Photo by Maj. Richard Barker, U.S. Army)

The 2018 *Center for the Army Profession and Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership* (CASAL) captured that “performance counseling is inconsistently applied by Army leaders and tends to be perceived as having little to no impact on leaders’ development.”¹ This observation demonstrates the common Army misconception that “counseling” is synonymous with “leader development.” The study also recommends that mentors fill the gap between counseling and leader development effectiveness and that fostering informal mentoring relationships can help mitigate the lack of counseling.² The study neglects the fundamental differences between counseling and mentoring and does not consider coaching as a solution. The key difference between coaching and counseling is that coaching focuses on the art of leadership and promotes behavioral changes to improve performance. In contrast, counseling evaluates performance “compared to established criteria.”³ Coaching is a critical aspect of developing leaders and should be the primary focus of leader development in the Army.

Army Field Manual (FM) 6-22, *Leader Development*, highlights that counseling, coaching, and mentoring are the “principal ways by which leaders provide others with knowledge and feedback.”⁴ It defines counseling as “occur[ing] when leaders review with the subordinate their

demonstrated performance and potential” and coaching as “when you guide another’s development in new or existing skills during the practice of those skills.”⁵ Put a different way, counseling becomes an evaluation of how the leader did and coaching explores what and/or how a leader needs to change to be a better leader or the leader they want to be. This difference is what makes coaching a vital and necessary component of leader development and what the Army requires to truly develop the leaders it is looking for.

Unfortunately, leaders do not commonly recognize coaching as a developmental approach. Most people usually envision sports coaching, where a leader trains a group of athletes toward the goal of winning through skills and teamwork development. Coaching for leader development, however, focuses on self-awareness, reflection, discussion, and guided execution where the goal is to become a more effective leader through behavioral change by addressing improvement in the art of leadership.

The Army cannot benefit from coaching until it incorporates broad education and training about how to coach, clarifies doctrine about the different developmental methods, and increases exposure to what coaching looks like and what it can achieve. By redefining coaching and developing a coaching culture, the Army can maximize its leader development approach and significantly increase leader commitment, competence, and character.

Gaps in Army Leader Development

The Center for Creative Leadership’s (CCL) *Handbook of Leadership Development* defines leader development as “the expansion of a person’s capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes.”⁶ Based on this definition, current leader development practices in the Army focus on improving leader capacity but primarily address the science of leadership, having little impact on leader growth in the art of leadership. Presently, Army leader development takes many different forms depending on the leader or the organization, but these are limited by what aspects of leadership they address, how the methods are implemented, and who is implementing them.

Army developmental programs focus on building knowledge, whether it is studying tactics and doctrine or using literature and case studies to study successful

and unsuccessful leadership. These programs simply address technical expertise and the science, rather than the art, of leadership. While education and studies are also essential, what is missing is the bridge that connects the learning to individual development through internal reflection or behavioral change. Practicing the art of leadership requires more than just expert knowledge; it requires knowledge of oneself. Studying the actions of a historical leader offers a glimpse into effective leadership, but it does not teach how to implement it. No amount of studying Gen. Matthew Ridgway’s actions to reinvigorate the Eighth Army in the Korean War will allow a leader to implement the same techniques in the same way to achieve the same or similar results. Every leader has strengths, weaknesses, tendencies, insecurities, experiences, and histories, all of which contribute to one’s leadership ability to achieve authenticity as a leader. Without increasing self-awareness and exploring the perceptions these traits cause, whether one’s actions align with intent, or how underlying motivations inform decision-making, an individual will never be able to achieve the behavioral change necessary to truly become a better leader.

Another common pitfall is in the implementation of leader development methods. Leaders must drive the experiential learning process by creating the right opportunities to develop each subordinate. A subordinate leader’s lack of confidence can stem from a lack of knowledge, lack of experience, or an unhealthy level of self-doubt, each of which may require different approaches by the leader. Leaders must give subordinates tailored opportunities to develop specific skills or as a way for the individual to see themselves. For example, a leader may place a subordinate leader outside their comfort zone to increase confidence. Without

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proper coaching before, during, and after the experience, the intended result will not be achieved. Instead, the subordinate may think that they were punished by the experience, set up for failure, or tested in a negative way.

