

Educating the Army's Field Grade Officer and
Recommendations for the Command and General Staff Officer
Course

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

Educating the Army's Field Grade Officers and Recommendations for the Command and General Staff Officer Course, by MAJ Brett M. Matzenbacher, 43 pages.

Standing guidance directs that the Command and General Staff Officer Course, delivered by the Command and General Staff School, must prepare students for their next ten years of service while simultaneously refocusing the officer corps from stability operations to large-scale combat operations to account for the resurgence in great power competition. Given this change in the environment and the Army's resulting shift in focus, how has the CGSS modified the curriculum of the CGSOC to produce field grade officers that are prepared to conduct large scale combat operations and for their next ten years of service? The CGSS has adapted its curriculum to align with this shift in focus, however, several challenges remain that preclude the school from fully aligning with this shift in emphasis while also complying with its mandate to prepare officers for their next ten years of service. Using the lenses of history, theory, and doctrine illustrates that changes to the course are incomplete, that improvements to faculty composition and the course's design are necessary, and that our doctrine is not nested with practice.

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Abbreviations

ADP	Army Doctrine Publication
AMSP	Advanced Military Studies Program
AOC	Advanced Operations Course
ATLDP	Army Training and Leader Development Panel
AY	Academic Year
CARL	Combined Arms Research Library
CAS3	Combined Arms and Services Staff School
CC	Common Core
CGSC	Command and General Staff College
CGSS	Command and General Staff School
CGSOC	Command and General Staff Officer Course
CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
FM	Field Manual
ILE	Intermediate Level Education
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JFLCC	Joint Force Land Component Command
JP	Joint Publication
KD	Key and Developmental
PME	Professional Military Education
RETO	Review of Education and Training for Officers
SAMS	School of Advanced Military Studies
TF	Task Force

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Introduction

In no other army is it so imperative that the officers of the permanent establishment be highly perfected specialists, prepared to serve as instructors and leaders for the citizen forces which are to fight our wars.

—General John Pershing, *Field Artillery Journal*

The following pages detail the history of officer education at the Command and General Staff School (CGSS) at Fort Leavenworth. Given this historical context, it is apparent that the most enduring characteristic of the CGSS is its constant change. Technology, changing mission, changes in the operating environment, modifications to the larger officer education system, and other stimuli have all been catalysts for change of the school and its course. Today the CGSS faces another period of transformation. Current guidance states that the Command and General Staff Officer Course (CGSOC) must “prepare new field grade officers for their next 10 years of service.”¹ The *Joint Operating Environment 2035* states the US will “face challenges from both persistent disorder and states contesting international norms” during that timeframe.² The Army’s recently published concept for the future, *The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028*, focuses on the latter of these two challenges.³ As such, the Army “is now attempting to change its culture shaped by over 15 years of persistent limited-contingency operations” to shift focus to “prevail in large-scale ground combat operations against peer and near-peer threats.”⁴ Given this

¹ Throughout its history, the school and course have undergone numerous name changes. As such, unless quoted directly, the current names are used throughout this monograph. The Command and General Staff School (CGSS) is the current name for the school itself. The course that is delivered by this school is the Command and General Staff Officer Course (CGSOC). US Department of the Army, *Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3: Officer Professional Development and Career Management* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2019), 7.

² Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *Joint Operating Environment 2035: Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community*, February 2016, 4.

³ US Army, *TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1: The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028* (Fort Eustis, VA: Training and Doctrine Command, 2018), 6.

⁴ Peter J. Schifferle, ed., *Bringing Order to Chaos: Historical Case Studies of Combined Arms Maneuver in Large-Scale Combat Operations* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army University Press, 2018), v.

change in the environment and the Army's resulting shift in focus, how has the CGSS modified the curriculum of the CGSOC to produce field grade officers that are prepared to conduct large scale combat operations and for their next ten years of service? The CGSS has adapted its curriculum to align with this shift in focus, however, several challenges remain that preclude the school from fully aligning with this shift in emphasis while also complying with its mandate to prepare officers for their next ten years of service. Using the lenses of history, theory, and doctrine illustrates that changes to the course are incomplete, that improvements to faculty composition and the course's design are necessary, and that our leader development doctrine is not nested with practice.

Pre-World War I

Army officer education has a long history at Fort Leavenworth. General William T. Sherman ordered the creation of a "school of application for infantry and cavalry" in May 1881, marking the beginning of Fort Leavenworth's use as a hub for officer education.⁵ The goals of this school were relatively modest, providing tactical instruction more akin to what officers receive today in their respective basic branch courses, as well as arithmetic and writing.⁶ Officers assigned to line positions at Fort Leavenworth were detailed as instructors as an additional duty, which illustrates the ad hoc nature of the US Infantry and Cavalry School. This school served as the progenitor of today's Command and General Staff School.⁷

Officer education at Fort Leavenworth has evolved many times since the establishment of this first school, usually associated with watershed events in the army's and nation's history. The

⁵ US Army General Orders No. 42 (07 May 1881) and General Order No. 8 (26 January 1882), cited in Elvid Hunt and Walter Lorence, *History of Fort Leavenworth 1827-1937* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Fort Leavenworth Historical Society, 1981).

⁶ Command and General Staff College, *A Military History of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College 1881-1963* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, May 1964), 3-4.

⁷ Timothy K. Nenninger, "Fort Leavenworth Schools: Postgraduate Military Education and Professionalization in the U.S. Army, 1880-1920," PhD diss. (University of Wisconsin, 1974), 43-45.

school underwent its first significant transition after the Spanish-American War.⁸ Based on the findings of the Dodge Commission, Secretary of War Elihu Root signed General Order 155, which established the CGSS as the penultimate officer education experience in an officer's career.⁹ As such, the school changed focus from the small unit level to the division and corps level. This proved a prescient modification given America's entry into World War I just a decade later. The graduates of the CGSS proved themselves during the US Army's involvement in World War I. General Pershing sought them for his staff and established an abbreviated version of the course at Langres, France to meet the requirements of a rapidly expanded army in dire need of improved staff work.

Inter-war

The American experience in World War I resulted in an overhaul of the CGSS. Despite the demonstrated value of the CGSOC during the war, the Army's performance as a whole left many officers with "a deep feeling of professional incompetence."¹⁰ While stopgap measures like the school established at Langres provided an expedient method to address the strain placed on the officer corps during the war, the fact remained that there were simply too few officers properly trained and educated to plan, prepare, and execute operations on the scale seen in France. Having established the value of the CGSOC in combat, the army looked to maximize its use in anticipation of the next great war. The National Defense Act of 1920 established a "small regular army designed as a schoolhouse for both the National Guard and a large reserve force with an unusually large proportion of commissioned officers" that would serve as the seed corn

⁸ Peter J. Schifferle, *America's School for War: Fort Leavenworth, Officer Education, and Victory in World War II* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 100.

⁹ The Dodge Commission was a body formed at the direction of President William McKinley in 1898 to investigate claims of incompetence and fraud within the War Department. Nenner, "Fort Leavenworth Schools," 95-97.

¹⁰ Schifferle, *America's School for War*, 15.

for a much larger army upon national mobilization.¹¹ While force levels would remain low, promotions stagnant, and large scale training opportunities scarce, officer education would be a top priority as a hedge against these other shortcomings. Senior army leadership mandated that the CGSS would begin its first post-war class on 1 September 1919, less than a year after the armistice in Europe, despite extensive updates to the curriculum. Additionally, the army expanded the duration of the course to two years.¹² The first year of instruction, the School of the Line, taught combined arms operations at the division level. Meanwhile, a second year of instruction at the General Staff School focused on corps level operations.¹³ Opinions are varied as to the quality of the education officers received at Fort Leavenworth during the interwar period.¹⁴ However, the influence of the school on the army as it entered World War II is indisputable, as fourteen of thirty-four corps commanders were both CGSS graduates and instructors.¹⁵ Only one corps level commander or higher was not a graduate of the CGSOC.

¹¹ Ibid, 17.

¹² Office of the Chief of Staff, War Plans Division, "Memorandum to Accompany Proposed Revision of Article XIV. Compilation of Orders - Embracing the Subject of Military Education," March 1919, 1-3, NAII RG 407, Box 808, folder 352 (10-13-19) to (10-4-18).

¹³ U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Regulations, No. 350-5, Military Education* (Washington, DC, 1925), 8.

¹⁴ Some historians have been openly critical of the performance of US Army officers in World War II. Jörg Muth takes this approach in *Command Culture: Officer Education in the U.S. Army and the German Armed Forces, 1901-1940, and the Consequences of World War II* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2011), as does Martin Blumenson in "America's World War II Leaders in Europe: Some Thoughts," *Parameters* 19, no. 4 (December 1989), 2-13. Another popular opinion, while not necessarily critical of US Army officers, is that the Allies prevailed by economic might, principally that of the United States. A small sample of this robust body of work is represented by the following, John Ellis, *Brute Force: Allied Strategy and Tactics in the Second World War* (New York: Viking, 1990); Martin Van Creveld, *Fighting Power: German Military Performance, 1914-1945* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Art of War Colloquium, US Army War College, 1983), Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *A War to be Won* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000), Russell F. Weigley, *American Way of War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), and Brian Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

¹⁵ Robert H. Berlin, *U.S. Army World War II Corps Commanders: A Composite Biography* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, CGSC, 1989), data from table 2, 11.

Post-World War II – Vietnam War

The school faced several challenges after World War II, resulting in a “patchwork curriculum” as the “army organized its officer education system.”¹⁶ Indecision on the future of officer education and the CGSS’s role is evidenced by the fact that three separate boards were convened to study the topic in the first twelve years following the end of the war.¹⁷ The school’s faculty grappled with three main issues: the expansion of the curriculum to cover course material required by the elimination of the Army War College after the war, the role of the army with the advent of nuclear weapons, and the dichotomy caused by the need to prepare students as staff officers as well as future division commanders. Combining the CGSS and War College curriculums overburdened and “cluttered the Leavenworth curriculum,” resulting in a diluted learning experience for the students.¹⁸ The reestablishment of the Army War College based on the findings of the Eddy Board mitigated this concern and resulted in a more manageable range of instruction for the CGSS.¹⁹ Initially, the school made little effort to incorporate atomic weapons into the curriculum. However, the school introduced atomics in 1950 and the 1952-1953 class saw an increase in instruction “in atomics to 210 hours.”²⁰ In 1956 the new commandant, Major General Lionel C. McGarr, “directed a wholesale rewrite” to incorporate atomic considerations throughout the course “marking the culmination of the atomic battlefield’s influence on the

¹⁶ Michael D. Stewart, “Raising a Pragmatic Army: Officer Education at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1946-1986,” PhD diss. (University of Kansas, 2010), 12.

¹⁷ Ibid, 137.

¹⁸ Hanson W. Baldwin, “Army College Expands,” *New York Times*, 17 January 1949, 8.

¹⁹ The Eddy Board was one of three boards convened by the Army within the first 12 years after the end of World War II to analyze and provide recommendations on ways to improve officer education. Manton S. Eddy, *Report of the Department of the Army Board on Educational System for Officers*, June, 1949, 37.

