

Strategy Research Project

Army Strategic Leader Competency Development: Small Changes For A Large Impact

by

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

Army Strategic Leader Competency Development: Small Changes For A Large Impact

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Abstract

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Leader development is the most important core competency of our Army. Multiple Army Chiefs of Staff have commented on the need to build the bench of strategic leaders for our Army, but this continuous identification of the issue has not solved the problem. Currently, our Army does a good job at developing tactical and operational leaders, as evidenced by our success at those levels in Iraq and Afghanistan, but numerous studies conducted by the Army and by leading think tanks highlight the need for greater attention to strategic leader development. Requiring an advanced degree from an accredited university and completion of true broadening assignments will facilitate the development of the competencies required for success at the strategic level.

Army Strategic Leader Competency Development: Small Changes For A Large Impact

Our military has been in constant conflict for over 10 years and by most accounts has performed well at the tactical and operational levels. Understandably, our Army has been focused on the short-term mission of winning the current fight. While many of the lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan can be applied in the future development of Army leaders, the Army still has not solved the problem of developing strategic leaders for the future. Following the withdrawal of U.S. Forces from Iraq, with the impending withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan, and with the certainty of decreasing defense budgets in the future, we face a challenge and an opportunity to improve how we identify, educate and develop the future strategic leaders for our Army.

Leader development is the most important core competency of our Army.¹ Multiple Army Chiefs of Staff have commented on the need to build the bench of strategic leaders for our Army, but this continuous identification of the issue has not solved the problem. Currently, our Army does a good job at developing tactical and operational leaders, as evidenced by our success at those levels in Iraq and Afghanistan, but numerous studies conducted by the Army and by leading think tanks highlight the need for greater attention to strategic leader development.² This raises some questions. What key competencies will our future strategic leaders need? How can the Army better develop these key competencies to better prepare officers to become strategic leaders?

To answer these questions, this paper will first identify the competencies required for success at the strategic level. Second, this paper will look at the current Army officer development and progression program, and will then consider recent reviews of the

topic that might highlight areas for improvement. Finally, proposed recommendations for change will be presented.

Key Strategic Leader Competencies

A strategic leader is a leader who sees his or her organization as interdependent and interconnected and understands the impacts of his or her decisions inside and outside the organization. Strategic leaders are future focused, they are able to integrate short-term results and long-term focus, and they are drivers of change.³ Strategic leaders may serve inside or outside the Army, and they must thoroughly understand political-military relationships.⁴ America's complex national security environment requires strategic leaders to have an in-depth knowledge of all elements of national power; diplomatic, informational, military, and economic, and they must also understand the interrelationships between these instruments and use them effectively to achieve our strategic ends.⁵

Competencies are the knowledge, skills, attributes, and capacities that enable a leader to perform his required tasks; they can be developed and improved through education and experience.⁶ Different skills are required for success at the strategic level. Although necessary, effective tactical and operational level leadership is not a sufficient condition for leadership success at the strategic level.⁷ Although many of the leadership competencies carry over, envisioning the future by developing a vision for the next 5-20 years, consensus building, and communication skills are the most important competencies that would enable a strategic leader to align his or her organization to a constantly changing and complex environment.

The capability to formulate and articulate strategic aims and key concepts is perhaps a strategic leader's most significant capacity.⁸ A strategic leader accomplishes

this by developing and promulgating an effective vision. Vision refers to a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future.⁹ In other words, vision provides the purpose, direction, and motivation for an organization.

Although leaders at all levels can and many should create a vision, it is essential at the strategic level. At all levels, a vision is focused on where the leader wants to take the organization. Unlike lower levels where the leader has the ability to directly influence his or her subordinates, at the strategic level, the leader is dependent on subordinates to do the influencing. An effective vision allows this influencing to be more focused and effective toward a common goal.

Prior to producing an effective vision at the strategic level, a leader must thoroughly understand the organization, know the internal and external stakeholders, and understand the internal and external audiences. For the Army, the internal audience is subordinate units or commands, and individual Soldiers and leaders. The external audience includes, but is not limited to, Congress, the American public, allies, and potentially even adversaries. Internal implications of an effective vision could include doctrinal changes, organizational changes, manpower adjustments, training focus, or changes in research and development. Externally, an effective vision allows outside actors and stakeholders to know the desired future direction of the Army.