Oftentimes, leaders take for granted that subordinates can connect a given opportunity with an individual developmental need. The assumption that the lessons are obvious and that subordinates can draw these conclusions on their own relies on a level of self-awareness that is sufficient to facilitate growth. While the leader was intentional in creating the opportunity, what is less intentional is the follow-up to help make sense of it all. Increasing self-awareness and exploring influences and motivations to drive behavioral change requires more than just the standard after action review or an event-oriented counseling session. These do not explore why the subordinate leader made certain decisions; it only reviews what happened and how decisions should be different in the future—examining the why more thoroughly helps leaders explore what influences their leadership ability or style and their decision-making, and whether their actions align with how they envision themselves as a leader. Coaching addresses the why and achieves a level of exploration that enables subordinate leaders to discover positive and negative leader behaviors and initiate behavioral change.

Unfortunately, Army professional military education (PME) does not focus on what coaching is and why it is different, which brings up the last shortfall in leader development in the Army: a lack of information and education on the Army's leader development approach and on the role of coaching and how it enhances leader development. Coaching is not discussed or taught as a developmental method, while counseling is overemphasized as a critical and required interaction between a supervisor and a subordinate. This can partially be attributed to the fact that doctrine does not clearly define the differences between counseling, coaching, and mentoring methods. Although used throughout the manual, the terms are not specifically defined or delineated until the last chapter of FM 6-22 when discussing leader competencies. Even in earlier chapters that reference leader development programs and the fundamentals of development, the terms counseling, coaching, and mentoring appear quite a few times and do not have

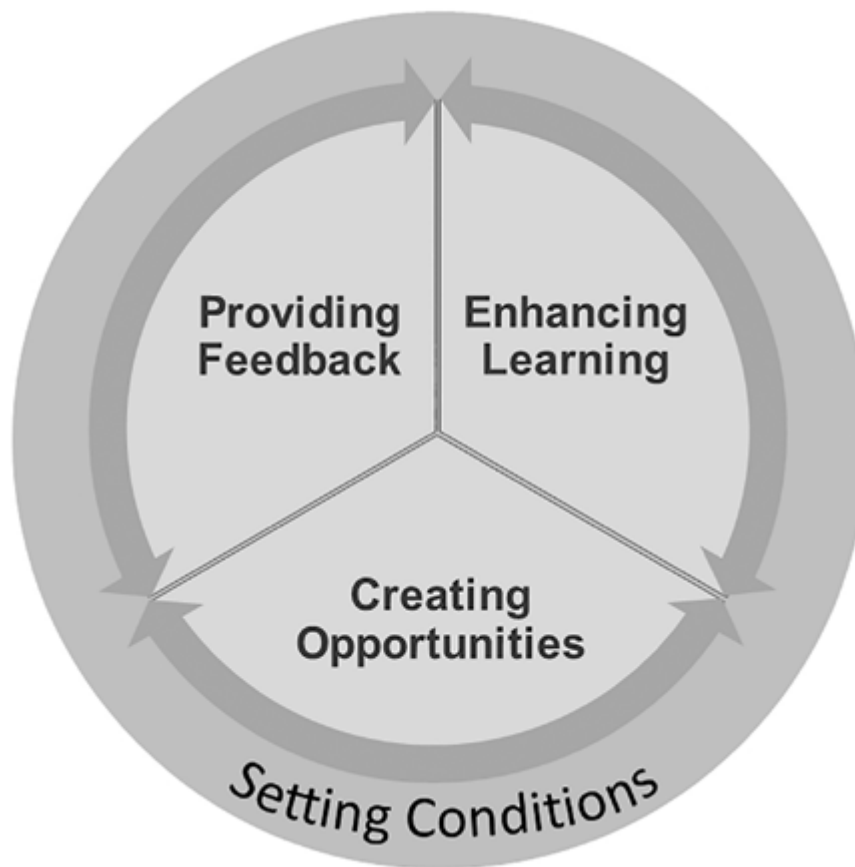
a clear definition. Clarifying these methods and their roles would allow leaders to understand and implement the best approach for development based on the situation.

