Adaptability: Making it More than a Byproduct of Training

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Abstract

Creating adaptability in Soldiers is an Army Chief of Staff strategic priority and a critical requirement for the future Army. The purpose of this paper is to make a recommendation to create adaptability in the current Army training system through initial research of behavior performance measures and then embed the results into the training system. Arguably, the Army training system produces some level of adaptability as a byproduct of producing ready units. However, adaptability performance behaviors are too critical to leave to chance creation. To address this imbalance, the Army needs to be deliberate in its goal to increase adaptability through the existing training system. Defining adaptability’s trainable aspects and understanding how the Army trains are the first steps in determining how to change current mechanisms to create a system that fosters purpose-driven adaptability. The tasks trained in the system are the key to driving adaptability behavior change in the Soldiers tasked to win in a complex world.
Adaptability: Making it More than a Byproduct of Training

(5,017 words)

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Army Warfighting Challenge #9. How to develop resilient Soldiers, adaptive leaders, and cohesive teams committed to the Army profession ethic that are capable of accomplishing the mission in environments of uncertainly and persistent change.

—Army Capabilities Integration Center

The Army Posture Statement to Congress for 2015 describes an environment filled with uncertainty, instability, and emerging global threats requiring a force that is “expeditionary, tailorable, scalable, and prepared to meet the challenges of the global environment.” The security obligations for an engaged Army are not decreasing, but the realities of the fiscal environment require resizing and shaping the Army for the new world realities. Critical to this new force are not just innovative concepts and technologies but the Soldiers of the all-volunteer Army being capable of not only operating but also thriving in this new environment. The Army senior leader requirement is for Soldiers to be adaptive. Adaptability is critical to enabling the future Soldier to operate in agile organizations facing the wicked security issues of tomorrow. The Army Chief of Staff’s strategic priority is to “develop adaptive Army leaders for a complex world.” Numerous keystone documents that establish policy for the Army echo the priority to develop adaptive leaders (Army Leader Development Strategy, the U.S. Army Learning Concept, and the Army Training Strategy, for example).

A recent research paper produced by the Institute for Defense Analysis asserts some senior leaders within the Army feel the system produces sufficient adaptability in Soldiers as a byproduct of moving through the training domains over their career. Perhaps there is some truth in this assertion that adaptability is a partly teachable activity that the Army training system addresses. There are certainly examples of junior
leaders demonstrating effective decision making in complex combat environments of Iraq having first passed through the training system. If adaptability is a critical component to success in the future as numerous senior leaders and policy documents state, why would we let this remain just a byproduct of the system? This line of thinking seems inconsistent with Army Warfighting Challenge #9, stated above.

If adaptability is a byproduct of training, then it would follow that some portion of adaptability is teachable. Incorporating those performance measures into the existing Army training system would increase the probability of producing purpose-driven adaptability in Soldiers. Therefore, my assertion is the Army needs to be deliberate in its goal to increase adaptability through modifying the existing Army training system. To support this assertion, I will first define adaptability to include understanding its cognitive aspects. I will then explain the Army training system, which is based upon education, training, and experience, to understand how the force is currently trained. Finally, the discussion turns to identifying mechanisms in the current Army training system, to include taxonomy and performance measurements, to increase purpose-driven adaptability in Soldiers and leaders required to fight and win in a complex and unknowable future.

Adaptability Defined

Adaptability is the subject of a wealth of professional research from a number of behavioral and social science disciplines. To explore the depth and breadth of significant work is beyond the scope of this effort. Instead, an overview approach is taken to understand adaptability in the context of military work performance.

Definitions of adaptability vary across scholars and researchers depending on the nature of their studies. Paul Bartone et al., summarizes several similar performance-
based research efforts along a common theme that “adaptability always has to do with effective change or adjustment in response to changing environments.” Waldo Freeman and William Burns assert “adaptability requires the capacity (added for emphasis) to take decisive and effective action in a timely manner, often under pressure.” From these two definitions, capacity is knowledge, experience, and traits. Capacity, the environment, and an effective response appear to be all common and essential elements of adaptability. For lack of an official Department of Defense or U.S. Army definition, the Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA) adaptability model’s definition of an “operable capacity to bring about effective response to an altered situation” will serve as the anchor. This definition links the minimum elements, capacity, and an altered situation to produce the required output, which is adaptive task performance.