Although it may be important in some instances at other levels, consensus building is essential at the strategic level. During the 2012-2013 Army Senior Leader Day at the Army War College (AWC), many of the leaders present described consensus building as the one competency that was essential for success at the strategic level.¹⁰

This is more important at the strategic level than other levels because the strategic leader spends more time dealing with outside organizations. The strategic leader may deal with legislatures, other Services, inter-agencies, non-governmental organizations, and even other nations – none of which would respond positively to orders or directives. Consensus is necessary for coordinated and effective action.¹¹ In order to reach consensus, the strategic leader, at a minimum, needs to be self-aware, culturally aware, and needs to possess negotiating skills. In order to effectively promulgate a vision and to be an effective consensus builder, a strategic leader needs to possess excellent communication skills.

Developing communication skills begins while building and developing tactical competencies. Communication skills include deciding who to influence, how to influence them, how to deliver the message effectively, and how to assess the effectiveness of the effort. Senior leader communications is a mix of art and science.¹² Communications at the strategic level differs significantly from communication at lower levels. Strategic leaders speak to internal and external audiences who may have less understanding of a topic or the background of a topic. Because of this, persuasiveness, brevity, and clarity are essential communications skills that must be mastered.¹³

Although many leadership competencies carry over, there is a non-linear increase in the demands of envisioning the future by developing a vision, consensus building, and communication skills at the strategic level. These competencies are vital to a strategic leader's ability to operate successfully in today's complex environment. Given the importance of these competencies, how does the Army develop them in its leaders? Leader competence develops from a balanced combination of education and

training, experience, and self-development.¹⁴ The Department of the Army's Pamphlet (DA PAM) 600-3, Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management, details each of these areas.

Officer Development and Officer Progression

DA PAM 600-3 serves as the primary "professional development guide for all Army officers."¹⁵ This section will review the process described in DA PAM 600-3 and how professional development is accomplished by the current officer progression model. From this, conclusions can be made on the effectiveness of the current system of developing strategic leaders for our Army.

Army officer development should effectively balance breadth and depth of experience. The current model for leader development is focused more on the "quality and range of experience, rather than the specific gates or assignments required to progress."¹⁶ It accomplishes this through institutional training, operational assignments, and self-development.

Institutional training consists of the schools and training centers where leaders learn the competencies required for quality leadership while training to perform critical tasks. Institutional training provides the foundation for officer development.¹⁷ Institutional training represents the resident training an officer receives in both military and civilian institutions. Military schools fall mainly into the Officer Education System (OES) and begin with the Basic Officer Leadership Courses (BOLC). BOLC's objective is to develop platoon leaders who are technically competent and confident. The courses provide the foundation of common core skills as well as branch specific training. The Captains' Career Course (CCC) prepares company grade officers to command at the company, battery, or troop level and to serve as staff officers at the battalion and

brigade levels. The course focuses on the technical, tactical, and leadership competencies needed for success as a company grade officer. Once selected for Major, officers attend Intermediate Level Education (ILE), the Army's formal education program for Majors designed to prepare new field grade officers for their next 10 years of service. All officers currently attend a type of ILE, either the 10 month resident course at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, or a blended ILE that includes a 3 month course at a satellite location. Following ILE, select officers may attend the Advanced Military Studies Program taught by the School for Advance Military Studies (SAMS). This is a year-long course and offers students an advanced education on the military arts and sciences focused at the operational level.¹⁸ If selected by a Department of the Army Board, officers attend Senior Service College (SSC) as a lieutenant colonel or colonel. SSC is the apex of the officer education system course and it prepares officers for senior command and staff positions within the Army or Department of Defense (DoD).¹⁹ SSC is the last scheduled formal education that officers receive in their careers for the positions of greatest responsibility in the DoD.

All officers are required to have a bachelor's degree prior to attendance at CCC, but there is no requirement for an advanced degree for the majority of officers. Officers may pursue full-time studies for an advanced degree through either fully funded or partially funded programs, but the number of positions available is based on budget, policy, or Army needs.²⁰ Cooperative degree programs are available at some branch schools and ILE, and tuition assistance is available for those officers desiring to pursue an advanced degree off-duty. There are also a small number of fellowships that allow an officer to pursue an advanced degree followed by a utilization tour on the Joint or

Army Staff. Completion of SSC at the Army War College also includes the awarding of a Masters of Strategic Studies degree. If selected for advanced civil schooling, DA PAM 600-3 directs that officers should pursue degrees in an academic discipline that supports their designated branch, functional area, or Military Occupational Specialty code (MOS).²¹

