



Leader Competency and Army Readiness

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Leader-development doctrine has come a long way since General Bruce C. Clarke's day, whose article (page 2) on pre-information age tenets of successful combat leadership began this leadership section. So Colonel Moilanen's piece is a fitting close. Moilanen summarizes the competencies required of today's Army leaders and shows how those leader competencies form the bedrock of Army readiness.

OUR ARMY IS PEOPLE.¹ Today, the U.S. Army focuses on transforming an existing organization to produce a particular capability for rapid deployment and strategic responsiveness. The Army sustains a trained and ready land force for meeting responsibilities in a potential major theater war and significant challenges across the spectrum of military operations. These complex and diverse worldwide environments, from small-scale contingency warfighting to humanitarian assistance, also require an improved readiness for strategic responsiveness. Rapidly deploying competent and confident soldiers demonstrates the most effective method of shaping national, international, and global situations in ways favorable to national interests.

In 1999, Secretary of the Army Louis E. Caldera said, "The implications are certainly far more than just platforms. They are organizational. And they're also people skills. [W]e are working on producing leaders for change, not just leaders who are doctrinally capable and competent leaders for warfighting, but leaders also for all kinds of missions that we are asked to be able to do today across the full spectrum, and who will have the capability to continue to deal with an evolving global situation in which the array of threats that you face goes across the entire spectrum, including the homeland defense-type issues and use of weapons of mass destruction."²

Success depends on leaders, soldiers, and cohesive teams as the Army transforms into a more strategically responsive, full-spectrum land force. Information-age technologies, enhanced logistics, and improved force-projection means will support, but not preempt, the indispensable readiness value of leaders and the team climate they create. Leaders must be adaptive to ambiguous and changing situations. Soldiers must be comfortable in new multifunctional roles. Teams must be expert at rapidly integrating skills, knowledge, and attributes into united, synchronized, mission-tailored capabilities.

Mental agility enhances the physical agility of current and future systems, platforms, and organizations. Progressive research and development provide enhanced ways and means to man and lead Army

organizations in the 21st Century. One immediate operational requirement is to transform Army strategic responsiveness by merging the lethality and survivability traditionally experienced in the heavy land forces with the agility demonstrated in light land forces. The outcome of this union, propelled by innovative and adaptive leaders, will provide a more mobile, flexible, rapidly deployable land power.

Leadership Competencies and the Human Dimension

The four main leadership competencies are conceptual, interpersonal, technical, and tactical. Values, attributes, and actions complement the four competencies. Using this leadership doctrinal baseline, an evolving combined arms training strategy (CATS) incorporates leader and team performance indicators with task-condition-standard criteria to assess and evaluate proficiency. Appendix B, "Performance Indicators," in Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership*, presents a listing and basic definition of leader performance areas.³ Ongoing practical unit application and supporting Army experiments will develop more precise measures of leader performance and team measures of effectiveness.

Developing innovative leaders is critical during the Army's transformation. Leader development is one of six Army imperatives: doctrine, organizations, materiel, leader development, training, and soldiers.⁴ The Army's current leadership doctrine provides effective fundamental principles to advance leader development in uncertain 21st-century environments. Army modernization and experimentation have charted several promising avenues for continued improvement. Digitization, as well as improved analog command and control systems, offer decisionmaking enablers to improve situational understanding. These capabilities will remain normal conditions of national, multinational, and other operational missions. Mental agility—the ability to maintain the initiative in complex and ambiguous situations—is key to balancing and synchronizing all six Army imperatives and enhancing the adaptive leadership required now and into the foreseeable future.

Leaders must be adaptive, critical thinkers and ingenious doers. They must be innovative and display initiative with prudent risk-taking. They should be able to exploit information-age situational understanding and be agents of change. Characteristics of adaptive leaders are best described using the doctrinal leadership framework of Army leadership. Proven fundamentals of a clearly understood mission and higher commander's intent energize the multifaceted functions of decisionmaking and leadership.⁵ Whether the situation involves a small-unit leader in an urban alleyway fight or a senior leader assessing the civil-military effect of multinational situational awareness, the leadership framework of values, skills, knowledge, attributes, and actions remain the foundation for all leadership and leader-development action.

