Then Secretary of the Army Dr. Mark T. Esper, and Deputy Chief of Staff, Army G-1 Lt. Gen. Thomas C. Seamands meet with the senior leadership of the U.S. Army Human Resources Command, Fort Knox, Ky. to discuss talent management, April 6, 2018. The Army is moving from a plug and play type system to one where Soldiers and Department of the Army civilians are deliberately managed and reassigned based upon their special skill sets. (U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Brian Hamilton)

Tools and Measures for NCO Talent Assessment

By Command Sgt. Maj. Jason P. Dein, Victor Ingurgio, Ph.D., Krista L. Ratwani, Ph.D., Frederick Diedrich, Ph.D., and Scott Flanagan

U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences

The concept of talent management is prevalent throughout the Army – from the publication of the *Army Talent Management Strategy* in 2016, to yearly releases and updates of the Army's personnel management system (Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army). There is no shortage of efforts ensuring the

> *To ensure that the Army has the necessary skills, knowledge, and behaviors to win in a complex world, we must shift from simply distributing personnel to more deliberately managing the talents that our Soldier and Civilians possess. This means creating the policies, programs, and processes that recognize and capitalize on the unique talents possessed by every member of the Army team and employing each member to maximum effect* (Department of the Army, 2016, p. 1).

Army has Soldiers, especially noncommissioned officers (NCOs), with the proficiencies needed to succeed under a myriad of dynamic situations.

Assessment

One of the keys to the Army's *Talent Management Strategy* is continuous assessment. Within the Workforce Management Framework outlined in the *Talent Management Strategy* (Department of the Army, 2016), assessments are a critical linchpin between the desired end state of Soldiers who are ready to win in a complex world and core talent management functions: Acquire, develop, employ, and retain talent ("Talent Management," 2018).

Assessment is essential for several reasons: First, at the individual Soldier level, assessments point to areas where further development may be needed. For example, what guidance, experiences, training, or education can help a Soldier further succeed within the Army?

Second, comprehensive assessments provide leaders with the data to understand where developmental gaps may exist across their units. For instance, what attributes and competencies are missing that may affect unit success? Overall, accurate, informative assessments are foundational to the Army managing talent to develop Soldiers for long-term career progression.

Leaders at all levels should be able to quickly and consistently assess and track Soldiers on important attributes and competencies to provide both formal and informal feedback to guide their progress. Similarly, they should be able to get a snapshot of where their unit stands in order to intervene as necessary. As such, this article describes the development of leadership rubrics that can serve as a foundation for those tools.

Without well-defined rubrics, assessments may not be standardized across leaders (the proposed rubric is located at the end of the article). This results in performance disparities, and ultimately, affects long-term Soldier development. In addition, efforts are currently being made to install these rubrics into tracking software that allows assessment and tracking of Soldiers over time.

Assessment Framework and Goals

The goal of this work is to help leaders make accurate, comprehensive, and consistent assessments of Soldiers. This will allow for both formal and informal feedback. For this research, we collaborated with a Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition (RSTA) unit and focused specifically on tools to be used by section leaders to assess

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Symon Bowen, Delta Company, 2nd Battalion (Assault), 2nd Aviation Regiment, 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade, uses his red lens flashlight to plot points for night land navigation during the 2nd Infantry Division Best Warrior Competition at Camp Casey, Republic of Korea, April 17, 2019. The competition served as a valuable training experience, and the winners will advance to the Eighth Army Best Warrior Competition May 2019. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Daniel Parker)

their team leaders. However, this work is generalizable to other contexts and units.

Leaders throughout the Army, including section leaders, are required to rate their team leaders on the leader attributes and competencies specified in the Army's Leadership Requirements Model (LRM) in the Army's *ADRP 6-22: Army Leadership* (Department of the Army, 2012) in the context of noncommissioned officer evaluation reports (NCOERs).

The leadership attributes and competencies specified in the LRM are the focus of the rubrics designed for this research. By developing assessments of those attributes and competencies, leaders can use the ratings to help both with formal feedback and evaluation (i.e., quarterly counseling, NCOERs) as well as more informal feedback (after action reports/hot washes) provided throughout the course of daily events.