Operational assignments are broken into 2 types, key developmental (KD) and developmental. KD positions are those positions deemed fundamental to the development of an officer in his or her core branch or functional area. Senior Army Leadership can also identify positions as KD if the positions are deemed critical to provide experience across the Army's Strategic mission.²² Examples of this are Stability Transition Team positions for majors or lieutenant colonels. Although all positions are developmental, those positions that provide exposure to experiences and competencies outside an officer's core branch or functional area are considered broadening. Broadening assignments are supposed to develop a wider range of skills, knowledge, and understanding.²³ For the purpose of this paper, typical assignments for a due course Infantry Officer will be used as career progression for an Infantry Officer is similar to other Maneuver, Fire, and Effects (MFE) Officers, and the majority of General Officers come for the MFE ranks.²⁴

Company level development occurs through the 10th year of service. Following commissioning and entry level schooling (Ranger, Airborne, BOLC III, etc.), a lieutenant is typically assigned to a Brigade Combat Team (BCT). Initial schooling typically takes 8-9 months. A lieutenant must serve successfully as a platoon leader in order to be eligible for promotion to captain. Officers selected for promotion will currently pin on

captain's rank at the 42 month mark, and will attend Maneuver Captains Career Course (MCCC) within 6 months (+ or -) of promotion. Upon successful completion of MCCC, officers are again assigned to a BCT. Ideally officers are assigned to a different type of Infantry Organization than they served in as a lieutenant.²⁵ The key assignment as a captain is successful company level command for 18 months, plus or minus 6 months. A select few officers will have the opportunity to command a second company, but total command time should not exceed 26 months. Following command, officers will pursue a variety of developmental and broadening positions. Officers selected for promotion will typically pin on major in their 10th year of service. With schooling and required KD times, most officers have approximately 4 years for developmental or broadening assignments at the company level.

Major development typically takes place between years 10 and 17. Following ILE, officers will be assigned to a unit to complete 18-24 months in a KD position. KD positions include Operations Officer or Executive Officer at the battalion or brigade level, Chief of Plans at the division or corps level for SAMS graduates, battalion or brigade Transition Team Chief, or division or corps level Chief of Operations. Developmental and broadening positions for a major include Combat Training Center Combat Trainer, Doctrine/Training Developer, Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Assistant Professor of Military Science (A/PMS), Army Staff, or Joint/Inter-Agency assignment. Officers typically pin on lieutenant colonel in their 17th year of service. With schooling and required KD times, most officers have approximately 4 years for developmental and broadening assignments at the major level. Development time for a lieutenant colonel typically occurs between the 17th and 22nd years.

KD positions for lieutenant colonels include Centralized Selection List (CSL) battalion level command or transition team chief. Following 24 months of command or transition team service, officers are sent to developmental or broadening assignments. Officers typically have 2-3 years for developmental and broadening assignments as a lieutenant colonel. Select lieutenant colonels may attend SSC or an equivalent course prior to or after selection and promotion to colonel. Officers typically pin on colonel at the 22 year mark. Colonel is the first rank where officers will work as a primary strategic level advisor and is the gate to strategic level leadership.

Unlike the institutional and operational domains, no time is allocated for self-development. According to DA PAM 600-3, self-development is a continuous, life-long process that consists of individual study, research, and practice that supplements on-the-job and institutional training and is on-going throughout an officer's career.²⁶ Self-development is the responsibility of each individual officer.

The following figure from DA PAM 600-3 visually depicts the concept for officer development over an officer's career.