Nevertheless, leaders do not always refer to doctrine when they establish leader development programs. The 2018 CASAL report found that “only 58% of leaders are rated effective or very effective in developing subordinates.”⁷ Many leaders use leader development methods that they have learned from their former superiors, others' shared ideas, or former senior leaders who have published books or articles about their approach to leader development. Most have not been formally taught how to effectively develop subordinates through coaching. It is not that leaders do not want to develop their subordinates; they do not have the appropriate training to do so.

Army Doctrine on Coaching

FM 6-22 outlines the Army leader development model that combines “education, training, and experience” as the means to producing leaders capable of leading soldiers, taking initiative, and exercising judgment and decision-making in critical situations.⁸ The Army champions experiential learning by putting leaders in leadership positions and roles, or through broadening opportunities and experiences that will enhance learning and preparation for the next level of responsibility.⁹ These ideas create the Army fundamentals of developing leaders from FM 6-22 (as shown in figure 1, page 25): setting the conditions, creating opportunities, enhancing learning, and providing feedback.¹⁰

The CCL's *Handbook on Leader Development* similarly emphasizes the value of experience; it aptly states that “leader development is a process that requires a variety of developmental experiences and the ability to learn from experience.”¹¹ Its framework of leader development specifies that the three elements of assessment, challenge, and support are required to make these experiences more meaningful.¹² To directly relate the Army fundamentals to the CCL's framework of leader development, setting the conditions and providing feedback represent assessment, creating opportunities generates experience, and enhancing learning provides the support necessary to make meaning of an experience and promote growth. While the Army achieves assessment through counseling and evaluations and



(Figure from Field Manual 6-22, *Leader Development* [2015])

Figure 1. Fundamentals of Developing Leaders

understands how to challenge leaders by creating opportunities, it could do better to promote support through developmental coaching.

To support growth through experiences, the Army's "enhancing learning" section consists of five parts: leader role models, mentorship, guided discovery learning, coaching, and study.¹³ Figure 2 (on page 26) provides excerpts from chapter 3, "Fundamentals of Development," in FM 6-22 that show how the Army views leader development based on its terminology.¹⁴

Of note, although counseling is not listed as part of the enhancing learning section, it is included in figure 2 to highlight the similarities and differences between the various leader-subordinate interactions.¹⁵ Counseling is listed under "setting the conditions," which would be part of assessment, not support. This is also important to note as part of the delineation between the practice of counseling and coaching. The Army currently focuses on

counseling as the primary means of leader development. Acknowledging that counseling merely sets the conditions and serves as a mechanism for assessment and providing feedback highlights the need for coaching as the primary means for support and enhancing learning.

Here are some of the critical discussion points based on the definitions in figure 2 and a holistic view of the doctrine:

1. Terms are used inconsistently throughout the manual causing the definitions to be indistinguishable.
2. The definition of coaching in the Army is an amalgamation of the definition of sports coaching and developmental coaching, which makes its purpose and benefits unclear.
3. Doctrine uses "counseling" as the all-encompassing term used to describe one-on-one development between supervisors and subordinates. It