While the current LRM leadership attributes and competencies are used to evaluate Soldiers on NCOERs, they can be interpreted as subjective ratings. Based on discussions with NCOs and officers, leaders sometimes struggle to articulate specific behaviors that represent these attributes and competencies. In addition, what one leader believes is good *presence*, may not be the same as another leader's perception of good *presence*.

There have been efforts in doctrine to make the dimensions more objective through the provision of behavioral indicators. For example, *FM 6-22: Leader Development* outlines behavioral indicators for each competency and anchor (Department of the Army, 2015a). The rubrics described here are not intended to replace or conflict with such information, but instead tailor the information found in doctrine to Soldiers and their leaders (section leaders and their team leaders), making it more accessible by incorporating their own words and examples of what each attribute and competency means.

Method: Rubric Development

Several steps were taken to create a rubric that meaningfully reflected how Soldiers view each of the attributes and competencies but did not conflict with existing doctrine. We focused on the behaviors of junior NCOs at different performance levels for each of the sub-attributes and competencies within the LRM. Behavioral anchors were developed to describe performance at three levels: Strength, standard, and developmental need.

Initially, observations of training exercises were

A Special Forces candidate at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School jumps onto a rope on Nasty Nick, the school's obstacle course, during Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) at Camp Mackall, North Carolina, Jan. 16, 2019. (U.S. Army photo by K. Kassens)

conducted with a RSTA unit. Training exercises observed were land navigation, gunnery (simulation and live-fire), reconnaissance, and section level live-fire. This identified behaviors reflecting leadership attributes and competencies. Next, the attributes and competencies were discussed with section leaders in detail to obtain additional perspectives on the types of behaviors they believed were important.

A doctrine review was also conducted, specifically: *FM 6-22: Leader Development* (Department of the Army, 2015a), *ADRP 6-22: Army Leadership* (Department of the Army, 2012), and *Department of the Army Pamphlet 623-3: Evaluation Reporting System* (2015b). In addition, the rubric was also shared with researchers at the Center for Army Leadership (now known as the Center for the Army Profession and Leadership) to ensure consistency with existing documents and that the general spirit of the attributes and competencies were captured. In doing this, the information in each existing document was made more precise by coupling it with the behaviors identified from the observations.

This combined information resulted in the three anchor points/performance levels approach as well as a short definition of each sub-attribute and competency. The one exception to the three anchor points was *Character*. This attribute only contained two anchor points, following a Go/No Go approach common with assessing character within the Army. An example definition and scale is in *Figure 1*.

Mental Agility: Applies multiple perspectives and approaches; anticipates or adapts to ever changing conditions

Mental Agility	Developmental Needs	Standard	Strength
	Inactive, paralyzed (e.g., rigidly follows initial plan causing mission failure; fights the plan, not the battle)	Unilaterally tries to develop solutions or only involves a limited number of perspectives, resulting in few contingencies	Identifies and isolates problems and changes behavior in an optimal and timely manner in response to ambiguous, complex or changing conditions
	Constantly surprised by unexpected conditions; lacks forethought; does not plan for contingencies	Identifies/isolates main problem and implements solutions, but slowly and/or may not be optimal	Stays one step ahead of problem, identifies second and third order effects, and exploits opportunities as they emerge
		Anticipates unexpected events; solves local problem	Collaboratively develops solutions with multiple perspectives and contingencies, leading to optimal execution

Figure 1. Example definition and scale. Each row of text represents three separate performance themes important for this attribute.

Talent Management Uses and Implications

The rubric is generalizable and can help push forward the Army's talent management initiatives in several ways:

- The rubric provides a mechanism by which NCOs can focus the development of their Soldiers on critical leadership attributes and competencies outlined in the LRM.
- By outlining behaviors associated with the LRM dimensions, the rubric leads to a better understanding of the dimensions through use and repetition.
- The NCO using the rubric to make assessments will become more familiar with each attribute and competency, and as the junior NCOs receive feedback, they will also become more familiar with them.
- Once Soldiers understand what each dimension means, they can better advance along each one.
- Once a greater understanding of each attribute and competency is achieved, there should be greater consistency in how Soldiers are assessed Army-wide. Consistency in the interpretation of the attributes and competencies is essential for creating a more standardized evaluation system.