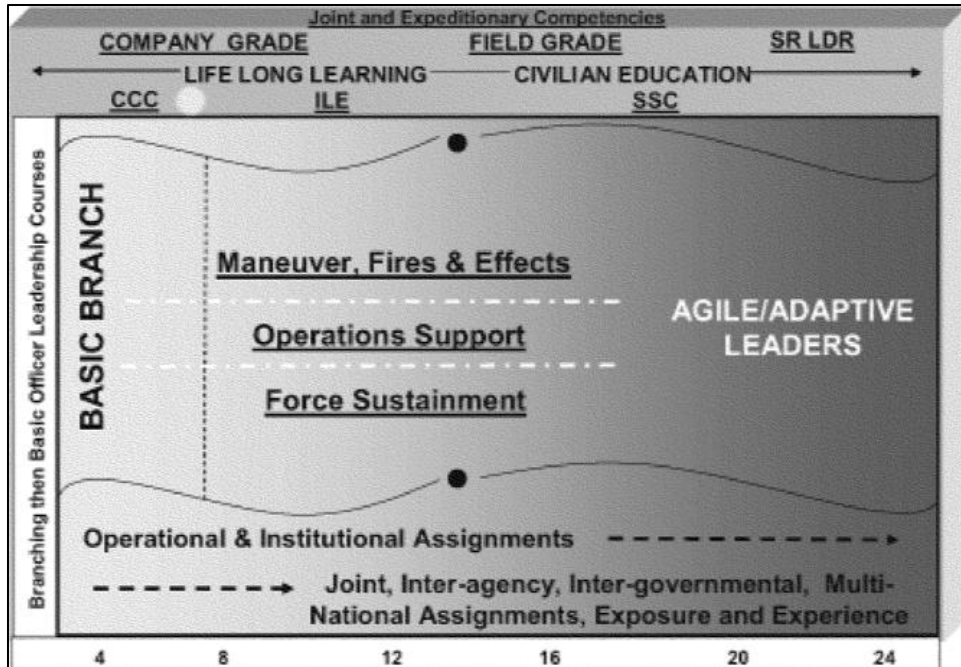


Figure 1. Officer Development over Time

Shortcomings for Officer Development

This portion of the paper will discuss the various shortcomings the Army has in developing strategic leaders.

One shortcoming highlighted in multiple Army studies is that personnel management requirements drive operational assignments at the expense of quality developmental experiences.²⁷ The Defense Officer Professional Management Act (DOPMA) of 1980 contains many of the laws and policies that govern officer career management. DOPMA is a time based management system with relatively fixed promotion zones.²⁸ The key aspects of DOPMA include promotion zones based on seniority, allowing officers one opportunity per grade to be in the promotion zone, allowing officers above the zone to remain eligible for promotion, and requiring separation of captains and majors who fail selection for promotion twice. It is Department of Defense policy “based on congressional intent conveyed in the House

and Senate reports accompanying the DOPMA legislation,” that establishes promotion zones.²⁹ A time-based system means all officers are eligible for promotion at similar time gates, plus or minus a year or two on either side to allow for below or double below the zone and above the zone promotions. Currently, assignments and schools are “linked to promotions and career management models for all officers.”³⁰ From this, it can easily be deduced that the development of an officer is based on promotion timelines. This discourages officers from some broadening assignments that require more time to complete such as the United States Military Academy (USMA) faculty which is a five year total requirement, or some fellowships that are a three year total requirement because of a belief by many that accepting those assignments may put an officer behind his peers, and put him at risk for promotion.³¹ Overlaying the various assignment, military education, and promotion timelines produces a view of the officer career progression for an Infantry Officer.

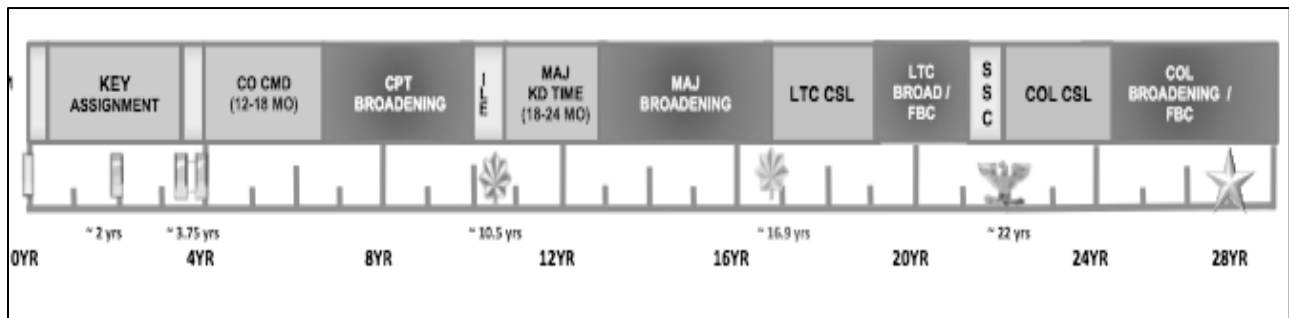


Figure 2. Infantry Officer Career Progression Model

Some conclusions can be made by a review of the career progression model. First, officer development does not meet the Army’s goal of breadth and depth of assignments; it is driven by time.³² Time in position and fixed promotion zones are the impetus for personnel managers and officer moves. Second, development is

overwhelmingly focused on tactical and operational competencies. By the time an officer is a colonel with 22 years of service, he will have had a maximum of 10 years for broadening opportunities. The amount of time for broadening will decrease if an officer is promoted below the zone (up to 3 years) or if the officer's career has not been optimally managed. Also, brigade commanders often hold the highest quality officers at the brigade level for an extended period. Over the past 10 years, some officers have seen a decrease in broadening opportunities due to the requirements of an Army at war. Additionally, some assignments classified as broadening do not meet the Army's definition of broadening. An examination of developmental assignments listed in DA PAM 600-3 for captains through lieutenant colonels shows that a majority are focused at the tactical or operational levels.³³ As a result, officer development and career progression are not optimized to develop strategic leader competencies.