**Components of Adaptability**

Task performance is the desired output to adaptive behavior. This is an important point to understand when considering how to produce effective organizations. Individual task performance and contextual performance encapsulate the behaviors of an effective organization. Task performances are behaviors bound to duties and tasks whereas contextual performance are the behaviors of the organizational culture. Researcher James Walker theorizes that task performance appears to be best predicted by measures of knowledge, skills, ability (KSA), and job experience, while contextual performance is best predicted by personality measures. Allworth and Hesketh’s research found that adaptive performance is generally the behaviors associated with change, coping, and transferring learning of one task to another as the situation varies. Specifically, the two components of adaptive performance are cognitive
(application of learning) and non-cognitive (emotional adjustment to change), which correspond to the “operable capacity” from the IDA definition above.

The KSAs are central to the cognitive sphere. Increasing proficiency in cognitive factors potentially increases adaptability. The primary methods for increasing proficiency of KSAs are through education, increasing domain-specific knowledge, and experience. In this context, education refers to the foundational understanding of creative and critical thinking to include problem-solving models that assist in understanding the environment. Domain-specific knowledge refers to skills and knowledge required to accomplish tasks within a profession. A mastery of the skills opens the door to application (ability to use learned skills to solve problems) and synthesis (combine ideas to create new solutions). Cohen et al. research supports the concept that domain-specific knowledge is required to enable effective responses. Training those specific task-related skills produces this level of mastery. Finally, experience is the learning that transpires in applying KSAs in a challenging environment that encourages synthesis in task performance. The more opportunities to participate in crucible experiences, the greater the probability of creating adaptability. The Institute for Defense Analysis in Developing an Adaptability Training Strategy and Policy for the Department of Defense included the following in its findings: “Adaptability learning is a function of education and experience as well as training; and the greatest adaptability learning occurs in situations where adaptability learning in one sphere is reinforced by similar learning in both of the other spheres.” The combination of education, training, and experience is then a critical aspect to understanding adaptability performance.
To be fair, there are competing theories to cognitive ascendance in adaptability performance. Some researchers favor the construct that adaptability is the result of non-cognitive factors. Personality-driven traits are the key influence of behavior irrespective of the environment. A sample of these traits are general self-efficacy, resilience, openness, achievement, motivation, and tolerance of ambiguity. The KSAs (such as critical thinking and leadership skills) are simply reflective of the personality traits that correlate positively with adaptiveness.

Several limitations exist in this theory by not accounting for pressure of the environment or assigning cognitive skills a secondary role. The operating environment provides pressures to individuals that can adversely affect personality traits (such as willingness to change) that are not accounted for in the theory. The second limitation to this theory is minimizing knowledge’s role in adaptive behavior. Knowledge, such as domain-specific knowledge (a key element), and experience (a critical predictor of adaptability) are the specific factors limiting non-cognitive dominance. An individual having extensive knowledge of a military task is more likely to determine creative changes to match the environment. Additionally, experience in applying domain-specific knowledge in unique situations has a positive correlation to future adaptation.

To summarize, learning to be adaptable is possible on some level through education, training, and experience. Experiences that apply time pressure and environmental stress may increase observable adaptable behavior in individuals possessing a mastery of professional tasks. Domain-specific knowledge was found as an enabler of adaptive behavior. A system that is built to produce domain-specific knowledge in individuals will generate some level of adaptable behavior by the nature of
their relationship. Understanding how a system uses education, training, and experience to create domain-specific knowledge is then important to understanding how to adjust it to produce greater adaptable behavior.