The rubric promotes methods by which junior NCOs can be guided more effectively. It encourages observing and noting specific behaviors which can then be discussed with the Soldier to facilitate their development. By collecting information on distinct behaviors, feedback can be more specific and more actionable. Embedding

U.S. Army Sgt. Daryl Kaisen, an evaluator for the 804th Movement Control Team, conducts an after action review with his team at the 3rd Canadian Division Support Base Detachment in Wainwright, Alberta, Canada, May 9, 2019. He reviews the performance of the unit and informs them of their strengths and weaknesses. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jermaine Jackson)

the rubric into a mobile application will allow leaders to quickly make observations and give feedback. Also, if used over time, the rubric allows leaders to watch the progress of individual Soldiers, as well as units, across periods of time or events.

Possibilities

By continuously assessing Soldiers on the same attributes and competencies, leaders will be able to hone in on their strengths and weaknesses. At the group level, data can be aggregated to obtain valuable diagnostic information about a unit like a platoon or brigade. For example,

if all Soldiers within a platoon are consistently rated negatively on certain attributes and competencies, leaders can create target interventions to promote growth. It may be that unit leaders need additional training related to mentoring Soldiers. Or perhaps the data will inform the company commander that platoon members need to be redistributed across platoons to better leverage the talents of individual members in that group. Ultimately, by examining observations at the unit level, multiple inferences can be drawn to further ensure each unit is in the best position possible for mission success. ∎

References

Department of the Army (2012). *ADRP 6-22: Army leadership*. Retrieved from https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/adrp6_22.pdf

Department of the Army (2015a). *FM 6-22: Leader development*. Retrieved from https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/fm6_22.pdf

Department of the Army. (2015b). *DA Pam 623-3*: *Evaluation reporting system*. Retrieved from https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/p623_3.pdf

Department of the Army (2016). *U.S. Army talent management strategy: Force 2025 and beyond.* Retrieved from https://talent.army.mil/wp-content/uploads/pdf_uploads/PUBLICATIONS/Army%20Talent%20Management%20Strategy%2C%20Force%202025%20and%20Beyond.pdf

Talent management: Acquire, develop, employ, retain. (2018). *Association of the United States Army*. Retrieved from https://www.ausa.org/articles/talent-management-acquire-develop-employ-retain

Complete Definitions and Rubric

LEADS	
Leads Others	Motivates, inspires, and influences others to take initiative, go beyond self, work toward a common goal, and achieve objectives
Builds Trust	Establishes a positive environment that encourages commitment built on respect and shared experiences
Extends Influence Beyond the Chain of Command	Influences and coordinates with others beyond direct lines of authority to accomplish objectives
Leads by Example	Serves as a decisive leader and positive role model who upholds standards and Army Ethic (legal and moral Army principles)
Communicates	Clearly expresses ideas to effectively translate goals into actions while actively listening to others
DEVELOPS	
Creates a Positive Environment/ Fosters Esprit de Corps	Establishes and maintains a positive attitude that supports teamwork, fairness, open/honest communication, and personal responsibility
Develops Others	Encourages and supports others to grow as individuals and teams to meet future unit and Army needs

Prepares Self	Maintains and continues to improve the expertise and skills required for role, unit, and profession
Stewards of the Profession	Makes decisions and takes action to improve the organization beyond current unit and position
ACHIEVES	
Gets Results	Ensures results consistently meet expected mission end state and are accomplished in accordance with the Army Ethic (legal and moral Army principles)
CHARACTER	
Army Values	Abides by the Army Values in all decisions and actions
Empathy	Considers and responds to another's point of view and feelings and provides care
Warrior Ethos	Applies the spirit of the Ethos across all activities to succeed with honor
Discipline	Follows, demonstrates, and promotes sound practices in administrative, organizational, training, operational, and legal duties
PRESENCE	
Military and Professional Bearing	Projects a commanding presence and professional image of authority (outward appearance, attitude, actions, and words)
Confidence	Projects certainty in self and unit with a calm and collected bearing; possesses control of emotions
Fitness	Having sound health, strength, and endurance that supports emotional health and effective thinking under prolonged stress
Resilience	Recovers quickly from adversity while accomplishing the mission
INTELLECT	
Mental Agility	Applies multiple perspectives and approaches; anticipates or adapts to ever-changing conditions
Sound Judgment	Makes sound and timely decisions; makes assessments according to strengths and weaknesses applicable to the situation and draws realistic conclusions
Interpersonal Tact	Possesses an awareness of how others view him/her; effectively interacts with others
Innovation	Introduces something new and creative as appropriate to the situation; original in thoughts and ideas
Expertise	Possesses knowledge, facts, beliefs, and logical assumptions necessary for technical and tactical competence