Major Studies and Reviews

This section will look at 5 reviews and studies from a variety of sources and focus on the relevant conclusions and recommendations related to officer development. Three of these, *2002 The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study: Report to the Army*, *2010 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Army Education*, and *2011 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership: Main Findings* are Army studies from the Center for Army Leadership at Fort Leavenworth. The last two were published in 2010. *Keeping the Edge: Revitalizing America's Military Officer Corps* is a Center for New American Security publication. The U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute published *Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: Developing Talent*.

The Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP) was chartered by the Chief of Staff of the Army to look specifically at Training and Leader Development.³⁴ The panel conducted a series of interviews and surveys and observed that officers felt that Army practices were out of balance with Army beliefs.³⁵ Some key conclusions of the panel are as follows. First, excessive operational tempo reduces the quality of training, operational and educational experiences. This increased tempo adversely affects leader development.³⁶ Second, personnel management requirements drive operational assignments at the expense of quality developmental assignments.³⁷ Another conclusion was that the Army's most experienced instructors teach the most experienced students (e.g., SSC) while less experienced instructors teach the least experienced students (e.g., BOLC), and there is no Army process to select, assign, train and certify OES instructors.³⁸ Key recommendations include revising DA PAM 600-3 to focus career management on quality experiences in the institutional and operational domains, and changing the strategy to select and assign OES faculty to ensure the best qualified and most experienced instructors are used throughout.³⁹

The 2010 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL) survey on Army Education looked at the quality and effectiveness of professional military education (PME) in leadership development. The study showed that PME ratings continue to receive less than 66% favorable ratings for improving leadership capabilities, preparing graduates to develop subordinates, and preparing graduates for their next assignments.⁴⁰ The favorability percentages increased as the experience of the student and the experience of the instructor increased.⁴¹ In other words, ILE and AWC graduates had a much higher favorability rating than BOLC and

CCC. Another finding was that favorability percentages increased from previous years' studies, but army education needs to continue to be an interest and concern for Senior Army leaders.⁴² The main recommendation is that the Army needs to decide where students learn and develop necessary competencies and develop standards for success.⁴³

The 2011 CASAL survey on Army Leadership is based on responses from over 16,800 Army leaders. A major finding was the "develops others" competency continues to be the lowest rated core leadership competency across all levels.⁴⁴ Another finding is that rapid promotion and "rigid methods for development and advancement" have a negative influence on leader development.⁴⁵ The time based promotion system has prevented leaders from remaining in positions long enough to develop the skills necessary for future leadership roles. Additionally, current leaders who have had limited duty positions lack the skills necessary for command and staff positions. A recommendation is to adopt a more flexible personnel management system that meets the needs of the Army and fosters better leader development.⁴⁶

The Strategic Studies Institute paper on developing talent is the fifth of six monographs focused on talent management in the Army. The purpose of the monograph is to provide a way to tailor talent development based on an officer's unique talents, skills, experiences, and needs.⁴⁷ They use human capital theory to show the importance of continuing education, genuinely useful evaluations, and the use of properly valued signals to positively affect the Army development climate.⁴⁸ They describe the current Army process as moving officers "down conventional career paths and through standardized gates."⁴⁹ Properly valued signals are those things the Army

does to show it values the credentials or capabilities of its officers. This can be in the form of promotions or assignment to key positions. Examples include requiring Infantry officers to be Ranger qualified as a pre-requisite to serve as a CCC Small Group Instructor, or promoting a higher percentage of officers who have successfully completed broadening assignments. The monograph also highlights a potential challenge for the Army by showing that there is an inverse relationship between developmental time afforded to officers and their increasing levels of responsibility across a 20-30 year career. In other words, formal development decreases as job complexity increases.⁵⁰ SSC is the last formal education for an officer. While SSC provides an executive level education, it cannot alone prepare senior leaders for the nearly 80 percent of their future jobs in “highly specialized, enterprise level assignments”.⁵¹ Senior leaders often find themselves in jobs where they haven’t received the formal education needed to succeed.⁵² The monograph recommends adopting a continuing education program to include more graduate school and executive level educational opportunities, changing the OER blocking percentages to fit Army and unit needs, and a continuous evaluation of the signals the Army values to ensure to officers are developing the talents it needs for the future.