²⁰ In this context atomics relates to the impact of the use of atomic weapons on the battlefield. Command and General Staff College, *Staff Study: Instruction of Allied Officer Students at CGSC*, December 20, 1951, Annex 3, 1, Folder “Staff Study,” Box 55, Classified Central Files, 1951-1952, RG 337, NARA II, Fort Leavenworth.

curriculum.”²¹ Finally, this period saw an increased debate over the purpose of the course. Was the primary purpose of the course to prepare future commanders or expert staff officers? Commanders in the field felt the CGSS was splitting the difference and providing graduates with inadequate expertise in either.²²

The 1960s saw the next major period of transformation for the CGSS, yet, surprisingly, the Vietnam War “had little to do with the change.”²³ The school began to place less emphasis on serving as the Army’s “senior school of applied tactics” to one that would prepare students for the administrative roles they would fulfill within a large government bureaucracy.²⁴ This change in emphasis was in line with new guidance published by the Continental Army Command (CONARC) stating that as an officer “progresses to positions of greater responsibility, he needs the professional development and increased perspective that comes from formal education” and that officers must understand “the economic, political, and psychological factors that influence military behavior.”²⁵

The findings of the Haines Board, released in February of 1966, significantly influenced the direction of the school. The board’s “recommendations for CGSC rested on three observations.”²⁶ First, the tactical experience of students was significantly higher than in the past, with more than sixty percent of the class having served in a division or higher organization.²⁷

²¹ Stewart, “Raising a Pragmatic Army,” 103.

²² Command and General Staff College, *Report of the Educational Survey Commission, Command and General Staff College* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1956), 59.

²³ Stewart, “Raising a Pragmatic Army,” 191.

²⁴ L.M. Wilson, “Draft Faculty Memorandum No. 1, /4 Curriculum” (Fort Leavenworth, KS, August, 1962), Binder Curriculum Planning Actions Pertaining to the /4 Plan, CARL.

²⁵ CONARC was the predecessor to Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and Forces Command (FORSCOM) before these responsibilities were split into two separate four-star commands. Headquarters, US Continental Army Command, “Annex Q to USACONARC Training Directive Army Service School System Policies and Administration” (Fort Monroe, VA, January 14, 1964), Q-16, CARL.

²⁶ The Haines Board was yet another commission convened to assess field grade officer education, specifically of the CGSS at Fort Leavenworth. Stewart, “Raising a Pragmatic Army,” 211.

²⁷ Ralph E. Haines, *Report of the Department of the Army Board to Review Army Officer Schools* (Washington, DC, February 1966), 35-36.

Second, for most of the students, CGSS would represent their final, formal, block of military education. Finally, “one-third of the graduates left CGSC directly for non-tactical assignments.”²⁸ These observations and resulting changes to the course fundamentally changed the CGSOC. When the school’s leadership briefed the new CONARC Commander, the recently promoted Lieutenant General Haines on their proposed changes, he was able to implement many of the modifications his board recommended. The Army transitioned the CGSS away from a trade school focused on developing its mid-grade officers to be experts in tactics at the division level to “a professional graduate school affording career education,” replicating a liberal arts university.²⁹ In many ways, the school has retained this model since the early 1970s.

Post-Vietnam War & the Creation of TRADOC

As the nation emerged from the ordeal of the Vietnam War, officer education became part of larger reforms shaping the army. All institutional training now fell under the newly created Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), giving the CGSS a new higher headquarters with a smaller mandate and a greater focus on the school. Additionally, the liberalization of the school’s curriculum, more closely replicating a civilian university setting, had triggered a reaction from leaders who felt that the pendulum had shifted too far from training to education.³⁰ One of these was the new Commanding General of TRADOC, General William E. Depuy, who shared his concerns with the school commandant, Major General John Hennessey, stating the curriculum should be focused on tactics at the division level.³¹ Major General John Seigle was more direct, stating “CGSC should do a better job training officers rather than ‘educating them.’”³² In

²⁸ Haines, *Report of the Department of the Army Board to Review Army Officer Schools*, 35.

²⁹ Ivan J. Birrer, “The New CGSC Curriculum,” *Military Review* 52, no. 6 (June 1972): 26.

³⁰ Stewart, “Raising a Pragmatic Army,” 241.

³¹ John J. Hennessey, “Memorandum for Record: Telephone Call from CG TRADOC.” (Fort Leavenworth, KS, July 1973), CARL.

³² Major General Seigle was serving in the TRADOC G3 position at the time. Robert Arter, *Trip Report of Majors DeReu and Van Steenburg* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, January 1979), Folder Miscellaneous Memos (1 of 2), Drawer 1978, Cabinet CAC, CAFLA.

response, tactical instruction increased from a low of 194 hours in Academic Year (AY) 1981-1982 to 261 hours by AY 1984-1985.³³ The other focus during this period was improving the quality and quantity of the faculty, which had been undermanned for years and had never regained the level of prestige that existed during the interwar period. The army “shortchanged its officer education system in this regard” creating an atmosphere where “the profession looked on instructors as inferior.”³⁴ However, with the implementation of the small group model and considerable effort by then commandant, Lieutenant General William R. Richardson, faculty quality improved, even if filling all faculty positions remained a struggle.³⁵

Intermediate Level Education

Finally, the findings of the Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP) drove the most recent transformation of the CGSOC. One major output of this study was the decision to increase CGSS attendance to all “active component, operations career field majors.”³⁶ This change dramatically increased the size of the student body. Class sizes in the early 1960s had totaled fewer than 700 students. With the advent of “universal ILE,” the 2010-2011 academic year saw a class size of 1,439 officers.³⁷ This rapid growth had impacts on the faculty as well. Most notably, the number of civilian instructors, on the rise since the 1970s, exploded relative to the number of military instructors at the school. During AY 2010-2011, the CGSS faculty included 373 instructors, however, 264 of them, or 71%, were civilians, leaving just 109 officers

³³ Stewart, “Raising a Pragmatic Army,” 268 table 10.

³⁴ Ibid, 302.

³⁵ Ibid, 303.

³⁶ The ATLDP was yet another of the ubiquitous reviews of the officer education program at Fort Leavenworth. This practice has since been rescinded, and attendance at CGSS has reverted to 50% of the active army population. James Sisemore, “Fort Leavenworth and Its Education Legacy; Recommendations for ILE” (Masters monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2012), 57.

³⁷ Command and General Staff College, *CGSC Resident ILE/JPME Phase I Student and Faculty Comparison* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, September 2011).

as instructors at the Army’s mid-grade officer education school.³⁸ Additionally, the ATLDP’s findings that many students felt inadequately prepared to conduct tactical planning at the Division level or above reignited the debate of the CGSS’s purpose.³⁹ Also, the new Intermediate Level Education (ILE) curriculum covered operations from the Joint Force Land Component Command (JFLCC) to the brigade level.⁴⁰ This was a significant broadening in the scope of previous instruction. Despite the increased emphasis on tactics, the actual hours of instruction on tactics decreased from 200 to just 179 hours.⁴¹ Once again, the scope of the school and its student population were expanding, while the size of its military faculty was shrinking apace.



Figure 1: CGSOC Curriculum Map. Screenshot from Microsoft PowerPoint. Created by CGSS.

³⁸ Command and General Staff College, *JMPE Student/Faculty Report to the Joint Staff* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, October 2010).

³⁹ *The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to the Army* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2001), OS-11.

⁴⁰ The current curriculum map is provided on the following page for reference throughout the paper. Sisemore, “Fort Leavenworth and Its Education Legacy; Recommendations for ILE,” 58.

⁴¹ Christopher Gabel, “The Leavenworth Staff College: A Historical Overview,” *Military Review* 77, no. 5 (October 1997): 100.

The Rhymes of History

Precisely because of their detachment from and elevation above the landscape of the past, historians are able to manipulate time and space in ways they could never manage as normal people. They can compress these dimensions, expand them, compare them, measure them, even transcend them, almost as poets, playwrights, novelists, and film-makers do. Historians have always been, in this sense, abstractionists: the literal representation of reality is not their task.

—John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History*

There are periods in American history analogous to the present which may illuminate a better way forward and needed adjustments within the Army's field grade officer education. Changes at the CGSS in the post-Vietnam War era were described in broad outlines in the preceding pages, however, a deeper look at this time period reveals many parallels with the contemporary environment that may be used to guide the present school towards a better officer education course.

Past is Prologue

Two events in the mid-1970s heavily influenced officer education at the CGSS. One was the withdrawal of all US forces from Vietnam and the subsequent unification of the country by the communist North Vietnamese. The other was the Yom Kippur War between Israel and a coalition of Arab states. The “defeat of one proxy army and the pyrrhic victory of another” reverberated across the army and had profound consequences at Fort Leavenworth.⁴² Specifically, the suddenness and lethality of the Yom Kippur War, fought between American and Soviet proxies, convinced army leaders that any direct confrontation with the Soviets would be fought in the context of even greater lethality. Additionally, army leadership determined that this fight would be decided by the level of readiness of the forces at hand, before a citizen army could be mobilized.⁴³ This understanding of the operating environment directly drove the school in

⁴² Stewart, “Raising a Pragmatic Army,” 237.

⁴³ David Jablonsky, “US Military Doctrine and the Revolution in Military Affairs,” *Parameters* (Autumn 1994): 18–36.

three directions. One, the school reduced the emphasis on stability operations. Secondly, the CGSS significantly increased the focus on major combat operations. Finally, the school addressed a recurrent concern since the post-World War II era began, that being the plummeting quality of the faculty at the school.

As discussed earlier, the 1960s saw the CGSOC pull away from its historical role as the Army's center for the instruction of tactics at the division and corps level and had now become "an orientation course for majors, with emphasis on humanities, political and social sciences."⁴⁴ While an overall more broadening experience, this departure from the school's historical focus was not without critics. Brigadier General Paul F. Gorman's observation of the typical mid-1970s CGSS graduate was damning, writing that "There are very few majors and lieutenant colonels running around in the Army today who have much more than a kindergarten idea of how to put together all combat power" in the context of division level operations.⁴⁵ Additionally, a Strategic Studies Institute report questioned "whether the Army as a service had the ability to develop officers capable of performing duties in operational headquarters."⁴⁶ Tactical planning expertise had declined dramatically at the school that had produced the planners that won World War II. The school set out to correct these identified shortfalls in tactics and planning proficiency. In addition to increasing the hours of instruction on tactics noted earlier, the CGSS put technology to work and incorporated newly acquired simulations capability, allowing students to execute operations they had only planned previously, and therefore benefitting from this direct feedback on their planning prowess.⁴⁷ Additionally, the school drove a renewed emphasis on logistics in

⁴⁴ Donn A Starry Interview (Fairfax Station, VA, 1995), 19–20.

⁴⁵ Paul F. Gorman quoted in "An Analysis of Responses to 'The Best Military Education System in the World,'" ca 1978, Folder Officer Training, Drawer 1978, Cabinet CAC/Fort Leavenworth, CAFLA.