Leads

LEADS	Developmental Need	Standard	Strength
Builds Trust	• Does not treat others with basic fairness and respect • Fails to address problems caused by team members that threaten trust in the unit • Makes no effort to build positive relationships with subordinates and teammates (e.g., does not get to know Soldiers) • Delegates responsibility without oversight	• Treats others with fairness and respect • Addresses problems as they arise but before they can cause trust issues in the unit • Uses shared experiences to relate to others and build positive relationships • Appropriately delegates tasks with limited or slow follow-up	• Addresses potential problems before they arise and cause trust issues in the unit • Retains responsibility and verifies that delegated tasking meets mission objectives by engaging in a timely follow-up even in unfamiliar conditions
Communicates	• Information does not get passed to everyone • Conveys information in a manner that is not organized, clear, accurate, or timely • Does not listen and/or interrupts others	• Recognizes and resolves misunderstandings • Informs higher and lower headquarters, superiors and subordinates as required • Conveys complete and accurate information but may not be concise • Listens, but may not clarify or take notes	• Shares complete and accurate information in a timely, concise manner, and ensures updates are provided as needed • Informs and verifies understanding with higher and lower headquarters, superiors and subordinates • Engages in active listening (e.g., clarifies; takes notes) • Proactively gets input from the team
Leads Others	• Fails to delegate, or delegates but loses control of subordinates, resulting in task/mission failure • Fails to influence others to accomplish objectives • Fails to ensure that self and subordinates meet standards • Unaware or dismissive of effects of mission fulfillment on subordinates' mental, physical, and emotional attributes	• Delegates appropriately but may not always follow up after delegating tasking and/or may sometimes micromanage when not appropriate/needed • Influences others to accomplish the immediate task but does not utilize the most effective methods • Ensures self and subordinates meet standards • Monitors effects of mission fulfillment on mental, physical, and emotional attributes of subordinates; expresses understanding	• Retains responsibility and verifies that delegated tasking meets mission objectives by engaging in a timely follow-up without unnecessarily micromanaging • Matches techniques of influence (e.g., personal appeals, collaboration, inspiration) to situation and individual needs • Pushes self and subordinates to exceed standards; takes responsibility for poor performance and addresses it appropriately • Monitors effects of mission fulfillment on mental, physical, and emotional attributes of subordinates, and takes appropriate action for relief as needed

Leads Continued

LEADS	Developmental Need	Standard	Strength
Extends Influence Beyond the Chain of Command	• Unable to establish common ground and resolve conflict • Ineffectively leverages resources to accomplish tasks, missions • Works only within immediate chain of command for task accomplishment	• Maintains unity by establishing common ground and helping resolve conflict • Only leverages local resources; reaches beyond only when there is a problem • Works with peers in immediate adjacent units to facilitate task accomplishment	• Proactively builds unity by establishing common ground and resolving potential conflict • Proactively builds working relationships to effectively accomplish mission tasks by leveraging the full range of available resources • Works with appropriate individuals across units to facilitate task accomplishment
Leads by Example	• Fails to display high standards; violates the Army Ethic • Ignores the perspective and ideas of others • Does not engage in honest or appropriate communication	• Models high standards and the Army Ethic under standard conditions; completes training to standard • Considers new ideas and perspectives but does not fully leverage them to enhance unit performance • Models honest and appropriate communication	• Models high standards and the Army Ethic even under difficult circumstances; does the right thing even when no one is watching • Seeks diverse and new ideas and leverages them to enhance unit performance • Encourages and models honest and appropriate communication

