

Engineer Officer Education Transformation

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On 4 February 2003, the Army announced significant changes to the Officer Education System (OES). These changes seek to provide the right education, in the right medium, to the right leader at the right time and place. Just as the Army transforms to the Objective Force to meet the challenges of the 21st century security environment, so too must the Army transform its education system to train and educate the leaders who will command and control that force.

The U. S. Army Engineer School at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, has been a leader in every facet of OES transformation. One of the keys to our success has been the many ideas, comments, and concerns from the field. Much of the feedback is incorporated into the Engineer School's transformation strategy. The latest initiatives and changes to the way we will train our engineer officers are captured in the following paragraphs.

After the Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC), junior officers will no longer move through broad-based educational gates based solely on a time frame. But, when officers move into a new staff job or into command, they will receive specific institutional training that is tailored to the skill sets necessary to succeed in that position (see Figure 1).

The current Officer Basic Course will transform into BOLC. This course will ensure a tough, standardized, small-unit leadership experience that flows progressively from

precommissioning (BOLC I) to initial-entry field leadership experience, a 6-week training experience held at a centralized location (BOLC II). The final component of the course will be branch technical/tactical training, an 11-week program held in residence at the proponent school (BOLC III). Current plans are for BOLC to be fully implemented in the 3d quarter fiscal year (FY) 06.

Training beyond BOLC will consist of the Combined Arms Staff Course (CASC) and the Combined Arms Battle Command Course (CABCC). These two courses will replace the existing Captain's Career Course and the Combined Arms and Services Staff School. The changes in the OES will provide institutional training that is tailored to a specific job in a way that is expertly packaged and provides more frequent training for shorter periods. This will allow the mind to better absorb and understand concepts and thus increase overall retention and depth of knowledge. Exposure to multiple and diverse jobs will provide breadth to an officer's knowledge.

The CASC is designed to train staff officer skills. The diversity of the Engineer Regiment requires multiple assignment-oriented training opportunities for its officers. With that concept in mind, the Engineer School developed a modular concept for the CASC built around six engineer staff/technical courses:

- Assistant Brigade Engineer
- Assistant Division/Corps Engineer
- Task Force Engineer
- Geospatial Manager
- Construction Engineer
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Engineer

All six courses will include advanced distributed learning (ADL) and intense resident experiential training. The officer's initial CASC course will include a 2-week common-core ADL, followed by a 1-week functional ADL module, and then a 2-week resident phase. The resident experience is the vehicle by which the officer will demonstrate a

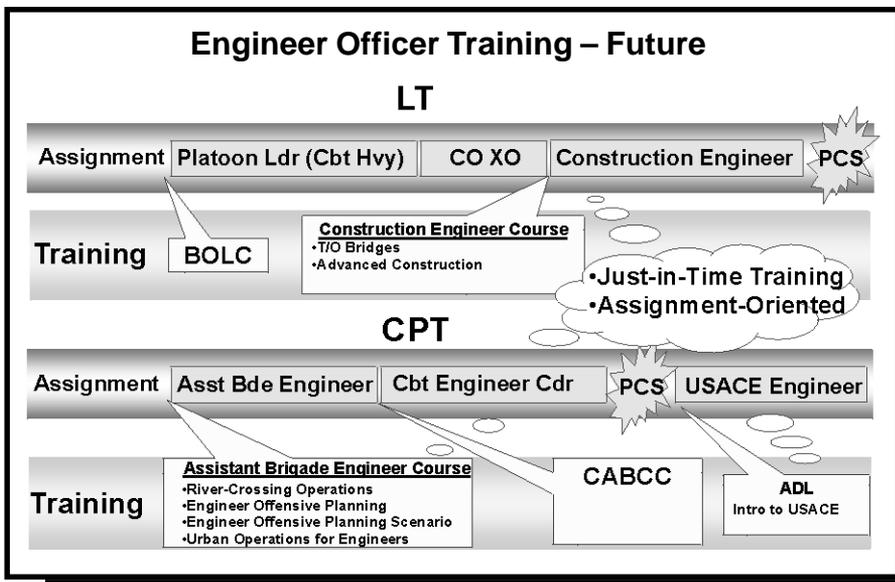


Figure 1

mastery of knowledge gained through completion of ADL. The experiential training will immerse the officers in simulations, history-based vignettes, and progressive problem-solving situations related to developing the skill sets required of the position.