⁴⁶ Strategic Studies Institute, *Operation Planning: An Analysis of the Education and Development of Effective Army Planners* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, September 30, 1982).

⁴⁷ Major William D. Meiers, interview by Michael Pearlman, May 1986, Folder General, CTAC-003, CGSC 85, CAFLA.

the planning of large-scale tactical operations.⁴⁸ While seemingly obvious and long a hallmark of American military operations, logistical planning had deteriorated at the school. While the rededication of program of instruction (POI) hours to large scale combat had the desired effect, improving the quality of tactical planning within the CGSOC, the bill payer was a drastic reduction in emphasis on stability operations. In fact, the “faculty nearly succeeded in extirpating low intensity conflict, small wars, internal defense, and counterinsurgency from the curriculum” as instruction fell to just eight hours for the 1981-1982 AY.⁴⁹ Ultimately, however, the problem of staff planning proficiency would not be completely corrected until the creation of an entirely new school. The Combined Arms and Services Staff School (CAS3) was born out of the findings of the Review of Education and Training for Officers (RETO) that stated that “all field grade officers need some staff training” in tactical and garrison operations.⁵⁰ This nine-week course would serve to fill the gap in tactical training while still preserving the “university” tenor at the CGSS.

While the CGSS staff was relooking the content of the CGSOC to better prepare students for the future, Fort Leavenworth leadership pondered how to acquire better talent for that staff, specifically among the instructors. As seen earlier during the interwar period, the army invested talent heavily in the institutional army. In 1929 for example, nearly half of all infantry captains and majors were serving somewhere in the schoolhouse as students or instructors.⁵¹ The experience of Major General Ernest N. Harmon, who ascended to corps command during World War II, was typical for the era. In the two decades between the end of World War I and the beginning of World War II, he spent “eight years as an instructor” and was “a student for four

⁴⁸ Stewart, “Raising a Pragmatic Army,” 267.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 264.

⁵⁰ B.L. Harrison, *A Review of Education and Training for Officers, An Overview* (Washington, DC, June 1978), VI-1-VI-7.

⁵¹ Notes from the Chief of Infantry, “Duties of Infantry Officers,” *Infantry Journal* 34, no. 1 (January 1929): 80.

years.”⁵² The institutional army was the path to high command for two primary reasons. One, military education and training were highly valued by the most influential officer in the army, General John Pershing, and, secondly, because officer education was the only thing the army could get Congress to pay for in the lean interwar years.⁵³ This emphasis made instructor positions highly coveted as well as professionally broadening. Unfortunately, the prestige of teaching in the institutional army did not survive World War II, and by the 1970s the position had reached its nadir. Promotion rates among instructors seemed “to lag behind Army-wide rates” and “recruiting faculty had to overcome years of accumulated disdain.”⁵⁴ In the early 1980s, Fort Leavenworth’s leadership began a prolonged campaign to improve the quality of personnel sent to CGSS as instructors. The Deputy Commandant, Brigadier General Crosbie Saint stated that “we must have the very best officer available to perform the vital tasks necessary in developing and teaching the Army’s future leaders” and that “marginal or average doctrine/instructional developers do not train or educate superior performers.”⁵⁵ However, real progress was difficult to achieve until the commandant, Lieutenant General William R. Richardson, left Fort Leavenworth to become the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, and, therefore, the Army’s principal staff officer who oversaw TRADOC’s functions” where he was able to influence Lieutenant General Maxwell R. Thurman, the Army’s personnel chief to assist in staffing the school with better personnel.⁵⁶ As a result of these efforts, by 1984 the promotion rate for CGSOC instructors was 12.8 percent higher than the army average, showing a decided increase in the quality of personnel assigned to Leavenworth to teach the army’s field grade population.⁵⁷

⁵² Schifferle, *America’s School for War*, 19.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 19–20.

⁵⁴ Stewart, “Raising a Pragmatic Army,” 253.

⁵⁵ Crosbie E. Saint, “Letter to William C. Roll,” March 18, 1982, Folder Correspondence (MAR)-BG Crosbie E. Saint, Drawer 1982, Cabinet CGSC, CAFLA.

⁵⁶ Stewart, “Raising a Pragmatic Army,” 257.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 258.

Thus, in response to the crisis presented by the problems of the post-Vietnam War era, namely the increased threat of large-scale operations, the corresponding drop in proficiency in planning for such operations, and the low quality of instructors at the CGSS, the school responded by shifting the paradigm in two key ways.⁵⁸ It adjusted the teaching emphasis within the school itself and was able to acquire the talent to deliver this adjusted curriculum.

However, reforms at the CGSS were incomplete. For one, the army has rightfully been criticized for myopically focusing on large-scale conflict in Europe to the detriment of retaining the knowledge gained of counterinsurgency operations in Vietnam.⁵⁹ Though, as Lieutenant Colonel Suzanne Nielsen points out in *An Army Transformed*, this shifting of focus to large scale combat operations in Europe was in line with the newly released Nixon Doctrine, army leadership in general and the CGSS, in particular, were delinquent in neglecting the low intensity sphere of the spectrum of conflict and the resultant loss of proficiency in stability operations.⁶⁰ Additional criticism of the army's reforms of this period is that they "helped to produce an Army more capable of tactical and operational excellence, but also one that was deficient in strategic thinking."⁶¹ The reforms instituted at the school were positive, the increased proficiency in training management, tactical planning, and the improvements in the quality of the faculty (among many other reforms to technology, training, discipline, the all-volunteer force, and others

⁵⁸ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

⁵⁹ Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

⁶⁰ While something of a generalization, the Nixon Doctrine stated that the United States would assist in the defense of allies but would not undertake this on its own, meaning that each ally was in charge of its own security, particularly in Asia so the United States could pivot its attention back to Europe. Suzanne C. Nielsen, "An Army Transformed: The U.S. Army's Post-Vietnam Recovery and the Dynamics of Change in Military Organizations" (Carlisle, PA, US Army War College, 2010), 46–47.

⁶¹ Ibid, 47. The quote is taken from Lieutenant Colonel Nielsen's work, however, for more detail on this critique see Richard H. Kohn, "Tarnished Brass," *World Affairs*, Spring 2009, accessed www.worldaffairsjournal.org/2009%20-%20Spring/full-Kohn.html. A second, more substantive critique of U.S. military strategic thinking was authored by Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

that were not directly related to instruction at the CGSS) were all validated by the improved professionalism and performance of the army (and the practitioners who graduated from the CGSOC), punctuated by the lopsided American victory in the Persian Gulf War of 1991. However, the remaining shortfalls addressed above suggest that the CGSS did not go far enough in its reforms of officer education in the 1970s and 1980s to fully maximize the potential of the CGSOC.

Application to the Present

Many of the concerns facing the post-Vietnam War CGSS rhyme today. Much like the early 70s, the threat has become more lethal, while the army has been preoccupied with “counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism at the expense of other capabilities, our adversaries watched, learned, adapted, modernized and devised strategies that put us at a position of relative disadvantage.”⁶² Concurrently, the army’s proficiency in large scale combat operations has once again atrophied, as evidenced by a list of sixteen skill gaps collected from senior leader observations in the field by the CGSS staff, eight of which relate directly to planning and executing large scale combat operations (See items in bold on Figure 2).⁶³

⁶² US Department of the Army, *Field Manual (FM) 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017).

⁶³ Mark A McManigal, “O-4/Major Skill Gaps,” email to author, September 2019.

O-4/Major Skill Gaps

1. Communicating. Majors are still challenged writing and communicating effectively.
2. Combined Arms Maneuver. Majors are challenged synchronizing the elements of combat power for the combined arms maneuver fight.
3. Reconnaissance. Major are challenged developing and executing reconnaissance plans in support of large scale combat operations.
4. Airspace Coordination. Maneuver Majors lack confidence in their ability to conduct airspace coordination and have a tendency to acquiesce the detailed planning and coordination to the Fire Support Officer and the Brigade Aviation Officer. The result is sometimes a lack of integration of all the war fighting functions, poor synchronization and an inability to de-conflict assets.
5. Planning: Majors still do not lead the MDMP process through the seven entire steps. Most units do steps 2.3 and 7. However, step 4, COA development/analysis is not being done to standard even when executed.
6. Mission Command. Majors do not fully understand how to conduct analog mission command they have an overreliance on digital systems that a fragile and when go down paralyze the staff.
7. Graphic Control Measures. Major are challenged developing graphic control measure.
8. Rehearsals. Majors are challenged when it comes conducting rehearsals and how to conduct different types of rehearsals maneuver, logistics, fires etc.
9. Battlefield Information. Majors are challenged with analyzing battlefield information, tracked either in a running estimate or in real time, to provide the "so what", on how this information affect the operation or project out how it will affect the next 24 or 48 hours. (See the enemy, see ourselves, see the terrain)
10. Sustainment. Majors still do not grasp how to plan and execute the sustainment of a mobile force conducting large scale combat operations generally lacking is: Understanding of 1) Combat Health Service Support Planning, add the Evacuation process of casualties with regards to CHS planning (AXPs, MEDEVAC vs. CASEVAC, Standard/non-standard). 2) Maintenance Planning and evacuation procedures. Non Mission Capable equipment evacuated by unit to MCP. 3) Maneuver units and FSCs not task organized to provide MST support. Units understanding 2 level maintenance no pass back to 3rd shop, go back to level maintenance (10/20, 30, 40/50).
11. Conceptualizing the Operational Fight. Majors lack understanding of how a division level fight is nested in a Joint force or MACOM operation.
12. ASCC operations. Major lack an understanding of Theater Army/Army Service Component Command roles, functions, missions, and enabler capabilities, and how Divisions and Corps are nested in supporting these commands.
13. Majors lack an understanding of what is required to transition to a joint force, perform as a joint force HQs, and how to apply the joint planning process.
14. Majors lack an understanding of the required behavioral and mental shift in maturity between company to field grade service.
15. Majors lack an understanding of how the Army runs (Big Picture), and their role as field grade officers in the bureaucracy (especially evident when assigned to their first TDA or Institutional Army organization)
16. Majors lack an understanding of how to work with or interrelate to DA Civilians as co-workers in accomplishing a common mission or task.

Figure 2: Major Skill Gaps. Screenshot from Microsoft PowerPoint. Based on an email from CGSS Chief of Curriculum. Created by Author.

Given these challenges, the CGSS has responded by modifying the curriculum to address these skill gaps. In AY 2018 the CGSOC included 298 hours of tactical instruction for large scale combat operations across the Common Core (CC) and Advanced Operations Course (AOC), including small group instruction and four practical exercises (see figures 3 and 4).

from Microsoft Excel. Created by CGSS.⁶⁵

In AY 2019-2020, the school increased emphasis on tactical instruction significantly. Students graduating in the summer of 2020 will have received a total of 443 hours of tactics, including the execution of a total of six practical exercises (see figures 5 and 6). An increase in the number of course hours and practical exercises is not the only change. The focus for these exercises has narrowed. The course no longer conducts exercises spanning multiple echelons from the JFLCC down to the brigade level. The AY 2019-2020 AOC consists of one brigade level exercise, while the remainder of the practicums are all focused at the division level, allowing students to build mastery at one echelon rather than diluting the quality of instruction attempting to cover six separate echelons within the context of a ten-month course. While the school will not be able to assess the effectiveness of these changes for a couple of years, the changes are encouraging.