How the Army Trains

The National Commission of the Future of the Army recently affirmed the Army training and education system as “highly regarded globally” in its ability to produce highly capable, skilled, and adaptive members.24 The Army training strategy combines an education, training, and experience framework into a three-domain training system (within the generating and operating force) designed to produce ready individuals, leaders, and units to accomplish the objectives of the Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World.25 To frame the discussion, the training vision from The Army Training Strategy is described below.

Army training will provide the critical depth and versatility needed to support the three strategic roles of the Prevent-Shape-Win concept by conducting unified operations executed through decisive action by means of the Army core competencies of combined arms maneuver and wide area security guided by mission command.26

There are two important concepts within this statement that are relevant to understanding how the Army trains. First, the Army is, at its core, a task-centric organization. Training is designed to create proficiency in individuals and leaders in conducting key tasks and essential tasks within the force that build upon progressively larger collective tasks that ultimately accomplish unified operations. Readiness to accomplish all the tasks is the purpose of the entire education, training, and experience framework of the Army.27 Second is decisive action. According to The Army Training Strategy, “The primary product of Army training is units and individuals prepared to execute operations through decisive action.”28 Decisive action is the simultaneous
application of tasks (offensive, defensive, and stability) to accomplish core competencies (combined arms maneuver and wide area security). Training is conducted in environments (conditions) that best enhance the decisive action experience. Ultimately, the tasks designed to accomplish decisive action are the profession's domain-specific knowledge. In this section, the three-domain training system is defined, along with the importance of the task and the crucible experience, to explore how domain-specific knowledge is produced through education, training, and experience in the U.S. Army.

The Domains of Training Readiness

The number one priority stated by several senior Army leaders is Readiness. Through the three pillars of development (education, training, and experience), Soldiers and leaders gain the tactical and technical competence required to be declared ready to perform in an operational environment. The training model establishes three training domains to visualize how the pillars deliver domain-specific knowledge to the Soldier from entrance into the system until separation from the service. The development model is divided into institutional, self-development, and operational domains that are centered on the three pillars of development as depicted in the figure below from the Army Doctrine and Training Publication (ADRP) 7-0, Training Units and Developing Leaders. Each domain has a specific role that supports the other domains in developing the leader. In the center of each domain, education, training, and experience are presented in order of importance by the domain and font size representing largest to smallest contribution to the collective. Although labeled, leader development in this figure it is indicative of Soldier and unit training as well.
Moving clockwise, the institutional domain is education-centric. It comprises the initial entry training and professional educational system. Initial Soldier training is all the foundation knowledge that the Soldier needs to function in the profession to include opportunities to develop experience applying professional tasks. Soldiers then move to assignments in the force to grow this fundamental knowledge. Episodically, Soldiers return to the institutional domain to attend professional military education that increases KSAs before returning to the force.

The self-development domain complements the operational and institutional domains. It predominantly relies on reflection of experience gained in the other two domains. As its name suggests, internal motivation is the driving factor to strengthen or eliminate the gap between the skills, knowledge, behavior, and experiences gained in institutional and operational domains. Army University, an online soldier education
source, is an example of opportunities for Soldiers to participate in structured, individualized self-development programs “that reinforce and expand the depth and breadth of an individual’s knowledge base, self-awareness, and situational awareness.”

Home station training, major training events, combat training centers, joint exercises, and operational deployments are all activities in the operational domain designed to increase mastery and experience. A Soldier spends the majority of his time in this domain. Individual, leader, staff, and unit collective skills mature from fundamentals into operational capabilities that produce ready units. Domain-specific knowledge is essentially a product of home station training as sequential training of individuals and units progresses until a unit can accomplish the functions required in Decisive Action.

For discussions on adaptability, the Army three-domain training system supports domain-specific knowledge through education, training, and experience. It is the operational training domain that has the preponderance of influence in creating domain-specific knowledge required for enabling adaptability whereas the other two domains support the process. The common thread in training of all domains is the task. Training is designed to create proficiency to mastery of tasks, which in turn encapsulate the skills and abilities of domain-specific knowledge. The task is then a critical component of the three-domain training system to produce domain-specific knowledge.