Type	Activities	Desired Outcomes	Notes
Counseling (Setting Conditions)	Provide clear, timely and accurate information (feedback) concerning individual performance compared to established criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify strengths and developmental needs Design individual development plan (IDP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDP is mostly goal oriented Counseling is heavily used to provide feedback and developmental counseling
Mentoring	A voluntary developmental relationship that exists between a person of greater experience and a person of lesser experience that is characterized by mutual trust and respect (AR 600-100)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists personal and professional development helps clarify personal, professional, and career goals helps develop actions to improve attributes, skills, and competencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually outside the chain of command Does not replace responsibilities of the superior
Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps another individual or team through a set of tasks or with improving personal qualities. A coach gets the person or team to understand their current level of performance and guides their performance to the next level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links feedback interpretation with developmental actions Advise the individual or team on what levels can be reached and what to do to reach them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can draw on the guided discovery learning techniques Leader tailors how directive feedback and guidance are depending on the situation of those being coached and the performance level
Leader Role Models	Provide a role model that exhibits leadership behaviors that others should emulate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A role model to new leaders for their reception and integration. A role model for a particular skill or special expertise. An inexperienced leader to shadow a role model for a specified period. 	<u>Examples:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A role model to new leaders for their reception and integration. A role model for a particular skill or special expertise. An inexperienced leader to shadow a role model for a specified period.
Guided Discovery Learning	the senior leader engages the subordinate in effective two-way communication to deliver observations on actions and behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subordinate discovers learning needs through support from senior leader Leader guides subordinate through hints, direction, feedback, or modeling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader uses open-ended questioning, multiple perspectives, cause and effect analysis, etc. Leader avoids prescriptive method and pure discovery learning
Study	an expectation for each leader to spend personal time seeking sources of knowledge and opportunities to grow and learn	leaders should develop distinct ways of studying their chosen profession and identifying ways to improve the unit	<u>Examples:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional reading Professional writing programs

(Figure by author; adapted from Field Manual 6-22, *Leader Development* [2015])

Figure 2. Excerpts from Field Manual 6-22, Chapter 3

- overemphasizes counseling, at times uses “counseling” when it really means “coaching” and implies that counseling is the most important aspect of development.
- Counseling is an evaluation of performance and potential, offering observations of the strengths and weaknesses of the subordinate by the supervisor. Counseling does not always explore what needs to change and how to make those behavioral changes.
 - Counseling can be negative or positive, but usually has a negative connotation, or an aura of judgment and critique. Due to its “evaluating” nature, it is not conducive to reflection and growth.
 - Feedback is linked to direct observation by the supervisor in relation to a specific event/place in time. Doctrine correctly associates feedback as occurring during counseling; however, it fails to connect how coaching is the method required to make the feedback meaningful.

7. Mentorship usually occurs voluntarily outside the chain of command; it is normally related to career advice or major decision points regarding professional growth. The same person can be a mentor and a coach, particularly in an enduring or closer relationship; however, doctrine should clearly delineate that mentoring is not coaching, and that mentors are not coaches, and vice versa.
8. Doctrine describes guided discovery learning as a technique to use within various leader development methods. Having this as a separate technique that can apply to different methods confuses purpose and desired outcomes for each method. Each method (counseling, coaching, and mentoring) should have sections for how to apply guided discovery learning techniques within those roles to align purpose and desired outcomes based on the intent for each method.
9. Study is a means of learning from others' examples and could be utilized to aid reflection. The sparse definition should also consider the use of study to enhance coaching and mentoring to make these practices more common and effective.

Overall, chapter 3 in FM 6-22 needs more clarity in describing the Army's approach to development. Interestingly, the more suitable definition and delineation of counseling, coaching, and mentoring is found in chapter 7, "Learning and Development Activities," when discussing the requirements for the leader competency of developing others.¹⁶ The interpretation of each of these methods and terms should be uniform throughout the doctrine. Providing clear definitions and delineation between the terms would help focus leaders on the appropriate method to apply in different situations. Developmental coaching also has its own forms and approaches leaders could apply, which could also be explained in doctrine.

Definitions and Types of Coaching

Several definitions have been suggested to describe coaching and its effects. While definitions may differ, they all propose coaching as a means for learning and exploration and, more importantly, a catalyst for change. Furthermore, coaching seeks "to align enhanced self-awareness, behavioral change, and strategic organizational objectives."¹⁷ It is not just about self-improvement but incorporates how individual

development also meets organizational needs. A couple of definitions for coaching are listed below; coaching is

a process of learning and development that leads to new perspectives, attitudes, behaviors, and skills ... A tool to support individual, team, and organizational learning, and as a lever for change.¹⁸

a process that fosters self-awareness and that results in the motivation to change, as well as the guidance needed if change is to take place in ways that meet organizational needs.¹⁹

Coaching exists in a variety of forms and approaches. Part of the power of coaching comes from its versatility. A point of emphasis in coaching is that different types of coaching may be more suitable for different situations or relationships. Some of the types of coaching that would be suitable for the Army are outlined below.