Draft AY2020 Common Core Course Map				As of 10 Sep 2019								
C100: Foundations				C200: Strategic Context of Operational Art				C300: Unified Action				
Lesson	Title	Hours	Weight	Lesson	Title	Hours	Weight	Lesson	Title	Hours	Weight	
C121	Critical Thinking	4		C201	Introduction to the Nature of War and the Combatant Commander's Perspective	4		C301	Fundamentals of Joint Operations & Unified Action	4		
C122	Creative Thinking	2		C202	Understanding The Environment	4		C302	Joint Functions	4		
C123	Application of Critical and Creative Thinking	2		C203	Power and Strategy	4		C303	Joint Functions Across the Range of Military Operations (ROMO)	4		
C131	Leader Development	2		C204a	National Level Organizations and Processes	2		C304	Multinational Operations	2		
C132.1	Self Awareness (MBTI)	2		C204b	DOD and Theater Organization and Processes	2		C305	Interorganizational Cooperation and Considerations	2		
C132.2	Self Awareness (LSI)	1		C205	National and Department of Defense Strategy and Policy	4		C306	US Army Roles, Functions, Capabilities, and Limitations	3		
C133	Individual Development Plan (IDP)	1		C206	Combatant Commander Theater Evaluations	2		C307	US Navy and US Coast Guard Roles, Functions, Capabilities, and Limitations	3		
C135	Profession of Arms	2		C209	Strategic Estimate Practical Exercise	3		C308	USMC Roles, Functions, Capabilities, and Limitations	3		
C171	Effective Writing	2		Credit Hours: 1.9				C309	US Air Force Roles, Functions, Capabilities, and Limitations	4		
C172.1	Writing Workshops	2		Assessments:				C310	US Special Operations Forces (SOF) roles, capabilities, limitation and operational considerations	2		
C172.2	Writing Workshops	2		Test 1 - C201 to C204b - BB multiple choice	20%		C311	US Space Operations: Forces, Fundamentals, Capabilities, and Limitations	2			
C173	Effective Speaking, Briefing, and Listening	2		Test 2 - Essay question(s) assessing application of course content	50%		C312	CyberSpace Operations	2			
C174	Briefing Practicum	6		Contribution to Learning	30%		C313	US Army Sustainment Support to Unified Action	2			
Credit Hours: 1.8				Total Hours			30	C399	Unified Action Practical Exercise	4		
Assessments:				F100: Managing Army Change				Assessments:			41	
Writing Diagnostic Essay	P/F			Lesson	Lesson Title	Hours		Credit Hours: 2.5				
Analytical Essay	P/F			F101	Foundations of Change	4		Exam after C305 - Multiple choice			20%	
Information Briefing	P/F			F102	Joint and Army Capability Development	2		Exam due at C399 - 4 short answer			50%	
Individual Development Plan	P/F			F103	Defense Acquisition System	4		Contribution to Learning			30%	
C400: Apply US Army Doctrine				F104	Develop Organizational Requirements	2		Total Hours				4
Lesson	Lesson Title	Hours		F105	Develop Organizational Authorizations	4		Weight				41
C401	Doctrinal Concepts of ULO in UA	4		F106	Force Integration	4		H100: Rise of the Western Way of War				
C402	Cdr's Role in Driving the Operations Process	4		F107	Planning Programming Budget Execution (PPBE)	4		H101	Introduction: War, Society, and the Structure of Military Revolution	2		
C403	Tactical Sustainment	4		F108	Fiscal Stewardship	4		H102	State, Army, and Limited War in Early-Modern Europe	2		
C404	Recognition and Security Operations	4		F109	Resource Management	2		H103	Nation in Arms: Napoleon	2		
C405	Offensive Operations in Unified Land Operations	6		F110	Operational Contract Support	4		H104	Imperial Overextension	2		
C406	Defense Operations in Unified Land Operations	6		F111	Student-Developed Case Studies	2		H105	Solomonowicz	2		
C407	Stability Operations in Unified Land Operations	2		Credit Hours: 1.1				H106	Jomini	2		
C409	Military Decision Making Process	4		Assessments:				H107	Brains of the Modern Army	2		
Credit hours: 4				Case Study Asimuth Checks	10%		H108	World War I—Train Wreck	2			
Total Hours			36	Case Study Written Product	50%		H109	The Birth of Combined Arms	2			
Assessments:				Case Study Brief	15%		H110	Blitzkrieg	2			
Final Exam after C407		65%		Financial Management Quiz	25%		H111	The Limits of Blitzkrieg	2			
Contribution to Group Learning		35%		L100: Developing Organizations and Leaders				H112	The Emergence of Multi-Domain Operations: Air Power Theory and Application	2		
Phi-C400 Diagnostic Exam				Lesson	Lesson Title	Hours		H113	The Chastise Way of War: An Alternative to Large Scale Combat Operations	2		
C500: Operational Art and Planning				L101	Developing Organizations and Leaders	2		Credit Hours: 1.4			26	
Lesson	Lesson Title	Hours		L102	Ethical Dimensions of Organizational Leadership	2		Assessment:			Weight	
C501	Introduction to Operational Art and Design	4		L103	Organizational Power and Influence	2		Argumentative Essay			60%	
C502	Elements of Operational Design	8		L104	Organizational Culture and Climate	2		Contribution to Learning			40%	
C503	Introduction to Joint Planning Process (JPP)	6		L105	Leading Organizations in Change	2		Outline			P/F	
C504	Joint Logistics Planning	2		L106	Developing Learning Organizations	2		X100: Comprehensive Exams				
C599	JPP EXERCISE IN DATE-E	24		L107	Organizational Teams built on trust	2		Directed Credit Hours: 1.0			Total Hours	
Credit Hours: 2.8				L108	Organizational Stress and Resilience	2		Assessments:			16	
Total Hours			44	L109	Developing Ethically Aligned Organizations	2		Online Exam			30%	
Assessments:				L110	Implementing an Organizational Vision	4		Oral Comps			70%	
Operational Art Assessment		60%		L111a	Extending Influence Through Negotiation	2		Common Core AY 19 Course Total Hours				293
JPP Exercise Contribution		25%		L111b	Extending Influence Through Negotiation-Simulation	2						
Contribution to Learning		15%		Credit Hours: 1.6								
Total Hours			26	Assessments:								
				L100 Block Exam								
				Contribution to Learning	40%							

Figure 5: AY 2020 CGSOC Common Core POI Hours Allocation. Screenshot taken from

⁶⁵ AOC hours of tactical instruction highlighted in green, totals 204 hours. Combined with the Common Core, this totals 298 hours of tactical instruction for the AY 18-19 CGSOC Class. Command and General Staff School, *AY 18 Advanced Operations Course* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, March 2018).

DRAFT AY 19-20 Advanced Operations Course				As of 12 July 19				
Branch Development Course			Module II: Joint Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration (JRSOI)		Module IV: Offense			
Lesson	Title	Hours	Lesson	Title	Hours	Lesson	Title	Hours
BDC1	Wet Gap Crossing	7.5	M200	Stage Setter	1	M400	Stage Setter: GEN (R) Franks	2
BDC2	Forward Passage of Lines	7.5	M202	Staff Estimates & Mission Analysis PE	3	M401	Sustain Division Offensive Operations	2
BDC3	Hasty Defense	7.5	M204	Joint Reception & Staging	2	M402	Operations to Consolidate Gains	2
BDC4	Security Zone Operations	7.5	M206	Movement Planning: Applied	6	M403	Dense Urban Terrain	2
	Credit hours:	30	M207	Integration	2	M404	Gap Crossing Operations	2
	Total Hours	30	M211	Complexity (Cynelin)	2	M411	Sustaining an Ethically Aligned Organization	2
	Assessments:	Weight	M212	Leading Multi-Nat Ops (Slim)	2	M412	Merely Courageous Followers	2
Module 0: Leading the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP)			M221	ETO, Jun-Nov 44	2	M421	Battle Analysis: Dense Urban Warfare, 1st MAR DIV at Hue	2
			M222	Battle Analysis: 7th AD at St. Vith	2	M422	Campaign Analysis: Yom Kippur War and Army Doctrine for LSCO	2
M	BOE Planning (MDMP) Practicum	30	M299	Division Movement Practicum	14	M423	Campaign Analysis: VII Corps and XVIII Corps in Desert Storm	2
	Credit hours:	30		Credit hours:	3.6	M431	Division Operations Plan Practicum	58
	Total Hours	30		Total Hours	96	M432	Division Operations Prepare Practicum	16
	Assessments:	Weight		Assessments:	Weight	M433	Division Operations Execute & Assess Practicum	22
				Blackboard Exam		M434	Division Operations Practicum X 2	22
				Staff Estimate				
				Movement Plan		M499	Credit hours: 3.6	Total Hours 136
Module I: Deploy			Module III: Defense, Transition to the Offense				Assessments:	Weight
							Individual Staff Planning Products	30.00
Lesson	Title	Hours	Lesson	Title	Hours		Concept Statement & Sketch	30.00
M101	Stage Setter - The American Way of War	1	M300	Stage Setter - GEN Holder	2		WFF Point Paper	30.00
M111	The Art of Command	2	M205	Joint Targeting in support of Land Operations	4		FGCO	10.00
M112	Developing Leadership Capacity	2	M311	Commanders Visualization	2	Module V: Transition from the Offense		
M121	"Power Projection for LSCO, 1942-1945"	2	M312	Decision Making	2	Lesson	Title	Hours
M122	Battle Analysis "Philippines 41-42"	2	M321	Expedientary Deterrence and limited war	2	M500	Stage Setter	2
M141	Movement Planning Tools	2	M322	Battle Analysis TF Smith, OPN Killer and Ripper	2	M504	Army Design Methodology (ADM)	2
M142	Deploy the Division	2	M323	Challenge & Hybrid Warfare	2	M521	Campaign Analysis:	2
M149	"Division Deployment - Planning" Practicum	8	M331	Information Collection	4	M522	LSCO in Future Peer-Peer Environment	2
M151	Theater LCC	2	M332	Information Collection Resources	2	M599	ADM to CDG Practicum	12
M152	The Division - Roles and Capabilities	2	M333	Information Operations	2		Credit hours: 1.3	Total Hours 20
M153	EAD - Sust Spt to LSCO	2	M334	Intel Practicum	6		Assessments:	Weight
M154	EAD - Protection W/F	2	M341	Intro to the division targeting process	2		Division Problem Statement	50.00
M155	EAD - Mission Command W/F	2	M342	Integrating Fires Deep	2		Contribution to Group Learning	50.00
M156	Set the Theater-Cyber	2	M343	Integrating Fires Close	2			
M157	SOP - Roles, Capabilities, and Integration in LSCO	2	M344	Targeting Practicum	4			
M158	Sustaining LSCO Operational Reach - COS/COHSS	2	M351	Passage of Lines	2			
	Credit hours:	2.0	M352	Counter mobility and survivability	2			
	Total Hours	37	M353	Sustaining Defensive Operations	2			
	Assessments:	Weight	M361	Planning Practicum	32			
			M431	Protection	4			
			M434	RDSP	2			
			MCWS3	Session 3 MCWS training	2			
				Credit hours:	1.3			
				Total Hours	86			
				Assessments:	Weight			
				Blackboard Exam				
				Staff Estimate				
				Commanders Intent and Planning Guidance				
				Contribution to Group Learning				
							AOC AY 20 Course Total Hours	405.00