**Task Centric Army**

Task success is the cornerstone of operational success. Joint Publication 1 defines a task as “a clearly defined action or activity specifically assigned to an individual or organization that must be done.” The Army catalogues tasks in a comprehensive list called the Army Universal Task List (AUTL). According to ADRP 1-
“AUTL provides a common, doctrinal structure for collective tasks that support Army tactical missions and operations conducted by Army units and staffs.” It describes the significant efforts of the force at the highest echelons to the lowest with the appropriate level of detail to accomplish missions. The task descriptions and recommended measures of performance are also part of the AUTL.

Generally, the Army has a system that leverages and refines the AUTL to unit-specific procedures and performance standards. A brief description found in the introductory table of the AUTL lists the types of tasks in collective training:

- Mission Essential Tasks (MET) perform the function an organization was designed, equipped, and manned to accomplish in decisive action.
- Collective Tasks are defined and measurable actions of an organized element to accomplish a function.
- Key Collective Tasks directly contribute to proficiency of a mission essential task.
- Individual Tasks directly contribute to the completion of a collective task.

In looking at the relationships of the different tasks and strategies to train them, the focus remains within the operational training domain for this discussion. The operational force integrates and synchronizes individual proficiency with collective proficiency by conducting collective tasks. As training progresses, the unit demonstrates the capability to accomplish collective tasks to required standards and conditions to support MET.

Determining the training strategies and resources required to achieve mastery of collective tasks in demanding, time constrained environments can put significant strain on operational units. The trainers in the operational domain look to the Combined Arms Training Strategies (CATS) for collective and individual tasks. The CATS is a web-
based system of the Army Training Network “designed to assist the unit commander in planning and executing training events that enable the unit to build and sustain Soldier, leader, and unit proficiency in mission essential tasks.”Important here is that trainers can view, select, and print tasks (supporting, collective, and individual) to plan, resource, and manage training. The figure below is an informational screen shot available to trainers to develop strategies for collective training.

Figure 2, MET to Collective Task to Evaluation Outline (TE&O) Crosswalk Example in CATS

The CATS screen shot is reflective of the level of intellectual thought given to developing tasks. The example displays a MET specific to the type and size of unit with supporting collective and individual tasks. The descriptions, conditions, standards, performance steps, and performance measures are clearly articulated and electronically linked to each other in a holistic medium.
Measuring Performance

The ADRP 7-0, *Training Units and Developing Leaders*, clearly asserts, "... all training must be evaluated. Otherwise, the training time is wasted." A standard is a proficiency level that results in task accomplishment and is a benchmark for evaluation. The standards for tasks are expressed in a training and evaluation outline. The ADRP 7-0 provides a brief description of a T&EO:

Task standards reside in the training and evaluation outlines for each collective task. A training and evaluation outline is a summary document that provides information on collective training objectives, related individual training objectives, resource requirements, and applicable evaluation procedures for a type of organization. This document provides the task title, task description, the recommended conditions to use in training, the standard to be met and the task steps and performance measures to attain a ‘GO/NO-GO’ for each step.

The T&EO resides in the Army Training Management System (ATMS) CATS web system. It is the primary source for the training and evaluation outline that describes the major procedures a unit accomplishes to perform any task to standard. Additionally, there is a process for re-evaluating the TE&O of any collective or individual task when significant differences are found in desired and actual outcomes for any reason (new equipment, force package change, etc.).

The task (individual, collective, and mission essential) is the domain-specific knowledge the Army requires of individuals and units. Descriptions, performance measures, linkages among tasks, and training strategies are all captured within CATS for use in the operational training domain to develop to mastery. Using the tasks as depicted in CATS, Home Station achieves the “operable capacity” from the definition of adaptability—a operable capacity to bring about effective response to an altered situation. An altered situation is the companion requirement to produce the effective
response. The CTC training experience provides the environment (conditions) that best enhance the experience where adaptability can be observed in Soldiers.