Values are at the core of everything the Army is and does. The seven Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage are integral warrior-ethos attributes. These values provide the sense of purpose necessary to sustain leaders, soldiers, and teams. Values guide the moral and legal bases for action; they help resolve ambiguities in warfighting and operations other than war. Leaders establish an environment in the Army where quality people do what is right; where leaders and soldiers treat others as they would want to be treated themselves; and where all team members have the opportunity to develop their full potential as professional Army leaders.

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Fostering a lifetime-learning environment that exploits reach-back, distance learning, and continuing education in knowledge networks is vital to developing leaders with the mental flexibility and conceptual skills required for executing dynamic operations. Correspondingly, leader development requires precisely defined, demanding self-development processes; improved learning from operational experience; and adaptive, competency-based institutional learning centers.

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U.S. Army General John N. Abrams said, “To maintain . . . proficiency, the Army must train continuously to develop and maintain combat-ready soldiers, leaders, and units capable of performing assigned tasks to specific standards—training that is founded on the basis of tasks, conditions, and standards; training that spans the full spectrum of military operations; and training that focuses on the small unit and small unit leader.”⁶

Anticipating competencies and experiences required of adaptive leaders in future operations, the Army must instill these abilities in much less time than is traditionally allowed. The expertise conveyed through institutional training and education, complemented with operational practice, must be achieved earlier in a leader’s career progression. Identifying innovative ways to hone the special skills, knowledge, and attributes of leaders poses a challenge of developing and implementing new learning models and programs. Learning organizations build on insight from educational courses, unit training, operational missions, and self-developmental programs that center on intellectual responsibility, passion for knowledge, emerging doctrinal and operational concepts, self-assessment, and reflection.

Leader Competencies Model

Leader-training scenarios must include all four leader competencies for developing leader and team tasks, conditions, and standards. A menu of complex vignettes allows flexibility in creating varying situations for each echelon of leader and team training. Event-based programs within the unit CATS are an evolution of proven systems with unit operational architecture, leader roles, and new, multifunctional responsibilities. The foundations of battle-focused-training doctrine emphasize the value of using proven methodologies such as training support packages (TSP), mission training plans (MTP), and evolving tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP).

Battle focus recognizes the critical linkage between collective mission-essential tasks and individual leader tasks. Battle tasks clearly state the essential tasks, conditions, and standards for teams and reinforce a notion of employing a team of teams. Analyzing battle tasks results in sets of critical leader tasks within each team function. Different levels of direct, organizational, and strategic leadership will be woven into the doctrinal fabric of a mission-essential task list and its application of TTP. Mission sets will depend on the level of unit organization and leader responsibility. Established initial operational capabilities and priorities of effort will guide the selection of leader-development competencies to insert into particular mission-training sets.

Today’s complex, ambiguous environments confirm that operational- and strategic-level leader skills are required of more junior leaders across a broad range of mission contingencies. The Army’s Leader-Competency Learning Model must keep pace with dynamic requirements to effectively educate and train high-quality leaders.⁷ Learning models, educational

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A joint and combined Prairie Warrior exercise at the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

approaches, and operational experiences must be honed to reflect the increased demands on leaders. Simulations and simulators, both constructive and virtual, reinforced with live training, will demonstrate integration of critical skills, knowledge, and attributes; leader development; and leader competence. Directing the cumulative combat power of command and control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR), cohesive leaders and teams will conduct operations with critical thinking, creative planning, and adaptive acting to achieve a mission task within a commander's intent.

Developing TSP, MTP, and TTP structure requires a statement of situational conditions for multiple operational environments. Near-term capabilities recognize assigned mission priorities; readily available interim equipment, materiel, and weapons-system capabilities for achieving mission readiness. Once realized, interim capabilities pursue the eventual objective design and team capability that lies beyond near-term practicality. Being able to rapidly deploy and employ mission-ready land forces within specified time lines will remain an overarching measure of effectiveness.

Full-spectrum training must include mission sets conducted in traditional environments and, more important, in vexing asymmetric, nontraditional situations. Conditions must be flexible to place leaders and teams in quickly changing situations. Variables include friendly forces, enemy capabilities, geography and weather limitations, time, and larger civil, political, and military considerations that affect rules of engagement.

Clear implications arise for the Army's institutional education system, increased learning and training within operational assignments, and demands for effective individual self-development programs. These implications point to leader abilities to translate patterns and trends that emerge from diverse operational variables and to perceive the second- and third-order effects on mission and intent.

Whether tasks are simple or complex, speed and precision mark critical aspects of maintaining the initiative as conditions change. Understanding the operational environment and the pace of changes requires adaptive

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