Figure 6: AY 2020 CGSOC Advanced Operations Course POI Hours Allocation. Screenshot taken from Microsoft Excel. Created by CGSS.⁶⁷

However, the CGSS must be careful to avoid overcorrecting and failing to adequately educate its students on the complexities of stability operations. A review of the same figures presented above reveals a troubling resemblance to the mistakes of the early 1980s. In AY 1983-1984, only twenty-three hours of instruction were allocated to the study of stability operations, and AY 1984-1985 was little better, with just thirty hours dedicated to low intensity conflict.⁶⁸ By comparison, in AY 2018-2019, just thirty-two total curriculum hours were dedicated to stability operations, while in AY 2019-2020 only twenty-four hours of instruction were presented, to include one exercise.⁶⁹ Considering that the army is still engaged in stability operations in Iraq

⁶⁶ Command and General Staff School, *AY 2020 Common Core Course Map* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, September 2019).

⁶⁷ Command and General Staff School, *AY 2020 Advanced Operations Course Map* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, July 2019).

⁶⁸ Stewart, "Raising a Pragmatic Army," 268 and table 10."

⁶⁹ Courseware oriented on stability operations are boxes highlighted with green and yellow

and Afghanistan, amongst other locations, this trend does not bode well for a balanced approach at the CGSOC and appears to repeat the mistakes made prior to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Additionally, the CGSS must not forget Lieutenant Colonel Nielsen's other admonition from the past. As Figure 7 depicts, only fifty-eight percent of majors will be promoted to lieutenant colonel, and of that number less than twenty-five percent, for a total of 300 officers, will attend Senior Service College (SSC).⁷⁰ Thus, for the vast majority of officers the CGSOC will be their final exposure to any formalized army education course. However, as Figure 8 below indicates, for the remainder of their time in uniform, the majority of these officers will spend most of their time in generating, operational, and joint force staffs.⁷¹ Aside from their initial duty following CGSOC, many of these positions are within the Department of the Army or Joint Staffs, where an understanding of the strategic environment will significantly impact the officer's performance. Given this, a solid grasp of strategy, its creation, and the external and internal influencers on its development is a critical component of the curriculum of the CGSOC. Despite this, the course currently only contains thirty hours of instruction on the strategic context, all contained within the C200 block, Strategic Context of Operational Art (SCOA), during the Common Core phase.⁷² This is not to say that strategy is not discussed during any other part of the course, as conversations within each seminar are bound to drift to discussions of strategy at times, however, in terms of formal instruction, the C200 block is all that is offered under the current curriculum.

background. Command and General Staff School, *AY 2020 Advanced Operations Course Map; AY 2020 Common Core Course Map; AY 18 Advanced Operations Course; AY 2018 Common Core*.

⁷⁰ Terry D. Brannan, *III Corps G1 FG Counseling Career OPD (MAJ-LTC)* (Document presented as part of brief to AMSP students Fort Leavenworth, KS, 4 September 2019), slide 3 is used as Figure 6 on the following page.

⁷¹ Command and General Staff School, *AOC Credentialing WG 2 IPR* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, March 2017).

⁷² Command and General Staff College, *CGSC Circular 350-1 College Catalog (AY 2018-2019)* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2018), 7–6.

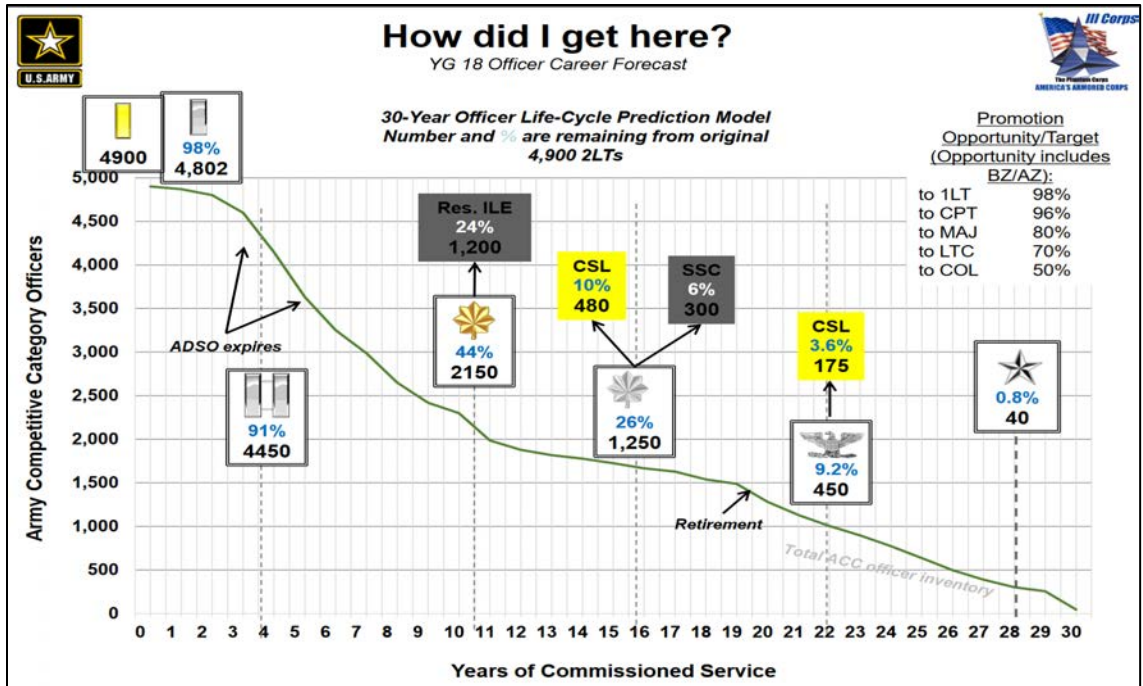


Figure 7: Officer Timeline Model. Screenshot from Microsoft PowerPoint. Created by III Corps G1.

Using the post-Vietnam War army as a case study illustrates that the CGSS has made some significant changes to its flagship course. The school has drastically increased the quantity of instruction on large scale tactics in terms of course hours, as well as the quality of instruction in terms of adding more opportunities for practical application of the course material. However, the school is repeating the mistakes of the past in that it is overlooking stability operations. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to determine how many course hours should be dedicated to teaching and applying instruction on stability operations, it is doubtful that twenty-four hours in the span of a ten-month course is sufficient.

Additionally, the current structure of the CGSOC is leaving a gap if the goal is truly to prepare “new field grade officers for their next ten years of service.”⁷³ At present, CGSOC dedicates only thirty hours of instruction on strategy during SCOA in the Common Core Phase, despite the fact that most officers who go on to work on strategic level staffs will never attend

⁷³ US Department of the Army, *Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3*, 7.

SSC. The current curriculum does not adequately prepare its graduates to serve at these echelons. Lieutenant Colonel Nielsen’s conclusions about the Army’s reforms of the 1980s may be just as applicable today, in that the changes made have been beneficial, but are not yet sufficient to adequately “shape the future force.”⁷⁴

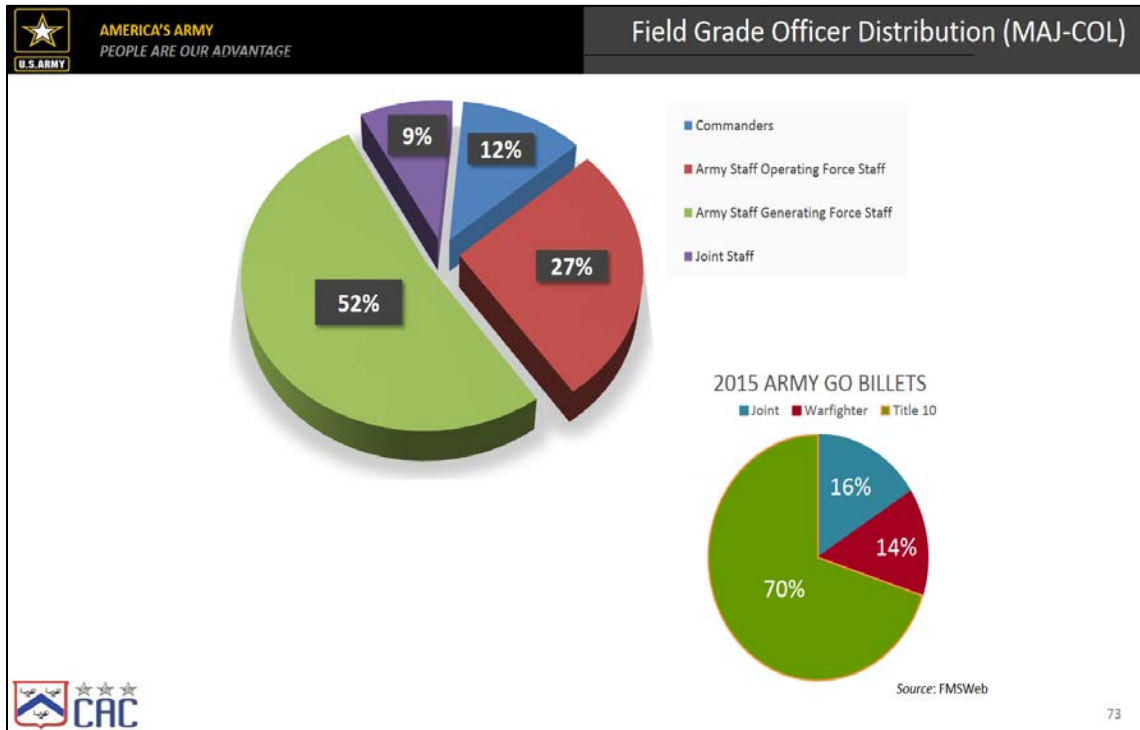


Figure 8: Field Grade Officer Distribution. Screenshot from Microsoft PowerPoint. Created by CGSS.

⁷⁴ Nielsen, “An Army Transformed,” 49.

Missed Opportunities: Educational Theory

We ought, then, to study the experience of learning by doing and the artistry of good coaching.