Develops

DEVELOPS	Developmental Need	Standard	Strength
Creates a Positive Environment/Fosters Esprit de Corps	• Does not ensure subordinates have the required time and resources to do their job • Frequently complains and gossips • Lacks consistency in attitude and behavior • Does not listen to others' issues and suggestions • Is non-inclusive and bullies others • Unfairly administers discipline and/or rewards	• Ensures subordinates have the time and resources to do their job • Consistent in attitude and behavior • Listens to others' issues and suggestions and takes appropriate action • Inclusive and does not bully others • Fairly administers discipline and/or rewards	• Considers costs and benefits while ensuring subordinates have the time and resources to do their jobs • Consistently sets and maintains a positive and inclusive climate even when under pressure • Keeps complaints/gossip to a minimum in a professional way • Listens to others' issues and suggestions and takes action to resolve problems; proactively develops others; takes ownership of subordinates' development

DEVELOPS	Developmental Need	Standard	Strength
Develops Others	• Solves problems for subordinates • Provides counseling to individuals and/or teams but does not address improvements (e.g., 'great job' and sugarcoats); provides feedback that is not actionable • Attempts to let subordinates work through problems but lacks patience to allow subordinates to fully solve it (jumps in prematurely)	• Provides counseling to individuals and/or teams with a balance of good and bad feedback but does not provide actionable feedback on how to improve • Coaches others and has sufficient patience for subordinates and/or teams to solve problems • Waits until there is an apparent problem to provide mentoring and coaching; misses some opportunities to develop subordinates	• Provides counseling that is balanced and results in an actionable plan focused on achieving current and future performance objectives • Patiently coaches others (peers and subordinates) and provides opportunities for Soldiers and/or teams to succeed • Anticipates and addresses developmental problems before they occur in Soldiers; proactively sets conditions that foster growth and promotability
Prepares Self	• Does not participate in self-development courses • Lacks self-awareness about own weaknesses • Consistently unprepared to execute missions and training events	• On schedule, making progress toward career goals (promotion board) • Recognizes weaknesses and takes the time to improve them by working on weaknesses during own time • Always prepared to execute mission, training events	• Ready or ahead of schedule to go to promotion board • Proactively seeks out experiences for advanced training (e.g., Gainey Cup; ARC) • Anticipates and plans for future mission and position requirements
Stewards the Profession	• Does not fully identify opportunities for unit or subordinate development • Does not put a lot of thought into what happens beyond local training exercises • Helps his/her own immediate team/unit accomplish a task • Unnecessarily wastes time and/or resources; does not prioritize	• Helps higher-level units succeed (is a team player) • Identifies opportunities for unit or subordinate development (e.g., key assignments, PME attendance) • Demonstrates good planning and forethought in how organizational resources are to be used	• Helps higher-level units succeed by identifying areas of opportunity; shares process improvements to benefit future units; does not hold information just for him/herself or immediate team • Understands big picture and engages in actions for the greater good • Optimizes time and resources for both the short and long-term benefit of the unit

Achieves

ACHIEVES	Developmental Need	Standard	Strength
Gets Results	• Routinely fails to meet end state within commander's intent and/or violates the Army Ethic while doing so • Does not fully leverage strengths of the team	• Meets end state within commander's intent and is consistent with the Army Ethic but may not be efficient or timely • Leverages strengths of the team but may not fully account for long-term effects (e.g., unnecessarily smokes team members)	• Always meets end state within commander's intent in a timely manner and is consistent with the Army Ethic • Leverages strengths of the team and efficiently uses resources, while considering long-term effects as appropriate • Routinely uses additional time available to proactively prepare for the next action

Character

CHARACTER	Developmental Need	Standard	Strength
Army Values	• Fails to support leadership and/or lets teammates fail when in leadership roles • Fails to meet obligations, accomplish tasks, or fulfill responsibilities • Is intolerant toward diversity; does not give others a chance; creates a counterproductive environment • Does not help others or seeks recognition/personal gain when doing so • Makes immoral or unethical decisions • Is unable to overcome challenges and physical fears; does not stand firm on values or principles	• Is a team player who supports leadership • Meets obligations and responsibilities individually and as member of a team • Remains open to different perspectives; listens to others; maintains positive and inclusive climate • Helps others and does not expect recognition for doing the job correctly • Consistently makes decisions that are morally and ethically sound • Works through challenges or physical fears to accomplish missions; stands firm on values or principles regardless of circumstances	N/A - Followed Go/No-Go approach

