

OUTCOMES-BASED TRAINING: SOLDIERS AS LEADERS

By Command Sergeant Major Douglas S. Padgett and Lieutenant Colonel Richard A. Pratt

“As a command sergeant major [CSM], I am truly impressed by the Soldiers that come through this battalion. I believe that they are extremely smart, innovative, and flexible. This excites me because I believe they are the future leaders who will win the War on Terrorism. The battle that our Soldiers will face is asymmetrical warfare and not the conventional fight. The enemy is strong, smart, and adaptive. To win this battle, we must produce Soldiers that are innovative and ready to contribute immediately to their first unit. The outcomes-based training model fits directly into Major General Martin’s vision to build great engineers with full spectrum capabilities.”

—CSM Douglas S. Padgett

Transformation of our warfighting doctrine has driven changes in the way we train initial-entry Soldiers. Some of the training events and tasks are the same, but a lot of what we do in the training base is focused on preparing Soldiers for immediate deployment to the current fight. There is a real focus on refining training through the implementation of an “outcomes-based” training model,¹ and this has greatly transformed how we in the 31st Engineer Battalion view the training of Soldiers—not only in basic skills such as warrior tasks and battle drills, but in the development of initial-entry training (IET) Soldiers as future leaders, prepared to accept the challenges of evolving warfare across a full spectrum of operations (see Figure 1).

The process of developing leaders in the Army (at all levels) is fairly straightforward; we allow them to—

- Develop a plan.
- Prepare to execute the plan.
- Conduct the operation.
- Assess and evaluate the results through self-analysis and external feedback.

We see this formula as lieutenants take charge of their first platoons. We also see it in every rotation at the National Training Center, the Joint Readiness Training Center, and the Joint Maneuver Readiness Center, where the observer-controllers allow Soldiers to take chances and calculated risks in a controlled environment. They teach



Figure 1. The five outcomes (Fig. 1-1 from *The Drill Sergeant Handbook*)²

and test leadership by allowing leaders to act, succeed, and make mistakes—then access their strengths and shortfalls, which in turn builds confidence, esteem, and discipline. This proven model of leadership development trains and evaluates Soldiers in all five of the categories of learning (see Figure 2, page 41). We find that in the IET environment, we can teach Soldiers to be leaders at the same time that we are teaching them the basics of soldiering. In fact, for many Soldiers, the additional stress of being placed in a leadership position helps them perform at their peak level.

As Soldiers enter IET, they are immediately given tasks to build teamwork and instill a sense of accomplishment and confidence; this is the first step to building leaders. We believe that on Day One of training, Soldiers should be given missions to accomplish and be evaluated on their ability to participate as a member of a team. This is definitely a paradigm shift from the days of being told step-by-step what to do and how to do it. Several Soldiers are selected by the drill sergeants to serve as squad leaders and/or platoon guides (platoon sergeants). The newly selected leaders have only their “brevet rank” and the innate leadership traits they brought

Basic Categories of Learning

Facts/Rote Memory: Recite the military rank, chain of command, three general orders, and The Soldier's Creed

Procedures/How To: Operate a radio, conduct first aid, set up a shelter half, establish a checkpoint

Motor Skills: Use a bayonet to defend yourself, engage targets with an M16A2, engage combatives

Problem Solving: Employ troop-leading procedures; react to various scenarios; assess mission, enemy, terrain, troops, time available, and civilian consideration (METT-TC)

Attitudes: Maintain self-discipline, teamwork, Seven Army Values

Figure 2

with them to effectively lead their peers (who possibly outrank them with private second class or private first class rank earned while serving at their home station) through the trials of engineer one-station unit training (OSUT).

Soldiers serving in leadership positions quickly learn additional leadership skills through observation and individual training from their drill sergeant on how to direct the actions of their newly assigned unit. It is exciting to see the drill sergeants working with the student leadership to accomplish the mission, and it is a process that develops “followers” and “leaders” concurrently. In fact, as the drill sergeants rotate the student leadership positions, Soldiers see the real value in being good team members and supporting the current chain of command—especially as

they hope to have the full support of their peers if and when they are put in charge.