—Donald Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*

As a young, relatively inexperienced pilot, Matt Brown was “flying a twin-engine Cessna northeast of Harlingen, Texas, when he noticed a drop in oil pressure in his right engine.” Matt lowered his “altitude and kept an eye on the oil gauge, hoping to fly as far as a planned fuel stop in Louisiana.” Matt knew that if the oil pressure got too low the engine might fail, and that based on the characteristics of his Cessna 401, if he were fully loaded, the best he “could do on one engine was slow” his descent. However, he was carrying a small load and had consumed most of his fuel, “so he shut down the ailing right engine, feathered the prop to reduce drag, increased power on the left, flew with opposite rudder, and limped another ten miles toward his intended stop.” On approach he made “a wide left-hand turn, for the simple but critical reason that without power on his right side it was only from a left-hand turn that he still had the lift needed to level out” for a landing.

Matt’s ability to learn, to acquire “knowledge and skills and having them readily available from memory” so he could “make sense of future problems and opportunities” had kept him alive.⁷⁵ The education and training Matt received before becoming a licensed pilot were successful in enabling him to overcome a significant crisis. It also and sheds some light on how the CGSS can modify the CGSOC to better educate and train officers. Specifically, an exploration of educational theory illuminates two issues with the current design of the CGSOC. First, the thematic approach of instruction within the CGSOC is not optimal nor is it sufficient to meet the requirement of preparing officers for their next ten years of service. Second, the current faculty composition prevents the Army from fully capitalizing on the educational and training

⁷⁵ Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel, *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), 1–2.

opportunities presented by the instructor positions resident in the Command and General Staff School, particularly within the Department of Army Tactics (DTAC).

Retrieval Practice and Interleaving

Sociologist Everett Hughes wrote that professional practitioners have struck a bargain with society, and that “in return for access to their extraordinary knowledge in matters of great human importance, society has granted them a mandate for social control in their fields of specialization, a high degree of autonomy in their practice, and a license to determine who shall assume the mantle of professional authority.”⁷⁶ The title of professional has long been tied to the practice of law, medicine, and some businesses. In his book *The Soldier and the State*, Samuel Huntington expanded the audience to include military officers.⁷⁷

Twentieth-century philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer John Dewey argued that a professional practitioner “has to see on his own behalf and in his own way the relations between means and methods employed and results achieved. Nobody else can see for him, and he can’t see just by being told, although the right kind of telling may guide his seeing and thus help him see what he needs to see.”⁷⁸ In other words, a practitioner “cannot be taught what he needs to know, but he can be coached.”⁷⁹ Dr. Donald Schön, the former Ford Professor of Urban Studies and Education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) built upon Dewey’s ideas, stating “we ought, then, to study the experience of learning by doing and the artistry of good coaching” and asserting that “professional schools must rethink both the epistemology of practice and the pedagogical assumptions on which their curricula are based and

⁷⁶ Everett Hughes, “The Study of Occupations,” in *Sociology Today* (New York: Basic Books, 1959).

⁷⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000).

⁷⁸ R.D. Archambault, ed. *John Dewey on Education: Selected Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 151.

⁷⁹ Donald A. Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 1987), 17.

must bend their institutions to accommodate the reflective practicum as a key element of professional education.”⁸⁰ The ideas expressed by Dewey and other contemporaries had a significant influence on the interwar design of the CGSOC, best demonstrated by the fact that nearly forty percent of the course in 1925 was dedicated to exercises or other practicum of direct application.⁸¹

Building on Dewey and Schön’s work, which identified the utility, even the centrality, of incorporating repeated practical application into the professional practitioner’s education, recent research indicates that the packaging of the courseware is also critical in ensuring the retention of knowledge. In their book *Make It Stick*, cognitive scientists Henry Roediger and Mark McDaniel claim that “empirical research into how we learn and remember shows that much of what we take for gospel about how to learn turns out to be largely wasted effort.”⁸² Rather than rereading material or massed practice (more commonly known as thematic instruction) they assert the dominance of two “primary learning principles”, those being “spaced repetition of key ideas, and the interleaving of different but related topics.”⁸³ The repetitions Roediger and McDaniel refer to, also known as retrieval practice, are clearly built upon the foundations laid by Dewey and Schön, however, the idea of interleaving material is less well known. Interleaving is the practice of simultaneously teaching two or more subjects or skills that are different but related and has proven a much “more potent alternative to massed practice” or thematic instruction. There is considerable and understandable resistance to this approach, as “teachers dislike it because it feels sluggish. Students find it confusing: they’re just starting to get a handle on new material and don’t feel on top of it yet when they are forced to switch.”⁸⁴ However, “research shows

⁸⁰ Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, 17–18.

⁸¹ Schifferle, *America’s School for War*, 117.

⁸² Brown, Roediger III, and McDaniel, *Make It Stick*, ix.

⁸³ *Ibid*, x.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 50.

unequivocally that mastery and long-term retention are much better if you interleave practice than if you mass it.”⁸⁵ The effectiveness of this combined approach (retrieval and interleaving) was demonstrated in the earlier example of Matt the pilot. Matt’s classroom instruction had covered multiple topics simultaneously, ranging from instruction on how fuel flow progressed through the aircraft to the plane’s electrical system. Matt’s instructors used simulators to test different scenarios involving faults in these systems. Thus, Matt’s instruction was “spaced, interleaved, and varied” and maximized practical application which increased retention and allowed him to perform in the moment.⁸⁶

With the revised curricula for AY 2019-2020 depicted in Figures 4 and 5, the present-day course has significantly increased the amount of practical application over the previous decade, with thirty-two percent of the course now dedicated to hands on practical exercises.⁸⁷ The Advanced Operations Course (AOC) in particular maximizes practical application with 220 hours of a total of 405 (54%) spent on exercises. This is more than double the amount of time dedicated to exercises in the AOC from the AY 2018-2019 curriculum. The added practicum is a positive step and will undoubtedly address some of the skill gaps presented earlier in Figure 2. However, a review of Figure 1 uncovers what remains a very thematic approach to instruction within the CGSOC. Focusing on the Common Core curriculum (again, depicted on Figure 1) as an example helps illustrate this. As mentioned earlier, within the Common Core phase of CGSOC, the C200 block of instruction provides a focus on the Strategic Context of Operational Art (SCOA). Taught over six to seven days in August, this thirty-hour block of instruction culminates with an eight-hour practical exercise where the students prepare a strategic estimate. However, a review of the remainder of the Common Core and the Advanced Operations Course reveals that, except for a

⁸⁵ Brown, Roediger III, and McDaniel, *Make It Stick*, 50.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 11–12.

⁸⁷ Command and General Staff School, *AY 2020 Advanced Operations Course Map*; *AY 2020 Common Core Course Map*.

comprehensive exam at the end of Common Core, the material discussed in the SCOA block is never reintroduced into later portions of the course and is never again tested. This violates the premise of retrieval practice which states that spaced, repeated retrieval of information and skills “not only makes memories more durable but produces knowledge that can be retrieved more readily, in more varied settings, and applied to a wider variety of problems.”⁸⁸ Knowledge and skills learned in August, last tested in November, are very likely to be lost entirely by the time the student graduates in May.

Faculty Composition

The current composition of the faculty within the Command and General Staff School represents another opportunity lost. The *2013 Chief of Staff of the Army Leader Development Task Force’s* final report recommended that the Army should “establish policies that board selects Captain’s Career Course and Intermediate Level Education teachers by HQDA or by proponent and assign them to instruct because they are talented officers and future battalion commanders.”⁸⁹ Additionally, this same report recommended that the trend of civilianizing the faculty at the CGSS, which by 2011 was more than seventy percent civilian, be reversed and to fill the preponderance of teaching positions with military faculty.⁹⁰ However, minimal to no progress has been achieved in either increasing the quantity or quality of the military faculty at the school as no changes have been implemented in the process for selecting military instructors and the ratio of military to civilian instructors remains heavily skewed, with civilians occupying at least sixty-five percent of the instructor positions.⁹¹ An evaluation of the quality of instructors

⁸⁸ Brown, Roediger III, and McDaniel, *Make It Stick*, 43.

⁸⁹ Lieutenant General David H. Huntoon, et al., *2013 Chief of Staff of the Army Leader Development Task Force Final Report* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), 33.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 34.

⁹¹ Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. *Another Crossroads? Professional Military Education Two Decades After the Goldwater-Nichols Act and the Skelton Panel* (Washington, DC: 2010), 123.

in the CGSS would require its own dedicated work and is not the focus of this monograph, however, the lack of military faculty is a problem. As described earlier, the interwar army highly valued officer education as a hedge against a lack of funding that precluded the execution of large-scale training events. As such, promising officers were prioritized for selection to attend military schools and then were retained by those schools to serve as instructors.⁹² Not just because they were quality officers who would elevate the level of instruction, but because an assignment as an instructor was continued development for them as well. Two years spent as an instructor, participating in the practical exercises with their students, provided officers with the repetitions, the retrieval practice and interleaving of ideas, to develop mastery of these ideas. Today, students receive a block of instruction on the strategic context of operations and, with so few opportunities to apply these ideas soon after graduation, and few opportunities to come back as instructors to apply them as instructors, may not employ these skills until they have been promoted to lieutenant colonel and are working at a combatant command seven or eight years later. As we have seen from our discussion of retrieval practice on the preceding pages, there is little chance these officers will retain the instruction they received at the CGSOC unless they apply it routinely.

At present, the school tasked to prepare majors for the next ten years of service is employing the concept of retrieval practice in a limited way, but its thematic approach is causing gaps in topics not reintroduced later in the course. Secondly, the school is wasting time for no value if the students are not retaining the information and employing it out in the force. The thematic approach to instruction and the dearth of military faculty within the CGSOC constitute a missed opportunity for the improved education and training of the Army's officer corps. Given the complexity of the current environment and the small portion of an officer's career available for dedicated educational focus, these are opportunities the Army cannot afford to miss.

⁹² Schifferle, *America's School for War*, 19.

Incoherency: Leader Development Doctrine

I am tempted to declare dogmatically that whatever doctrine the Armed Forces are working on now, they have got it wrong.

—Michael Howard, *Military Science in the Age of Peace*

Matt the pilot's ability to act in a crisis was clear proof that the constant repetitions, or retrieval practice, and the interleaved nature of his flight education and training was a successful model in preparing him for the demands he would face during his career. What happened next is also instructive. It would have been easy (and even appropriate) for his employers to congratulate themselves for a job well done. However, Matt was just beginning the company's continuing education and training program. Even "after ten years piloting the same business jet, his employer reinforces his mastery every six months in a battery of tests and flight simulations that require him to retrieve the information and maneuvers that are essential to stay in control of his plane." After all, pilots rarely "have an emergency, so if you don't practice what to do, there's no way to keep it fresh."⁹³ Matt's company clearly understands the importance of adopting a lifelong, or at least career long, education model that builds off of and complements the experience he gains by actually flying on a regular basis.

The *Army Leader Development Strategy 2013* espouses the same idea when it states that army leaders are trained and educated "in three domains: institutional, operational, and self-development."⁹⁴ Figure 9, depicted on the following page, implies that each of these domains are interconnected and mutually supportive of one another.⁹⁵

⁹³ Brown, Roediger III, and McDaniel, *Make It Stick*, 20.