In *Keeping the Edge: Revitalizing America’s Officer Corps*, the authors state that the Army must develop and maintain a high degree of adaptability in its officer corps in order to be effective in an increasingly complex environment.⁵³ In addition to proficiency in conventional warfare tasks, officers must also develop “a broader knowledge of politics, economics, and the use of information” to be successful in a more complex and rapidly changing environment.⁵⁴ The paper makes some recommendations worth

serious consideration. First, the paper recommends allowing officers career flexibility in the form of unconventional assignments and sabbaticals. Sabbaticals could be used to deal with family or personal issues, pursue graduate education, or to gain additional experiences beneficial to their military careers, such as working with industry.⁵⁵ The paper also recommends enhancing officer education by getting career officers outside of their comfort zones and into the academic arena by increasing graduate degree opportunities, and continuing officer education into the General and Flag Officer ranks.⁵⁶ Other recommendations include increasing Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) opportunities, and making those opportunities available earlier in an officer's career. Increased training in communication skills and cultivating linguistic and cultural knowledge throughout an officer's career are also recommended.⁵⁷ The final recommendation of the paper is probably the most important, promoting the right people with the right skills. In other words, promoting officers with the skills that are most valuable for anticipated future conflict and are most capable of leading the Army in the future, not just those who demonstrate tactical excellence.⁵⁸

The review of the studies and papers identified some overarching themes and areas of improvement. First, the current leader development model does not meet the requirements for developing strategic leaders. The Army needs to better manage individual officer development through developmental, broadening, and educational opportunities, and broadening opportunities need to be increased. The Army needs to improve the quality of OES and increase opportunities for civilian graduate education. Second, the time based career progression model does not effectively meet the

requirements of developing strategic leaders. The Army needs to allow more flexibility in career progression, and needs to better incentivize broadening opportunities.

Recommendations

This portion of the paper will recommend changes to improve the development of strategic leaders for our Army. The recommendations will include identification of talented officers, changes to officer career progression, and changes to the operational and institutional domains.

Not all officers will become strategic leaders, nor do all officers desire to become strategic leaders. The Army needs to identify those with the potential and desire and maximize their opportunities to develop the competencies required for success at the strategic level. One way to identify officers with potential is thru the Officer Evaluation Report (OER). The current OER, Department of the Army (DA) Form 67-9, allows senior raters to give an “above center of mass” rating to up to 49 percent of the officers in their rating pool. The other 51 percent of officers may receive “center of mass” or “below center of mass” ratings. A 49 percent rating is too broad for identifying future strategic leaders, and takes identifying future leaders, and identifying those who need to receive priority for key broadening assignments away from raters and senior raters and passes that responsibility to Human Resources Command (HRC) Assignment Officers and members of DA selection boards.⁵⁹ The Army has already made adjustments to the OER that will be effective in 2013, but the changes don’t go far enough. Requiring the rater to use enumeration is a vast improvement and ensures that the rater has a voice in which officers show the greatest potential for promotion and key assignments, but there still in not enough stratification in the senior rater portion. Having blocks for the top 10%, 11-33%, 34-49%, 50-80%, and 81-100% allows senior raters to have greater input

on who gets promoted, allows assignment officers to better discern who has the potential to excel at various developmental and broadening assignments, and paints a better picture of manner of performance for selection boards.⁶⁰ Once officers with an exceptional pattern of performance are identified, they need to be personally managed by the branch representatives at Human Resources Command to ensure they are afforded the opportunity to develop the competencies discussed earlier that are required at the strategic level.

The Army identifies broadening assignments as those assignments that “develop a wider range of knowledge and skills, augment understanding of the full spectrum of Army missions, promote practical application of language training or increase cross cultural exposure, and expand officer awareness of other government agencies, units or environments.”⁶¹ Broadening assignments broaden an officer’s view of the world, where the Army fits into that world, and can force an officer to better develop cultural awareness skills, consensus building skills, and communication skills. Broadening assignments will also force an officer to better know and understand the Army, and how the Army fits in the military element of national power. This understanding will better enable a strategic leader to develop an effective vision. The Army offers many true broadening assignments such as fellowships, USMA faculty positions, and joint and inter-agency assignments. However, the Army also considers Combat Training Centers (CTC) combat trainer positions, training base company command and company executive officer positions, CCC small group instructor and doctrine writing positions as broadening. Although an officer can learn and develop a great deal in these positions, these should not be considered true broadening assignments as they are focused at the