Cognitive coaching is one of the most widely used forms of coaching and is predicated on the assumption that behavioral change requires a change in perception, thought, or beliefs.²⁰ Cognitive coaching consists of three components: (1) a planning conversation; (2) an event, usually observed by the coach; and (3) a reflecting conversation.²¹ It can occur for one specific event or for a longer duration. The purpose of this type of coaching is to set goals together and visualize success (planning conversation), observation and data collection (event), and then review data to discuss whether goals and success were achieved (reflective conversation).²² The goal is to discuss perceptions, beliefs, and thinking to guide self-directed learning, which contributes to a larger goal of working effectively within systems and performing as a more effective organization.²³ This type of coaching is most similar to the Army's definition of coaching. Cognitive coaching best encompasses the meaning-making that occurs in experiential learning. Experiences drive learning, but to foster growth, the planning, end state, and follow-up must be deliberate and communicated between the leader and the subordinate to capitalize on the opportunities.

Appreciative coaching follows four stages revolving around a single topic. The topic is something that the coaching process will investigate or seek to explore, rather than a "goal" that has an idea of success or failure

attached to it.²⁴ The first stage is “discovery,” which is meant to explore positive experiences, strengths, and successes through some core questions.²⁵ The next stage is the “dream” stage and consists of reflecting on the answers to the questions from the discovery stage to describe a desired end state or future. In the third stage, the “design” stage, an experimentation plan helps lay out a way to utilize strengths and skills to achieve the dream. Lastly, the “destiny stage” is the implementation of actions that will lead to the realization of the dream. Appreciative coaching can either end after one cycle, continue with the selection of another topic, or expand the existing dream.²⁶ While mentorship may explore specific goals and paths to get there, appreciative coaching facilitates topics like transformational leadership or active listening, or even questions like whether one wants to be a battalion or brigade level commander. Appreciative coaching creates a more positive and enabling coaching environment which may be more appropriate in some cases.

Executive coaching has been emerging as a specific practice for corporate executives that improves leadership effectiveness through self-awareness. An examination into current behaviors and perspectives through coaching allows higher-level managers to acquire “new skills, perspectives, tools, and knowledge through support, encouragement, and feedback in the organizational context” that the leader may not otherwise be able to discuss or talk about.²⁷ An executive would utilize this type of coaching to transition from a lower to higher level (growth-minded) or to provide the leader an opportunity to work on specific “barriers to performance” (change-minded) to increase organizational impact.²⁸ Executive coaching is not necessarily a different way of coaching but rather takes into account the level of leadership. The burden of leadership increases as leaders ascend the ranks, and often can be difficult to be shouldered alone. Executive coaching gives senior leaders an opportunity to speak frankly or honestly and to get different perspectives on topics that they may not be able to engage others about.

Coactive coaching incorporates much more than just the professional aspect of the client-coach relationship. Coactive coaching embraces a collaborative method of coaching where the client and coach share all aspects of the client’s life, personal or professional, to identify friction between competing demands and help achieve more balance to become more effective both

as a person and as a leader.²⁹ The client leads a coactive coaching relationship and determines what they want the coaching sessions to accomplish. The coach helps identify a way forward and stay on path. Coactive coaching is the most comprehensive coaching approach and most closely related to how Army supervisors get to know their subordinates. While this type of approach may seem somewhat invasive, the nature of the Army profession requires a lot of personal sacrifice from its soldiers and leaders need to be aware of how these sacrifices may weigh on other aspects of a subordinate’s life. Coactive coaching uses this awareness to connect how those life factors influence leadership capacity and capability.

Coaching is much more than a conversation or a relationship. Different types of coaching should be applied with different subordinates to address their individual developmental need at that point in time. Developing a coaching relationship enhances the level of engagements and approaches to developing subordinates. The above coaching methods give a glimpse into different ways coaching can benefit Army leaders and achieve different results from counseling. The individual and organizational impact of coaching highlights the need to increase coaching in the military.