The Decisive Action Experience

Experience is the third pillar of development as depicted in the leader development model (see figure 1 above). Experience, a part of each training domain, is an integral part of the operational domain. The Army Training Strategy states that the Combat Training Centers (CTCs) "serve a dual role in both generating unit readiness while serving as a crucible experience for active leader development."52 The focus is "training and developing self-confident, adaptive, and self-aware leaders."53

The CTC is divided into the maneuver CTCs (MCTCs) and Mission Command Training Program (MCTP). The maneuver CTCs are the primary venue for Brigade Combat Teams to conduct decisive action force-on-force and live fire training in an operational scenario and environment approximating combat.54 The MCTC provides constructive simulation for mission command training for commanders and staffs above the brigade level to stress process, procedures, and systems of command and control.

Some of the CTC program objectives from AR 350-50 are:

- Training focused on MET, Unified Operations and Decisive action
- Performance-oriented training in a realistic tactical or operational environment assessed against established tasks, conditions, and standards
- Facilitate commanders’ readiness assessment through live-fire, force-on-force, and computer-simulated exercises that integrate all aspects of lethal and nonlethal effects, tailored to the operational environment from platoon to corps level
- Conduct doctrinally-based After Action Reviews (AARs) focused on observed performance that enable Soldiers and leaders to discover for themselves what happened, why it happened, and how to sustain strengths and overcome weaknesses55
The important takeaway to understanding the CTCs contribution to the development of Soldiers and units is the scale of the experience provided to the force. At the MCTC, 3,500 (+) soldiers of a Brigade Combat Team deploy with their issued equipment and immerse themselves for 11 days in a scenario/environment that is complex and challenging. A near peer opposing force capable of hybrid and direct action is given the same directions as the Brigade Combat team (BCT)--to win. The human terrain is populated with cultural, governmental, non-governmental, criminal, media, and population role players. The BCT conducts mission essential tasks--in this operational environment that is live, virtual, and constructive--to synchronize lethal and nonlethal effects. The CTC observer-coach-trainers (OCT) and doctrinal experts conduct analysis of unit and leaders’ performance and provide the after action reviews mentioned above with the help of excellent instrumentation that captures cause-and-effect data.\textsuperscript{56} There is a saying that the Army’s purpose of the CTC is to make the “practice harder than the game.”\textsuperscript{57}

System Summary

In the previous discussions on how the Army trains, I identified the three aspects of the IDA adaptability definition combined in the training system. The definition of adaptability is an operable capacity to bring about effective response to an altered situation. The task (domain-specific knowledge) is trained to mastery in the operational training domain (operable capacity). This operable capacity is applied to wicked problems in a decisive action environment (altered situation) provided by a CTC crucible experience to produce development. The effective response is still successful completion of the CATS documented task.
Adaptability is then a byproduct. The task does not contain performance measures for adaptability. A search of CATS using adaptability as the key word reveals no tasks or associated performance measures within the system. The closest approximation is the task “Think Critically and Creatively,” but standards reflect classroom training. The CTC system includes a process to capture lessons learned, to correct institutional deficiencies, or share the experience throughout the force. None of those efforts include measuring the observable behaviors of adaptability during the crucible experience. The Army’s training system is a proven mechanism. Viewing the Army training system from a different perspective and making a few adjustments, it would increase the probability of producing purpose-driven adaptability in Soldiers.

Purpose-Driven Adaptability

The objective is to increase the probability of adaptability performance manifestation in well-trained Soldiers and units in stressful, complex environments by leveraging the current Army Universal Task List and Army training management system. Before recommending adjustments to the system, consider a change in perspective when viewing the leader development model from figure 1. Instead of three interconnecting domains, consider gears of a machine, a training machine. In a purpose-driven adaptability model, the task (MET, collective, and individual as expressed in CATS) is the driver gear of training. The institutional training and operational training domains are gears driven by the task, producing education, training, and experience within the machine (see figure three). Aspects of the system are mechanisms to embed or reinforce the desired behavior changes for adaptable performance.
Dr. Edger Schein’s cultural change theory provides the basis for describing how to approach the training system to create adaptability behavior.\textsuperscript{58} Culture and adaptability are similar in construct in that they are both composed of complex behaviors. Schein’s model uses embedding and reinforcing mechanisms to make and sustain cultural changes in complex organizations. Embedding mechanisms emplace the change in the organization. How performance is measured is an example of an embedding mechanism in the training system. Reinforcing mechanisms are activities that ensure alignment between the desired change and the embedding mechanism. A visual depiction of the task as the driver of training domains with associate embedding and reinforcing mechanisms theory is below.