⁹⁴ US Department of the Army, "Army Leader Development Strategy 2013" (Government Printing Office, 2013), 7.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 8.

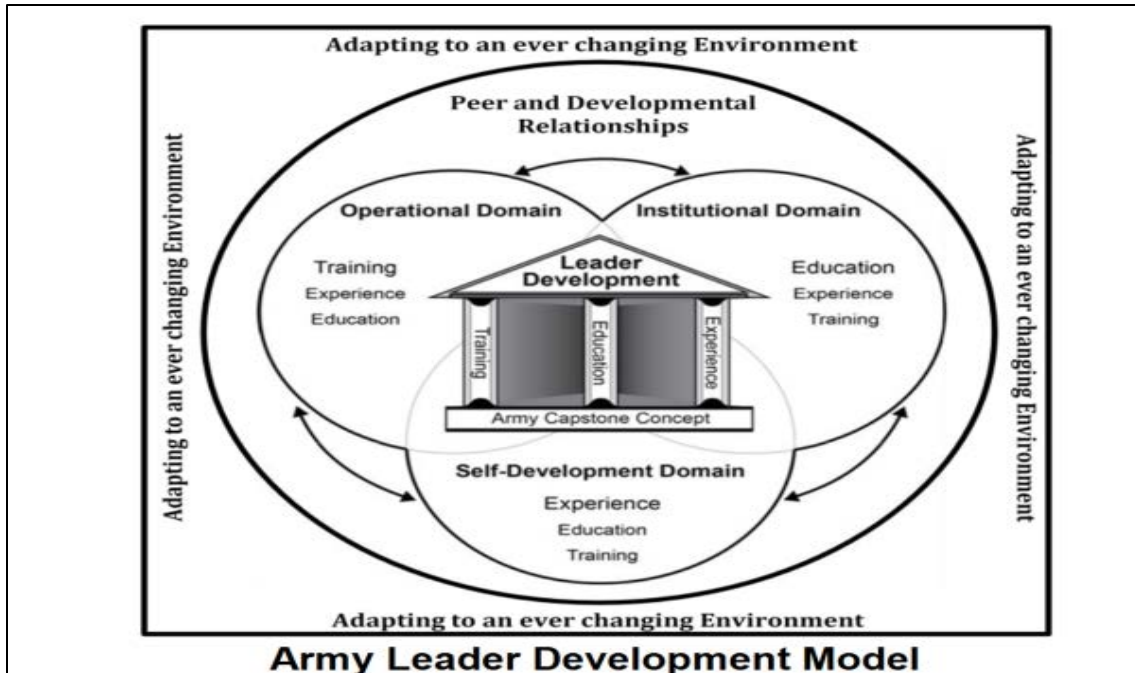


Figure 9: Army Leader Development Model. Screenshot taken from Microsoft PowerPoint. Created by Department of the Army.

On the following page, Figure 10 makes this implicit expectation explicit when it states that the operational and self-development domains must prepare officers for their next professional military education (PME), or institutional assignment.⁹⁶ Unfortunately, this is a fallacy. There is no overarching strategy that guides the operational force as to how it should continue to educate officers to prepare them for attendance at a follow on PME school. More specifically for the scope of this paper, there is nothing that guides the operational force on how it should be educating captains in preparation to attend the CGSOC. Of course, officers in units executing their primary branch positions are learning and gaining experience in a myriad of home station training events, and, for most, this culminates in a rotation to a combat training center (CTC) or a deployment or both. Additionally, mentorship is an integral component to officer development. Across every battalion in the army, battalion commanders are teaching majors how to be future battalion commanders. Majors are preparing captains to become field grade officers,

⁹⁶ US Department of the Army, "Army Leader Development Strategy 2013," 10.

and captains are doing the same for lieutenants. Indeed, there are many more mentorship interactions than the simplified ones identified above. These are tremendously beneficial experiences that build officer competency. However, units typically conduct leader development programs (when they exist at all) that build officer proficiency in their current assignments, not necessarily preparing officers for the future.

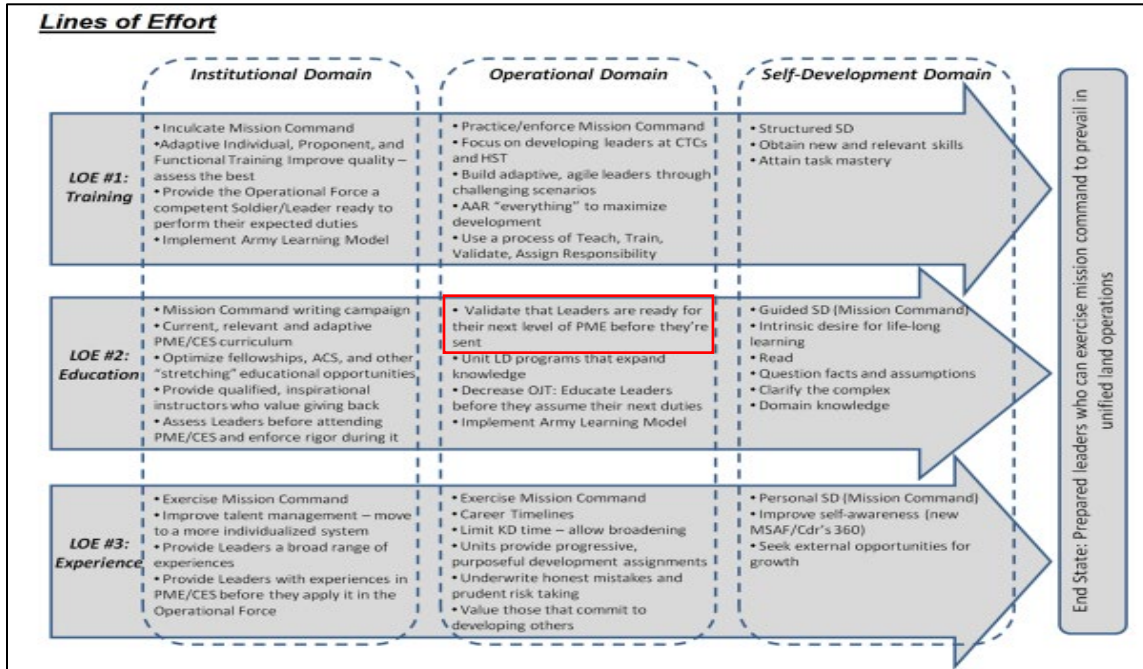


Figure 10: Army Leader Development Strategy Lines of Effort. Screenshot taken from Microsoft PowerPoint. Created by Department of the Army.

The self-development domain is even more chaotic. Outside of unit or specific leader reading lists, or the ever-increasing number of professional online forums like *The Military Leader*, *From the Green Notebook*, and others, officers are on their own to prepare themselves (or not) for the future. Not only does this result in a mixed level of effort, it is also risky, as there is a “necessity for military professionals to be guided and mentored in their study” to prevent the learning of the wrong lessons from historical examples without context.⁹⁷ The growing number of

⁹⁷ John Kiszely, “The Relevance of History to the Military Profession: A British View,” in *The Past as Prologue: The Importance of History to the Military Profession*, Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 27.

communities of practice online and their ever-increasing membership demonstrates that officers are eager to learn, but at present, the army can hardly claim to be maximizing or steering this effort.

This disjointed approach even extends to the selection of officers to attend the resident CGSOC at Fort Leavenworth. The Chief of Staff of the Army, General James C. McConville was recently quoted in the *Army Times*, stating that we spend more time selecting “an enlisted Ranger than we do on a battalion commander.”⁹⁸ The Army, laudably, is instituting a Battalion Commander Assessment Program to remedy this issue. However, the selection of officers to attend CGSOC is no better. Centralized boards review eligible officer candidates officer evaluation reports (OERs), usually spending no more than a minute or so on each officer’s file and then select the top fifty percent for resident attendance. Much like the battalion command board, this process is ripe with opportunity to make poorly informed decisions. At present, the Army Leader Development Model and the doctrine describing it is incoherent and is not driving an intelligible officer education process. The domains of leader development are not mutually supportive, not linked, and are not coherent, and therefore the US Army does not have an actual leader development strategy.

Fortunately, history once again has some light to shed on how the Army might remedy this problem. The interwar German Army (Reichswehr) conducted an annual examination called the *Wehrkreis-Prüfung* (defense district examination) to determine which officers would be selected to attend the *Kriegsakademie*.⁹⁹ The *Wehrkreis-Prüfung* was a comprehensive examination that tested and challenged the applicants on tactics at the regimental and division level, logistics, field craft (map reading and use of terrain), equipment and weaponry, basic

⁹⁸ Todd South, “How the Army Picks Battalion Commanders Could Get a Major Overhaul by Next Year,” *Army Times* (Springfield, October 12, 2019), October edition, accessed November 21, 2019, <https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2019/10/12/how-the-army-picks-battalion-commanders-could-get-a-major-overhaul-by-next-year/>.

⁹⁹ Muth, *Command Culture*, 151.

engineering, as well as non-military topics such as civics, history, language, economics, and physical fitness. The examination lasted an entire week.¹⁰⁰ The *Wehrkreis-Prüfung* provided a very thorough examination of the officers applying to attend the vaunted *Kriegsakademie*, likely resulting in the best officers attending this school and therefore elevating the quality of the education, but this is hardly the only or even the chief benefit of the *Wehrkreis-Prüfung*. Rather, Jörg Muth suggests the “test embodied an integral part of the German officers’ education because the candidates had to start preparing for it years in advance and had to be proficient in a variety of areas.”¹⁰¹ The tests and solutions to given problems deemed the best by the evaluators were published yearly and drove the officer development programs of each regiment and the self-development efforts of the officers themselves.¹⁰² More senior officers within the regiment who were more advanced in their preparation or had already taken the exams were expected to mentor their juniors, building unit cohesion and giving the senior mentors experience in developing younger officers, as a poor score on the exam was seen not just as a failure by the officer, but as a disgrace to his whole regiment.

Thus, even though “only a small minority would make it to the *Kriegsakademie* and even fewer of those would be selected for the Great General Staff,” preparation for the exam and what they learned at the war academy made them more valuable officers. They had already made a professional leap by preparing” for the exam.¹⁰³ Muth claims the military education of a German officer was a path of ceaseless preparation and selection. To be selected as cadets at the *Hauptkadettenanstalt* (HKA) officer aspirants had to prove themselves. Once there they had to prepare for the *Fahnrichsexamen*. If they cleared this hurdle, they had to excel in actual operational assignments as a *Fahnrich* (roughly equivalent to a Sergeant) within their regiments

¹⁰⁰ Muth, *Command Culture*, 152–157.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 159.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 151–152.