These courses will provide assignment-oriented training just in time for a staff duty position. The construct of this design allows engineer officers to receive training before assuming a staff/technical position anywhere along their career path. The six courses have some foundational knowledge in common, which is organized into modules. This commonality allows for reduced training time as officers receive the foundational knowledge in the first course attended. Subsequent courses will not repeat this baseline but will build on it to train the unique skills and knowledge for that course. For instance, an officer can take the fourteen required ADL modules for the Construction Engineer Course but only have to take five additional course-unique ADL modules to complete the Assistant Brigade Engineer Course. The residential phase is still required, and the officer has an option to repeat modules if desired. Current plans call for the implementation of CASC for 3d quarter FY05 (see Figure 2).

As with the CASC, the Engineer School has developed a modular construct to train battle command skills in the CABCC. The curriculum in the proposed command course is divided into seven modules: take command, train, administer, maintain, deploy, fight, and lead. Each module will include both ADL and experiential training activities that focus on company command. Leaders and officers in the field will also benefit from the modular design. The time an officer spends completing his ADL will be more focused, and leaders will be able to provide more focused mentorship, which should result in a more meaningful and rewarding learning experience for junior officers. The course will culminate with a 2-week combat training center experience, which will expand upon training management skills. Current plans will implement CABCC in 2d quarter FY06.

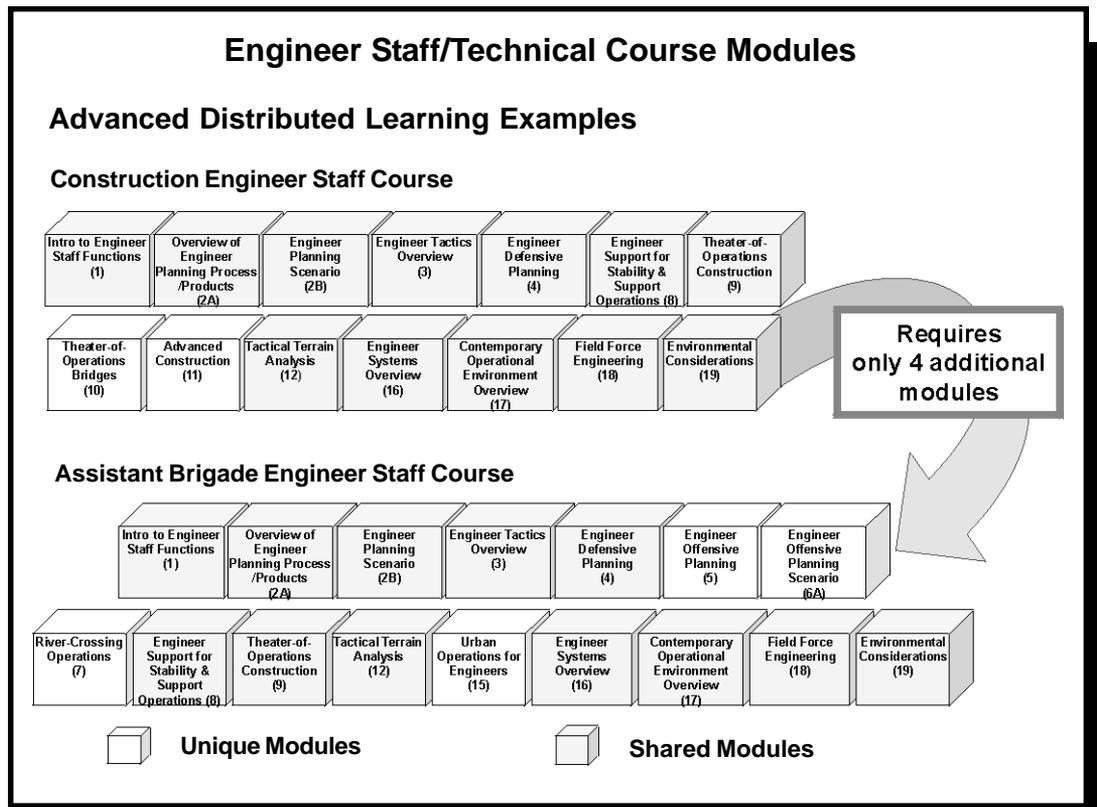


Figure 2

The current Command and General Staff College (CGSC) will change to Intermediate Level Education (ILE). All majors will attend 12 weeks of common-core operational instruction. An additional phase of up to 28 weeks will be provided to meet the requirements and needs of officers in their respective career field and/or functional area. Current plans are for ILE to be fully implemented by 4th quarter FY05.

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