Coaching in the Military

Recent programs in the Army, such as the Battalion Command Assessment Program (BCAP) and the Colonels Command Assessment Program (CCAP), highlight the Army’s efforts in finding the best qualified candidates to lead its soldiers. They also represent the current Army Coaching Program, which was started in 2019 and utilizes external coaches to allow officers in either command assessment program, regardless whether they are deemed ready to command, the opportunity to work with a coach.³⁰ Unfortunately, both of these assessment programs occur much later in an officer’s career, when it is seemingly too late for a significant change to result in a productive impact for the individual’s career or for the Army to benefit.

These programs look beyond an officer’s evaluations and focus on the officer as a leader, including their authenticity as perceived by both subordinates and peers. Many have been impressed with the assessments taken during the program, especially as the results are interpreted and presented by an operational psychologist. One officer

referred to the results as an opportunity to see “how others view you and discover how external perceptions affect your leadership and your unit writ large.”³¹

In another example, a lieutenant colonel offered her reflection on her two attempts at selection during BCAP.³² The first time she went through the program, she was found not ready for command based on—in her estimation—her peer and subordinate evaluations. BCAP offered her a coach, and she took the opportunity to reflect and learn more about herself. The coach helped her identify and explore her personality, tendencies, and past experiences to discover herself and what and how she could change. Her self-awareness allowed her to implement small changes to how she led and interacted with others. A year later, she attended her second round of BCAP and was selected as an alternate to command. Despite her challenges, she stated that she was more confident in herself as a leader and believed in the program.

The above anecdotes of coaching and its success in the Army indirectly reveal the gap in the system. Senior majors in these examples, who have had a multitude of different leaders, evaluations, leader development programs, and counseling sessions in almost fifteen years in the Army, were still surprised by what these assessments revealed about them as leaders. How could, or would, they have benefited from a culture of coaching throughout their careers?

To start, the Center for the Army Profession and Leadership has implemented programs like the Project Athena Self-Development Tool, which allows leaders at all levels to take online assessments that convey how they think or decide, and about the traits and attributes that contribute to their leadership.³³ Students take these assessments at every level of resident PME.³⁴ Based on the assessment results, there are various online resources that provide developmental tools or more information on how to improve. These assessments increase self-awareness and identify areas that need more attention or opportunities to excel, but follow-on improvement is up to the individual. The Athena assessments are primarily for individual development but lay a great foundation for a coaching relationship. While individuals can share these results with their supervisors and mentors to discuss and gain assistance with formulating a plan for change, many leaders will still not know how to conduct effective

coaching to incorporate the feedback in a manner that will result in growth or change.

The Air Force has also recognized the power of coaching and implemented ways to achieve a coaching culture through education. One of the many efforts is a “coaching culture facilitator course” that is designed to “equip leaders with a coaching skillset to enable and enhance the development of Airmen.”³⁵ The director of Force Development for the Air Force, Russell J. Frasz, stated, “The goal for this course is to support the creation of an organizational culture that understands, values and uses formal and informal coaching to amplify the development of Airmen.”³⁶ He also explains the Air Force’s view of coaching: “A mentor talks to you, and a coach talks with you.”³⁷ This course was established in cooperation with an external contract partner, Flatter Inc., to certify leaders as coaches, earning them a coaching certificate and committing graduates to conducting one hundred hours of coaching during a two-year utilization period. The pilot course launched in April 2021 for a selected audience, and depending on its success, the Air Force will widen the audience to other ranks and populations.³⁸

As of February 2022, the Army has partnered with the Air Force to allow an Army cohort in the Air Force coaching course in a step toward developing Army coaches.³⁹ While this is a move in the right direction, the scope and size of the Army would likely require a combination of this type of concentrated approach to create experts and a broader approach that teaches basic coaching skills at different levels of PME to create a coaching culture.

The Army has already seen some of the benefits of coaching and has received positive feedback from those that have been exposed to coaching. Nonetheless, the Army has yet to embrace those results and take actions to broaden the impact of coaching across the Army. Adopting a coaching culture reinforces the Army’s commitment to leader development and would pay dividends in Army talent management and retention.