“When I was a drill sergeant”—a common phrase often heard among senior noncommissioned officers—“Soldiers were told where to be, how to get there, how to accomplish the mission, and who had to do it.” This old tradition didn’t allow Soldiers to understand the process of problem-solving (which leads to mission accomplishment), to take initiative, or to develop their own leadership skills. A common cliché among training platoons now is “Lead the way, drill sergeant, and we will follow.”

We have challenged our drill sergeants to look at their Soldiers not as “trainees,” but as the members of their operational squads and platoons. Drill sergeants give warning orders and operations orders and conduct troop-leading procedures, precombat checks, and precombat inspections (see Figure 3). Once they

teach the students to use these techniques, they watch the student leadership execute the mission. Soldiers are given the mission of assisting with morning accountability and reporting; monitoring training schedules and timelines; leading after-action reviews; and leading the battalion commander and CSM through inspections.

Leader actions demonstrated during the Red Phase of OSUT (weeks 1–3) look distinctly different from those in the Blue Phase (weeks 6–8). By the end of the Blue Phase, student leaders are conducting combat patrols during a field training exercise that culminates with combat operations through the Night Infiltration Course (a simulated raid conducted under direct enemy fire with M240B machine guns live-fired directly above their heads).

Key Concepts

Troop Leading Procedures

1. Receive the mission
2. Issue a warning order
3. Make a tentative plan
4. Initiate movement
5. Conduct reconnaissance
6. Complete the plan
7. Issue the orders
8. Supervise and refine—
 - a. Precombat checks
 - b. Precombat inspections
 - c. Rehearsals

Every Soldier is a Sensor (ES2)³

1. Conduct after-action reviews (AARs)
2. Perform individual counseling
3. Conduct sensing sessions



The Army training management model
(Figure 4-5 from FM 7-0)⁴

Figure 3

Student leaders take charge by directing fire and maneuver, calling for status reports, and directing aid and litter teams with a level of confidence expected from a noncommissioned officer. It is a formidable task, but our success rate is high, resulting in greater pride and confidence in young Soldiers as they accomplish complex tasks while serving as leaders of these formations.

As outcomes-based training is fully implemented, we will see Soldiers who are ready to contribute immediately upon assignment to their first operational unit, drawing on more highly developed leadership abilities:

“I will never forget my first platoon sergeant, who saw my leadership potential and maximized every opportunity to make me successful. He provided the purpose, motivation, and direction; that was all I needed. I was given the task to ensure that the platoon’s area of responsibility was always in a high state of readiness. It was then my responsibility to request the resources, plan and coordinate the tasks, and follow up and evaluate. I was in charge of some seniors, peers, and subordinates—a daunting task, but it really developed my leadership skills.”

—CSM Douglas S. Padgett

Outcomes-based training applies this same idea; it pushes young Soldiers to learn several different concepts at the same time, including basic tasks, with the underlying theme of training Soldiers and developing them as leaders. Beginning the process of leader development early during basic combat training provides our Army with better-trained, more confident, and more proficient Soldiers. 

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Endnotes

¹“Outcomes-based training is a philosophical approach to military training that stresses the end state of the Soldier’s mental intangibles, attributes, and skills required by the commander for combat. The training is guided by the commander’s intent and unit initiative to obtain the greatest effectiveness and is not focused on process-driven requirements.” *Drill Sergeant Handbook*, Chapter 1, “Knowledge,” 1 January 2009, Directorate of Basic Combat Training (DBCT) Center of Excellence (COE).

²Center for Army Lessons Learned, No. 09-12, *Drill Sergeant Handbook*, 12 January 2009, Figure 1-1, page 7.

³Moving away from the notion of the “intelligence officer” and toward human intelligence-gathering operations at every level is the concept of “every Soldier as a sensor (ES2).” Torchbearer National Security Report, June 2005, <www.ansa.org/programs/torchbearer/nsr>, accessed 5 October 2009.

⁴Field Manual 7-0, *Training for Full Spectrum Operations*, 12 December 2008, Figure 4-5, pages 4-14.