¹⁰³ Robert M. Citino, *The Path to Blitzkrieg: Doctrine and Training in the German Army, 1920-1939* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 93.

to be nominated to attend the *Kriegsschule* (roughly equivalent to the Army's modern Officer Basic Course and Captain's Career Course combined), finally earning a commission as a Lieutenant if they completed this course. Then, after "two to three more years, the young officers had to begin preparation for the *Wehrkreis-Prüfung*, a preparation that lasted well over one – usually about one and a half – years" before they took the examination. Officers selected to attend the *Kriegsakademie* could then compete to attend a final year of instruction to ascend to the ranks of the General Staff. As such, the entire "German officer education system was an integrated structure with concerted steppingstones" that truly unified a formal institutional system with an officer's operational experience and guided self-study.¹⁰⁴ There was a vision of what the end product was supposed to be and officers could begin preparing themselves for that from the time they received their commission.

Is this argument outside the scope of this paper? After all, the lack of coherence amongst the three domains of leader development is an army problem at all levels of education and well beyond the scope of the CGSS to resolve on its own. This is true, however, the army's failure to develop and execute a coherent officer education strategy that truly integrates the three leader development domains diminishes the level of instruction of the Command and General Staff Officer Course. The CGSOC is a compressed course, consisting of 837 hours of instruction in ten months, whereas a comparable civilian masters program would include roughly 200 contact hours.¹⁰⁵ However, a considerable portion of this time is spent on material that should be covered and tested before the students' arrival. For example, again referencing Figure 1, the introductory module of the CGSOC is C100: Foundations. This module is a thirty-hour block that covers topics like critical and creative thinking, the Army Profession, writing workshops, and effective briefing.¹⁰⁶ The C400 Module: Apply US Army Doctrine, is a thirty-six-hour block of instruction

¹⁰⁴ Muth, *Command Culture*, 193.

¹⁰⁵ Command and General Staff College, *CGSC Circular 350-1 College Catalog (AY 2018-2019)*, 7–3.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 7–6.

that includes lessons on the commander's role in the operations process and broad overviews of offense, defense, and stability operations. The F100: How the Army Runs module is a thirty-four-hour block of instruction that "introduces field grade officers" to the steps of the Army Force Management Model and some of the concepts, agencies, and systems involved in this process.¹⁰⁷ Finally, and most inexplicably, the Module 0 within the Advanced Operations Course provides a thirty-hour block of instruction on the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) to familiarize professionals with ten years of experience with the planning process the army uses for all formations above the company level (and frankly is no different than the Troop Leading Procedures used at the company level and below). Compare this to the German first lieutenant who, having been commissioned for all of five years, would be required as part of the *Wehrkreis-Prüfung* to be able to develop a concept of operations for a reinforced regiment or division, to include all enablers, in any given tactical scenario.

Students spend nearly twenty percent of the CGSOC on the modules described above. The course may need to retain some of this material, however, with such a premium on the time the army allocates to educate its mid-grade officers, the CGSS cannot afford to dedicate contact hours to material that students should have already mastered prior to attending. A *Wehrkreis-Prüfung* like examination would provide the dual benefit of guiding officer education in the operational and self-development domains, giving the military education system a logic it currently lacks while also ensuring the students chosen to attend already know the requisite information. Additionally, an examination of this type would increase the level of competition to attend the course. A higher caliber student body and more time available within the curriculum for more advanced material would elevate the overall output from the CGSS and produce better trained and educated field grade officers.

¹⁰⁷ Command and General Staff College, *CGSC Circular 350-1 College Catalog (AY 2018-2019)*, 7-8.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The great trouble with starting anything new is to break away from the conservative policy of those who have gone before.

—Brigadier General William Mitchell

The Command and General Staff School has made several modifications to the Command and General Staff Officer Course as the Army shifts its focus from low intensity conflict to an emphasis on large-scale combat operations. The increase in tactical instruction and the enhanced exercise program will address many of the officer skill gaps identified in Figure 2, as will increased writing requirements. These changes are helping to return the CGSOC to its historical role as the epicenter of tactical instruction for army officers. However, again referring to Lieutenant Colonel Nielsen's argument, these changes represent a good start to improving the output from the CGSOC, but they are not sufficient to prepare officers for their next ten years of service, the stated goal of the CGSOC.¹⁰⁸ The school is currently neglecting the education of officers in the complexities of stability operations and in the relationship between strategy and operational art. Both topics are integral to the successful execution of large-scale combat operations. Additionally, the CGSS' thematic approach to instruction is suboptimal, likely resulting in less retention of the material covered, particularly material covered earlier in the course that is not explicitly reintroduced later on. Interleaving the material across multiple exercises would prove more effective and improve the long-term retention of material.¹⁰⁹

The civilianization of the faculty also represents a missed opportunity. While recent retirees are certainly capable of providing instruction on tactics and planning processes, the failure to use military personnel who will also gain experience and proficiency as instructors and then return to the operating force constitutes a missed opportunity. The record of instructors from

¹⁰⁸ Nielsen, "An Army Transformed," 49.

¹⁰⁹ Brown, Roediger III, and McDaniel, *Make It Stick*, 12–18.

the interwar period during World War II speaks for the value in having officers return to the institutional army to reflect on their experiences and share them with their more junior counterparts while developing the mastery of material that comes with teaching it.

Finally, the incoherence of the Army's Leader Development Model results in a disjointed officer education system that diminishes the level of education at each step of professional military education. The institutional army spends too much time covering material that officers should already know while the operational and self-development domains of the Leader Development Model are unfocused and fail to pull their weight. In 1939, General George C. Marshall stated, "I thoroughly agree with the Chief of Infantry as to the too strong tendency of regimental commanders to rely on the service schools for the education of their officers."¹¹⁰ This remains a problem eighty years later.

Given these shortfalls, the CGSS is not complete in modifying the CGSOC to accommodate the transition in focus to large-scale combat operations or to meet its mandate of preparing officers for their next ten years of service. Below are several recommendations to complete this process and improve the product of the Command and General Staff Officer Course, the Army's field grade officers.

Recommendations

First, the CGSS (as part of a wider army effort as the CGSS cannot implement this of its own accord) should implement a *Wehrkreis-Prüfung* like examination to determine attendance at the Command and General Staff Officer Course in lieu of the current method of selecting attendees via a centralized board. Adopting this change would have numerous benefits over the current system. It would increase competition to attend the school, and thereby the course's stature within the Army, while also raising the caliber of the student population. Much like the

¹¹⁰ Larry Bland and Sharon Ritenour Stevens, ed. "We Cannot Delay July 1, 1939-December 6, 1941," in *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall*, vol. 2 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

Centralized Selection List (CSL) for selecting battalion commanders, the current board process is arbitrary and cannot seriously claim to be selecting the top fifty percent of officers in a year group. The demonstrated proficiency of the officer should determine an officer's ability to attend the course, regardless of branch. As the noted educational historian Frederick Rudolph stated, more than a collection of courses form a curriculum. The intersection of the faculty, the students, and the material covered determines the quality of education.¹¹¹ If the CGSS can improve the quality of the students in its flagship course, it will produce higher quality graduates. Additionally, as noted earlier, an examination, with previous years' results available to all, would provide goals for officers and organizations to strive for when developing their self-development and leader development programs. This would provide a known point to drive officer education in the operational force, helping to provide coherence to the operational and self-development domains of the Army Leader Development Model that does not currently exist.

Second, the Command and General Staff College should eliminate the Advanced Military Studies Program (AMSP) within the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) and incorporate its curriculum and faculty within the CGSOC. While the AMSP has not been a focus of this study, there is some overlap between its curriculum and that of the CGSOC. Additionally, the stated mission of AMSP is to “educate members of our Armed Forces, our Allies, and the Interagency at the graduate level to become agile and adaptive leaders and critical and creative thinkers who produce and communicate viable options to solve operational problems” and that the reason for the course was to “create a second year of study at Fort Leavenworth for selected CGSOC graduates to increase the competence of these officers, and then ‘leaven’ that competence across the force.”¹¹² The above mission statement should be applicable to all field grade officers, not just a selected few. Furthermore, implementing a follow-on course to “increase

¹¹¹ Frederick Rudolph, “Frames of Reference,” in *Revisioning Curriculum in Higher Education* (Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing, 1995), 4.

¹¹² Command and General Staff College, *CGSC Circular 350-1 College Catalog (AY 2018-2019)*, 8-1.

the competence” of graduates of the preceding course is not an efficient or justifiable use of resources. The CGSC should improve the quality of its flagship course, the CGSOC, rather than applying a band-aid to it after the fact. Improving the quality of the student body as per recommendation one would assist in this effort, while improving the quality of the CGSS faculty by incorporating the faculty of the AMSP would contribute as well.

A counterargument to this recommendation would be that there is insufficient time to combine the curriculums of AMSP and the CGSOC into a single year. However, if a *Wehrkreis-Prüfung* like examination were instituted which resulted in a coherent leader development strategy that nested the three leader development domains and elevated officer development prior to attending the resident course at Fort Leavenworth, much time would be saved, allowing for the combination of the curriculums of the two courses. Additionally, reducing the allocation of eight weeks of electives within the CGSOC would facilitate this curriculum adjustment. It is outside the scope of this paper to prove that the combination of these two curriculums is possible within the current ten-month window for CGSOC. However, even if the course had to be extended several months to deliver the requisite material, this would still be superior to the current model of having less than ten percent of CGSOC graduates attend a remedial course immediately upon graduation on the assumption that these graduates will then be able to leaven the rest of the force. Implementation of recommendations one and two would improve the quality of the students, the faculty, and the courseware at the CGSOC, touching all three legs of the educational trinity described above by Dr. Rudolph.

Third, eliminate the thematic approach to instruction within the CGSOC. In addition to the consolidation of the curriculum of CGSOC and AMSP, the school should discard its thematic approach to instruction. Interleaving different concepts simultaneously is a superior method of instruction and would result in longer lasting retention of material. Massed practice is suboptimal when compared to an interleaved approach that requires periodic retrieval practice throughout the duration of the course.

Fourth, active-duty officers should replace the civilian instructors at CGSS, at least within the Department of Tactics, and receive the same priority for fill as Observer/Coach/Trainer (OC/T) positions at the Army's training centers. Post key and developmental (KD) majors are in high demand across the Army to fill requisitions for OC/T duty, for positions on the Army and Joint Staffs, within the new Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFAB), and elsewhere. However, if the Army truly wants to make its educational system a producer of high-quality talent, it must invest more heavily in the instructor positions at the CGSS. Assigning outstanding officers to these positions better the educational experience for the students, and, just as importantly, it provides the officer instructors additional exposure to the material, bettering them in the process and making them better division and corps staff officers when they return to the force after their tour as teachers. The success of interwar officers discussed in the first section of this paper, who served as instructors repeatedly, is not an accident of history. They were successful because they spent their developmental years as students and teachers, getting repeated exposure to the courseware at each level of education. These opportunities for reflection are critical to learning.

The current Command and General Staff Officer Course is not a failure. Graduates of last year's course are serving admirably at the battalion through Army Staff levels today. Changes are ongoing that will produce graduates that are better prepared to conduct large-scale combat operations and better serve the Army holistically. However, this paper has outlined some additional opportunities to improve the course and better prepare the army's field-grade officers for whatever comes their way over their next ten years of service.

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