Benefits of a Coaching Culture

Gen. (Ret.) Gustave Perna wrote that “in organizations of all sizes, three traits have stood out as non-negotiable in leadership: competence, commitment, and character,” and that these traits create the foundation for growth.⁴⁰ A coaching culture emphasizes leader



Capt. Cydnia Jackson, a senior human resource advisor for the 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion, 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade (3-2 GSAB), coaches a newly enlisted soldier 15 September 2015 at the 3-2 GSAB office in Pyeongtaek, South Korea. (Photo by Chung Il Kim, 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade)

development through exploration of a leader as a person—their personality, how they were raised, key life experiences, attributes, etc.—to understand who they are and increase self-awareness while encouraging growth through reflection and behavioral change. Applying coaching as a primary method of development cultivates a coaching culture that can promote Perna's three key traits across all leaders in the Army.

Learning about coaching and how to coach builds leader competence, not just in developing others, but also in a leader's individual skills such as confidence, oral communication, listening, and reflection. The University of Worcester in the United Kingdom offered an introductory course on coaching to undergraduate students and measured the effects of learning about coaching. The study found that not only could students learn how to coach others, but also learning how to apply coaching increased communication skills, developed a commitment to self-development, and helped students understand themselves as individuals.⁴¹ It concludes that early exposure to coaching is beneficial for both practical skills development and lifelong application of coaching.⁴² Similarly, increasing training and education in the Army about how

to coach others can also increase a subordinate's commitment to developing themselves as a leader.

Another study into the effectiveness of executive coaching found that it affected positive change in corporate managers. Coaching specifically increased confidence, which facilitated "the adoption of new collaborative behaviors, openness to feedback, and acceptance of personal limitations."⁴³ Coaching acknowledges strengths and weaknesses equally, capitalizing on both to become a better leader rather than framing weaknesses as deficiencies. This leads to increased self-awareness and collaborative behaviors that increase productivity and organizational effectiveness, ultimately increasing the individual's commitment to the organization.⁴⁴

Those coached also demonstrated a heightened self-awareness that improved individual character.⁴⁵ Coaching relationships between leaders and subordinates promote transparency and genuineness, which fosters character and create a learning organization. The study also found that coaching conversations encouraged career development, indicating an investment into a subordinate's success.⁴⁶ This corresponded to a commitment to the organization, increasing talent retention.

Coaching addresses the art of leadership in ways that other methods do not. These are just two of many studies that demonstrate how coaching can increase competence, commitment, and character for an organization. A coaching culture melds the science and art of leadership together at the individual level, increasing authenticity in leaders and bettering the Army.

Recommendations

The current Army Coaching Program is specifically focused on “formal engagements between the coach and the [coachee] at key career milestones, such as professional military education.”⁴⁷ It does not include an approach to educating the force about coaching and how it can make a difference in leader development. Coaching is a skill that can be learned and applied by leaders; all Army leaders should be educated in a coaching approach to improve leader development. Implementing a

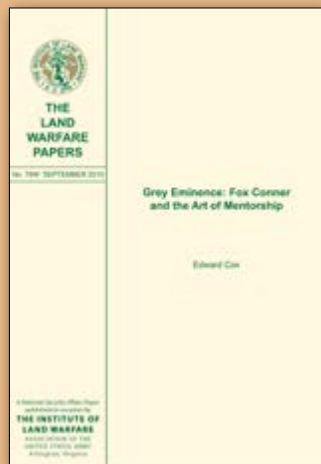
more comprehensive coaching program is necessary to maximize the benefits of coaching. The Army Coaching Program should include an early exposure to coaching, coaching education, and leader as coach training to initiate a culture of coaching within the organization.

Doctrinally, a reexamination of the leader development methods and how each is defined in doctrine and implemented in practice would clarify the roles of each method and how they contribute to leader development. More specifically, the roles of counseling, coaching, and mentoring should be delineated and explained more clearly in FM 6-22. A coaching pamphlet that outlines techniques and the different types of coaching would assist leaders in determining the best approach for different subordinates and giving them a starting point for initiating a coaching relationship.