tactical level and seldom take an officer out of his comfort zone. Broadening assignments should be assignments not at the tactical or operational level; they should be assignments outside an officer's branch or functional area. Broadening assignments should take an officer outside of their normal comfort zone so they are forced to operate in a different culture and learn new skills. DA PAM 600-3 needs to be changed to reflect three types of assignments: Key Developmental, Developmental, and Broadening. The Army should require that an officer successfully complete at least 2 broadening assignments prior to promotion to colonel to ensure officers have had the breadth of assignments required for the development of the competencies required at the strategic level. Promotion boards should be directed to give additional consideration to those officers who successfully complete broadening assignments. Promoting officers who successfully complete broadening assignments will send the signal that the Army values officers who are broadened. Failure to promote these officers will send the signal that the Army does not value officers who are broadened resulting in fewer quality officers pursuing broadening assignments.

Earning an advanced degree benefits the Army, regardless of the field of study. Critical and creative thinking skills are developed, officers are exposed to different points of view and cultures, and officers gain the knowledge of the field of study. Getting career officers out of their comfort zones and into an academic arena where their view of the world is challenged can only benefit the Army.⁶² The Army currently has no Ph.D. program without the requirement of a utilization tour resulting in very few officers commanding at the tactical and operational level with a Ph.D. Some equate the educational environment to that of a foreign country with a foreign culture, and

understanding other points of view, customs, and cultures allows for an expanded view of the world. The more people experience expanding their world-view, the more adaptable they will become.⁶³ This experience would force an officer to communicate to a non-military audience, developing both written and oral communication skills. The expanded world-view gained in the education process would allow for better critical thinking skills and better vision development skills. The experience of dealing with people with different points of view, or from different cultures can also assist in developing consensus-building skills. The Army needs to expand the Advanced Civil Schooling program to allow more officers to participate. The Army should require an advanced degree from an accredited university for promotion to lieutenant colonel. The Army should allow officers who show the potential and desire to be strategic leaders to obtain a Ph.D., or at least a Master of Arts or Master of Science degree from a Tier I university and return to troops in lieu of a utilization tour.

Development of communication skills required at the strategic level can take place throughout an officer's career. A requirement similar to the speaking requirement at the AWC should be included in ILE and CCC. Completing this requirement would aid in the development of oral communication skills to audiences outside the military. In addition, officers attending ILE and AWC need to have an additional requirement of a written document to an audience outside the military. Media training needs to begin at BOLC and be reinforced in training events. These simple tasks would serve as a forcing function for officers to better develop their communications skills to audiences outside the military.

In the current Army promotion system, officers are eligible for promotion based on their time in grade. This system keeps some officers from applying for and accepting broadening assignments because of the perception that they will end up behind their peers. Adopting a promotion system that allows an officer to be in the promotion zone for up to 3 years for the major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel boards would allow officers to complete required and desired broadening opportunities, and would allow officers the opportunity to remain in some KD positions longer than the current 18-24 month limit. This would ensure that officers selected for colonel have had the time to complete the experiences and education necessary to develop the competencies required for success at the strategic levels. Doing this would ensure that officers selected to serve at the strategic level have had the opportunity to develop the competencies required for success at that level.

Quality of OES active duty instructors continues to be an issue.⁶⁴ OES instructors are not chosen from the top tier of officers. With the exception of MCCC, which is a nominative assignment, officers assigned as OES instructors are Tier 2 officers. In other words, they are fully qualified but not necessarily the best a branch has to offer.⁶⁵ A recent study of CCC graduates found that course satisfaction correlated with branch investment in selecting, certifying, and developing instructors.⁶⁶ The Army needs to invest in the future by ensuring its officers are trained and educated by the best officers. The Army needs to assign some former battalion or brigade level commanders as OES instructors, and provide a promotion incentive for those officers who choose to be an OES instructor through instructions to promotion board members.

Conclusion

This paper looked at how the Army could better develop strategic leaders by first identifying what competencies are needed for success at the strategic level; developing a vision, consensus building, and communications. Next, the paper looked at the current officer development and progression system and identified that the system focuses on tactical and operational competencies at the expense of developing strategic competencies.

The paper then reviewed some studies and surveys that showed the current system does not effectively develop strategic leader competencies due to the time based promotion system, inadequate access to advanced civilian education, and the failure to properly define and incentivize broadening assignments.