First, the CATS tasks and associated T&EOs are the embedding mechanisms. Adaptability performance behaviors and measures are introduced into the system by tasks, which in turn drive the training in all domains. The T&EOs reflect the desired adaptability performance behaviors measures for mission-essential and collective tasks.
In the operational training domain, the trainers use individual and collective tasks in home station training to produce proficiency in mission-essential tasks, embedding the desired behaviors.

Second, the CTCs become reinforcing mechanisms to support the entrenching of the desired positive adaptability performance behaviors in two ways. The CTCs provide the stressful, complex crucible environment to generate adaptability. The Institute for Defense Analysis’ recent research found that: “One key to developing adaptable leaders, leader teams, and units at every level is repeated exposure to ‘crucible experiences’ that are consummate with the operational environment and level of responsibility.” 60 The CTCs OCT observe, measure, and capture adaptability performance against CATS standards. The CTCs provide candid assessments, after action reviews, and applied lessons learned and best practices to the force. 61 The CTCs have a reputation for being “the engine of change for collective training in the Army.” 62 Trainers adjust their home station training to achieve success at the CTCs. In this case, adjusting training to achieve adaptability performance measures success at the CTC reinforces the desired embedded behaviors in the collective tasks.

Third, the feedback loop is a key element in the purpose-driven adaptability model in order to allow for the adjustment of T&EOs to achieve the desired behavior. The performance feedback extends beyond the immediate feedback to individuals in the training environment. The CTCs are a significant source of raw data as part of the Army Lessons Learned Program (ALLP). The ALLP is a system for gathering, understanding, and disseminating insights from Army activities (operations, experiments, and training). 63 The Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) is the agent for managing the
observations, insights, and lessons back into the Army. \textsuperscript{64} The purpose of the entire program is to identify institutional deficiencies and provide the methodology to correct them. Observations are gathered and analyzed within the CTC and CALL framework as directed in the ALLP. The Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate (CADD) is ultimately responsible for the AUTL and CATS. \textsuperscript{65} However, warfighting proponents within the force have a say in adjustments of tasks associated with their function. Cooperation within the training governance mechanisms is required to make timely adjustments.

**CATS Task Title: Adaptability**

The challenge to making this model function is first determining what to embed in the tasks. Although there is a wealth of research on adaptability, research is just beginning to scratch the surface of adaptability dimensions in the workplace. \textsuperscript{66} Pulakos et al. in 2000 developed a model of eight dimensions of adaptive performance to “understand the adaptive performance requirements of jobs.” \textsuperscript{67} The research acknowledges that cognitive and non-cognitive variables are difficult to determine without first an appreciation of “the job performance requirements we are trying to predict.” \textsuperscript{68}

Susan White et al. furthered this research in *Developing Adaptive Proficiency in Special Forces*. The focus of this effort is increasing adaptive performance and training adaptability in Special Forces officers attending institutional training. \textsuperscript{69} Other efforts by the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences have similarly focused on the instructional training domain, specifically, a Professional Military Education related course to increase adaptability awareness.