When it comes to training coaches, education and exposure go hand in hand to promote coaching

Military Review

WE RECOMMEND



The AUSA Land Warfare paper *Grey Eminence: Fox Conner and the Art of Mentorship* fills out details on the personal influence the early twentieth century had on shaping the education and experiences of future key leaders of the Army, most notably then junior officers Dwight D. Eisenhower, George S. Patton Jr., and George C. Marshall. The mentoring approach used by Conner, including a demand for extensive reading on military subjects as well as detailed exercises in orders production, provide insight into the development of mentoring methodology that may be applicable to the challenges associated with mentoring officers and other soldiers in the current day. To view this paper, visit <https://www.ausa.org/sites/default/files/LWP-78-Grey-Eminence-Fox-Conner-and-the-Art-of-Mentorship.pdf>.

(Painting courtesy of the Collection of the Museum Division, Mississippi Department of Archives and History)

in leader development. Learning the basics of coaching would be a significant step in the right direction; however, the best way to learn about coaching is to experience coaching oneself to fully understand its value and purpose. An effective coaching education program would include an early and universal opportunity to experience coaching, leader as coach training, and continuing coaching education to develop a culture of coaching within the organization.

PME should include instruction on what coaching is and introduce how to coach to all officers for broader application. For example, for officers, exposure to coaching would occur during the Basic Officer Leader Course where every lieutenant is able to meet with a trained coach to discuss some or all their Athena Assessment results and increase their own self-awareness as new leaders in the Army. Not only would this introduce coaching, but it could also initiate a desire for self-improvement. Training as coaches would begin during the Captains Career Courses, where students learn the elements of how to coach and practice coaching with each other, enabling reflection of their experiences since Basic Officer Leader Course and discuss how their assessment results may or may not have changed. During the Command and General Staff Officers' Course, students could learn about transitioning how to be a coach as an organizational leader and understanding how to be a coach, particularly when they are not a supervisor. During the Battalion and Brigade Pre-Command Course and at the War College, students would be challenged to not only coach their subordinates but also how to develop leaders as coaches. Training outside of PME should also supplement education through refresher training that involves both instruction and practical exercises.

The Army also recently developed a professional development skill identifier, A3B, which is an Army coach, as part of the Army Coaching Program.⁴⁸ Not only will it take time to build a larger population of certified Army coaches, but the program will also not generate enough coaches to create a coaching culture across the Army. Accessibility to coaching should not be limited by the number of certified coaches. An all-encompassing approach to increase knowledge and application of coaching by Army leaders is necessary to change the Army's approach to leader development and promote a coaching culture.

Conclusion

The Army continues to train the next generation of leaders from within its own formations, which highlights the need to develop a level of commitment, competence, and character that will sustain leaders through each level.⁴⁹ Leader development is a continuous process that requires investment, particularly for organizations like the Army, where it grows its own leaders. Increasing the current role of coaching, introducing coaching as a developmental practice, and developing a coaching culture should be the desired end state for Army leader development.

Coaching already exists in the Army leader development approach, but a lack of education, training, and exposure prevents leaders from promoting growth in their subordinates in an effective manner. The CASAL results clearly indicate that there is a gap in what Army doctrine says about leader development and how leaders are executing it in their formations.⁵⁰ Developing a coaching culture in the Army is a critical component of advancing leader development and adopting a coaching culture should be the next step in enhancing the Army People Strategy. ■

Notes

1. Center for the Army Profession and Leadership (CAPL), *2018 CAPL Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Military and Civilian Leader Findings*, Technical Report 2019-1 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: CAPL, May 2019), ix.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Field Manual (FM) 6-22, *Leader Development* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2015), 3-6.

4. *Ibid.*, 7-47.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Ellen Van Velsor, Cynthia D. MacCauley, and Marian N. Ruderman, *Center for Creative Leadership: Handbook of Leader Development*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 2.

7. CAPL, *2018 CASAL*, ix.

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