CHARACTER	Developmental Need	Standard	Strength
Empathy	• Bullies or excludes others • Does not listen to others' perspectives • Fails to account for subordinates' strengths and weaknesses; uses a one-size-fits-all approach • Fails to act when subordinates/peers are struggling despite opportunities to intervene	• Is inclusive/supportive, without compromising task/mission requirements • Actively listens to others' perspectives (e.g., demonstrates understanding; asks clarifying questions, provides comments or words of support) • Considers subordinates' strengths and weaknesses when planning tasks or delegating • Helps peers/subordinates when they are struggling	N/A - Followed Go/No-Go approach
Warrior Ethos	• Is easily discouraged; quits or gives up • Places personal needs above mission • Does not strive to improve him or herself or team/unit based on failures • Does not help others	• Does not quit under challenging conditions • Places mission above personal needs • Attempts to learn from negative events • Helps others even under adverse conditions	N/A - Followed Go/No-Go approach
Discipline	• Impulsive (e.g., lacks personal control) • Takes the easy wrong way over the hard right way • Does not always consider legal, moral, and ethical consequences • Fails to consistently meet or hold others accountable to standard (legal, moral, physical)	• Maintains composure even when under stress • Does what is right; lives the Army values • Considers legal, moral, and ethical consequences • Holds self and others accountable to meet or exceed standards (legal, moral, physical)	N/A - Followed Go/No-Go approach

Presence

PRESENCE	Developmental Need	Standard	Strength
Military and Professional Bearing	• Fails to have uniform squared away; has poor hygiene • Looks at ground when speaking; has a shaky voice • Does not communicate or act in a courteous manner	• "Looks the part" of a Soldier (e.g., cleanly shaven; clean haircut, appropriate uniform) • Follows customs and courtesies; adheres to Army standards • Communicates and acts calmly and effectively	• Models appropriate customs and courtesies even when no one is looking • Communicates and acts calmly and effectively while motivating/energizing others • Encourages peers and subordinates to look the part of a Soldier
Confidence	• Unable to maintain composure/self-control • Unable to a make decision or rushes to incorrect decisions • Rejects (argues) constructive criticism when given • Continuously seeks input without deciding, acting (e.g., lacks competence) • Overly confident; manages all aspects of planning, execution without accounting for subordinate suggestions	• Maintains composure/self-control under standard conditions, but struggles as stress and ambiguity is introduced • Makes sound decisions under standard conditions, but may not be timely or may be likely to waver when pressed • Accepts constructive criticism but is slow to change • Task, purpose, and end state is overly vague or too complicated, suggesting uncertainty	• Maintains composure/self-control while under stress or with little information • Makes timely and sound decisions while solving complex problems • Incorporates constructive criticism • Maintains command and control even under difficult conditions and effectively conveys task, purpose, and intent
Fitness	• Does not meet minimum physical requirements • Lets performance suffer under stress (e.g., gives up easily) • Does not follow adequate PT plan	• Meets minimum physical requirements • Occasionally exhibits difficulty performing under pressure • Follows adequate PT plan	• Exceeds APFT standards • Consistently endures and performs to a high standard under prolonged stress • Helps others develop adequate PT plan
Resilience	• Is unable to bounce back, shuts down, and/or loses organizational/mission focus after a setback or negative event • Unit fails to bounce back after setbacks/negative events	• Recovers from setbacks and negative events, but is slow to apply and demonstrate improvement • Maintains organizational/mission focus • Unit bounces back after setbacks/negative events but relies solely on the leader	• Quickly recovers and learns from setbacks or negative events to improve performance • Maintains organizational/mission focus even after extreme setbacks • Unit bounces back after setbacks/negative events and fully leverages capacity of all members