Let’s look at a hypothetical example to see how adaptability might be incorporated into the current CATS system based upon adaptability dimensions
research. I will compare a current individual task in CATS, *Think Critically and Creatively*, to a hypothetical task, *Adaptability*, using the eight dimensions of adaptive performance as the taxonomy for this new task.\(^7^0\)

**Table 1. Example of a Hypothetical Adaptability Individual Task for CATS\(^7^1\)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Steps</th>
<th>CATS</th>
<th>Pulakos</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Define critical thinking</td>
<td>1. Solving Problem Creatively</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Define creative thinking</td>
<td>2. The other seven dimensions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Specify approaches that</td>
<td>omitted for brevity.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>bring discipline to thinking</td>
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<td>4. Recognize traits exhibited by</td>
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<td>habitual critical and creative</td>
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<td>Thinkers</td>
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<td>5. Identify tools to enhance</td>
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<td>critical and creative thinking</td>
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<tr>
<th>Performance Measures</th>
<th>CATS</th>
<th>Pulakos</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Defined critical thinking</td>
<td>(Solving problems creatively measures only)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Defined creative thinking</td>
<td>1. Employing unique types of</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Specified approaches that</td>
<td>analyses and generating new,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>bring discipline to thinking</td>
<td>innovative ideas in complex</td>
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<td>4. Recognized traits exhibited by</td>
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<td>habitual critical and creative</td>
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<td>Thinkers</td>
<td>unrelated information and</td>
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<td>5. Identified tools to enhance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>critical and creative thinking</td>
<td>creative solutions</td>
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<td>3. Entertaining wide ranging</td>
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<td>possibilities others may miss,</td>
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<td>more effective approach</td>
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<td>4. Developing innovative</td>
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<td>methods of obtaining or utilizing</td>
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In this example, the CATS individual task title is *Adaptability*. This new task has a performance step of solving problems creatively. The other seven dimensions of adaptability are omitted only to keep the example modest in size. The performance measures are the taxonomy developed by Pulakos et al. research in 2000.\(^7^2\) The performance measures articulate the observed behaviors expected to accomplish the
step. This individual task is then linked as a supporting task to every key collective and essential task in CATS. This task is used by trainers in developing home station training strategies. Tasks are trained to masterly level with all members exposed to the behavior performance measures of adaptability. However, the performance measures are likely not truly observed until participation in a crucible experience.

Tasks like these become the embedding mechanism for the desirable adaptability behaviors required by senior leaders. Evaluating the performance measures at CTCs is then the reinforcing mechanism of the desired behaviors. This is only an example of how adaptability research can be applied to task training in the Army system.

Recommendations

Similar research is required on the classification of adaptive performance with the focus toward operational training domains and tasks as defined in CATS. The CTCs are a logical choice to begin the development of task taxonomy through direct observations, testing, and analysis. This location provides the greatest likelihood of adaptability manifestation by the most well-trained units and individuals in the most demanding environment. The CTCs have a history of hosting the U.S. Army Research Institute in the pursuit of increasing performance and identifying determinates of effective home station training since the creation of the training centers. Without this initial research, the adjustments to the system are guesswork at best, and adaptability remains a byproduct of training.

Recommendations to begin purpose-driven adaptability in the Army training system are:
• Commission a U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences approved research study to determine performance dimensions and taxonomy for adaptability in all Army tasks

• Incorporate adaptability performance dimensions in all CATS T&EOs based on research commission recommendations to initiate embedding within the Army training system

• Measure and capture observed adaptability performance dimensions at CTCs using established CATS standards to reinforce desirable behaviors

• Establish long-term research at CTCs to continue to develop accurate adaptability taxonomy for the Army training management system under TRADOC direction

• Revise the CATS T&EO adjustment process between proponents and TRADOC directorates (CADD, CALL, and ATMS) to allow timely revisions to produce purpose-driven adaptability as analyzed in CTC research.

Conclusion

Creating adaptability in Soldiers and leaders is an Army Chief of Staff strategic priority and a critical requirement for the future Army to “Win in a Complex World.”

Adaptable performance is too critical to leave to chance creation in the Army enterprise. Creating adaptability should be a purposeful effort within the Army training system to increase the probability of adaptable performance. The cognitive factors such as knowledge, skills, and abilities are resident in the current training system that leverages education, training, and experience. The task is key to developing purpose-driven adaptability from the training system. Commissioning research to identify the most favorable performance behaviors to introduce into the system is the first step. Once embedded, measuring performance at the crucible experience and adjusting the taxonomy based upon observations would maximize the desired adaptability performance requirements contribute to winning in a complex world.


3 Ibid., 31.

4 Ibid., 10.


6 “Many leaders are of the opinion that they and those with whom they work are as adaptable as they need to be; that a normal career pattern, with traditional training, produces sufficient adaptability; and, therefore, there is no need to be concerned with developing greater adaptability. Specifically, they contend that although there is currently no purpose-designed adaptability training, existing training develops adaptability as a by-product. From this perspective, the question no longer is who should receive adaptability training and how should the training be accomplished, but why devote scarce resources to purpose-designed adaptability training for anyone?” Waldo D. Freeman and William R. Burns, Jr., Developing an Adaptability Training Strategy and Policy for the Department of Defense, IDA Paper P-4591 (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analysis, August 2010), 25.

7 Dr. Wong’s assertion is that Junior Leaders are operating in complex environments making decision with little direct oversight. The experience of the combat theater environment and previous Army training system could provide the minimal tools to be adaptive, likely an imperative in order to be successful in this case. Leonard Wong, Developing Adaptive Leaders: The Crucible of Operation Iraqi Freedom (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, July 2004), 3.


9 Freeman and Burns, Developing an Adaptability Training Strategy and Policy for the Department of Defense, 7.

10 “…despite frequent reference to the importance of adaptability by senior military leaders and a general consensus among academics and scientists as to what constitutes adaptability, there is no DOD-recognized definition of adaptability.” Ibid., iii, iv.

12 Ibid., 13-14.

13 Ibid., 16.


18 Ibid.


20 White et al., *Developing Adaptive Proficiency in Special Forces Officers*, 3-4.

21 Ibid., 4.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.


27 United States Army Chief of Staff, GEN Mark A. Milley, "Army Readiness Guidance, Calendar Year 2016-17," memorandum for all Army Leaders, Washington, DC, January 20, 2016, 3.

29 Ibid.


32 Ibid., 1-2.

33 Ibid., 2.

34 Ibid., 1.

35 Ibid., 3.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., 1-2.


39 Ibid., 9.


42 Ibid.

43 Ibid., xiii.

44 Pressure of time and overwhelming training requirements can lead leaders to make from poor to bad decision in how to expend training time. The priority of training must be made clear to leaders to maximize home station training opportunities. Leonard Wong and Stephen J. Gerras, Lying to Ourselves: Dishonesty in the Army Profession (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, February 2015).


46 A screen shot of the CATS viewer depicting the ability of a trainer to select a mission essential task and see the supporting collective tasks. The trainer can select a collective task and view the performance steps and measures associated with the task to develop training strategies. Ibid.
U.S. Department of the Army, *Training Units and Developing Leaders*, 3-12.

Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid., 4.


Purpose-driven adaptability figure is my own creation to visually depict task driving training, the practical application of Dr. Schein’s embedding and reinforcing mechanisms, and the cycle of correcting the T&EOs.


“Lessons learned is defined by CALL as — Validated knowledge and experience derived from observations and the historical study of military training, exercises, and combat operations that leads to a change in behavior at either the tactical (standard operating procedures (SOP), TTP, and so forth), operational, or strategic level or in one or more of the Army’s DOTMLPF domains.” Ibid., 10.

White et al., *Developing Adaptive Proficiency in Special Forces Officers*, 2.


Ibid., 612.

White et al., *Developing Adaptive Proficiency in Special Forces Officers*, 4.

The eight dimensions of adaptability are: handling emergencies or crisis situations; handling work stress; solving problems creatively; dealing effectively with unpredictable or changing work situations; learning work tasks, technologies, and procedures; demonstrating cultural adaptability; demonstrating physically oriented adaptability. Pulakos et al., "Adaptability in the Workplace: Development of a Taxonomy of Adaptive Performance."