Intellect

INTELLECT	Developmental Need	Standard	Strength
Mental Agility	• Rigidly follows initial plan causing mission failure; fights the plan, not the battle • Constantly surprised by unexpected conditions; lacks ability to think ahead; does not plan for contingencies	• Tries to develop solutions individually or only involves a limited number of perspectives, resulting in few contingencies • Identifies main problem and implements solutions, but slowly and/or may not be optimal • Anticipates unexpected events; solves local problem	• Identifies problems and changes behavior in an optimal and timely manner in response to ambiguous, complex or changing conditions • Stays one step ahead of problems, identifies second and third order effects, and takes opportunities as they emerge • Collaboratively develops solutions with multiple perspectives and contingencies, leading to optimal execution
Sound Judgment	• Fails to assess the situation; does not make timely or sound decisions • Does not ask clarification questions or seek more information if unsure how to proceed • Cannot explain the "why"	• Independently draws realistic conclusions but may not assess all relevant pieces of information (e.g., METT-TC); focuses mainly on the tactical evidence • Explains the "why" • Makes timely decisions	• Effectively seeks and integrates multiple relevant pieces of information (e.g., METT-TC) to make an informed decision before taking action; considers consequences of decision • Justifies decision-making based on a sound assessment of the situation • Takes prudent risks when appropriate; uses time wisely and prioritizes effectively, even under stress or deadlines
Interpersonal Tact	• Is unable to adjust tone and interaction style • Loses self-control • Does not pay attention to non-verbal signals from others (e.g., eye rolling); does not listen to others (no turn taking) • Is intolerant toward diversity	• Maintains self-control under standard conditions • Makes attempts to adjust tone based on needs and perceptions of others but does not always do so effectively • Reacts to non-verbal/social cues appropriately • Accepts diversity but is unable to fully leverage it	• Effectively adapts interaction style across multiple contexts • Embraces and leverages diversity to enhance unit performance/mission • Maintains self-control under stress. adversity, and deadlines

INTELLECT	Developmental Need	Standard	Strength
Innovation	• Relies on traditional methods that may not work when faced with challenging circumstances • Relies solely on the creativity of others to solve problems	• Attempts to adjust and try novel approaches but may not be fully effective, feasible, or needed • Independently develops new ideas without fully leveraging others	• Thinks past standard solutions to recognize feasible opportunities for improving situation/process/performance; changes behavior and proposes new outcomes • Develops new ideas while building on others' ideas • Encourages and questions others' ideas to foster new perspectives as appropriate
Expertise	• Does not know, or cannot apply required tactical/technical procedures	• Displays expected level of tactical/technical expertise consistent with role/position and event • Recognizes own level of expertise and takes appropriate actions to learn • Trains subordinates to standard	• Employs individuals, teams, and organizations effectively to fulfill mission objectives • Seeks ways to expand knowledge and shares it with peers/subordinates • Trains subordinates to standard and also helps peers as necessary

Command Sgt. Maj. Jason P. Dein is an infantry senior sergeant in the United States Army. Dein is currently working towards his bachelor's degree in liberal arts. He is the command sergeant major for 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Victor Ingurgio holds a doctorate in experimental psychology from the University of Oklahoma and is a senior research psychologist with the Army's Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, Fort Benning, Ga. He has conducted research and applied human factors principles and techniques for NASA, FAA, TSA, DoN, and DoD/DoA systems for over 22 years.

Krista L. Ratwani holds a doctorate in industrial/organizational psychology from George Mason University. She is currently the senior director of the Learning and Training Systems Division at Aptima, Inc,. where she leads research and development efforts focused on creating the components of learning experiences that facilitate effective lifelong learning.

Frederick Diedrich holds a doctorate in cognitive science from Brown University and is currently an independent consulting principal scientist. His work focuses on methods of instruction and assessment designed to deliberately support development in areas such as social skills, character, initiative, and critical thinking. Previously, Diedrich was CEO at Milcord, LLC, as well as president at Aptima, Inc.

Scott Flanagan is a retired U.S. Army master sergeant and served 20 years active duty in Special Forces and Special Mission Unit assignments. Flanagan's Army career includes operational, instructor, and research and development assignments including multiple combat deployments to the Middle East. As a consultant, Flanagan has extensive experience working with the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization and the Asymmetric Warfare Group.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the NCO Journal, the U.S. Army, or the Department of Defense.