The Army currently does a good job at developing leaders to fight and win at the tactical and operational levels, but it must provide the opportunity and incentive for those with the desire and the potential to develop the competencies required for success at the strategic level. Requiring officers identified as having the potential to succeed at the strategic level to complete graduate level education and serve in multiple broadening assignments will set the conditions for the development of the competencies required for success at the strategic level. The Army needs to invest in its education system by assigning quality officers to train and educate its future leaders, and by increasing the communication requirements of officers to communicate to non-military audiences.

The promotion system needs to be changed to allow for more flexibility in an officer's career to allow time for broadening and educational opportunities, and the Army needs to signal that it values broadening and advanced education through promotions.

Making these small changes will have a large impact on the future development of strategic leaders for our Army.

Endnotes

¹ U.S. Department of the Army *Leader Development Strategy*, (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Training and Doctrine Command, 2009), 1.

² Daryle Hernandez, *Building Strategic Leader Competencies Into Army Officer Development and Career Progression*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: 2011), 1.

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⁵ *Ibid.*, 11-1.

⁶ Stephen J Gerras, ed. Department of Command, Leadership and Management, *Strategic Leadership Primer, 3rd Ed.* (Carlisle, PA: USAWC, 2010): p. 28.

⁷ Attributed to Marshall Goldsmith as an attention getter in Question 1 of the AY 2013 Strategic Leadership Course Directive, p. 5.

⁸ Gerras, *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 30.

⁹ John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, Harvard Business School Press, 1998): p. 68.

¹⁰ Army Leader Day discussions, 17 Oct 12.

¹¹ Gerras, *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 32.

¹² Dennis M. Murphy, "In Search of the Art and Science of Strategic Communication," *Parameters* 39, no. 4 (Winter 2009/2010).

¹³ Gerras, *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 33.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1-5.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of the Army, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, February 1, 2010), 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of the Army, *DA PAM 600-3*, 29.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

²² *Ibid.*, 14.

²³ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁴ Based on personal viewing of Army General Officer Biographies on the GOMO website.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 57. Types of Infantry units are broken down into two basic types, vehicular and non-vehicular. Vehicular units include mechanized and Stryker units. Non-vehicular units include light, airborne, and air assault. Assignment to a Ranger unit counts as a vehicular assignment.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁷ U.S. Department of the Army, *The Army Training and Development Panel Officer Study: Report to the Army*, (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combined Arms Center, 2003), OS-2.

²⁸ Peter Schirmer, Harry J. Thie, Margaret C. Harrell, Michael S. Tseng, *Challenging Time in DOPMA: Flexible and Contemporary Military Officer Management*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, National Defense Research Institute, 2006), xv.

²⁹ Extracted from U.S. Code, Title 10 Chapter 36, "Promotion, Separation, and Involuntary Retirement of Officers on the Active-Duty List" in Schirmer et al., *Challenging Time in DOPMA*, 10.

³⁰ U.S. Department of the Army, *DA PAM 600-3*, 25.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

³² Schirmer, et al., xv-xvi.

³³ Hernandez, *Building Strategic Leader Competencies Into Army Officer Development and Career Progression*, 31.

³⁴ U.S. Department of the Army, *The Army Training and Development Panel Officer Study: Report to the Army*, OS-1.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, OS-1.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, OS-1.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, OS-2.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, OS-11.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, OS-13.

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⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁴ U.S. Department of the Army, *2011 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Main Findings*, (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Center for Army Leadership, 2012), iv.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁴⁷ Casey Wardynski, David S. Lyle and Michael J. Colarusso, *Toward a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: Developing Talent*. Officer Corps Strategy Series Monograph, vol. 5. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2010), v.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, viii.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵³ John A. Nagl and Brian M. Burton, eds., *Keeping the Edge: Revitalizing America's Military Officer Corps*. (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, 2010), 5.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁹ Deductions made after OER Revision Brief given by HRC Chief on 6 Nov 2012 in Bliss Hall.

⁶⁰ Wardynski, et al., 20.

⁶¹ U.S. Department of the Army, *DA PAM 600-3*, 15.

⁶² Nagl and Burton, 69.

⁶³ Wardynski, et al., 31.

⁶⁴ U.S. Department of the Army, *CASAL 2010*, 12.

⁶⁵ Discussion with COL Reese Turner, Former MFE Branch Chief, 13 Nov 12, on how branches assign officers to OES assignments.

⁶⁶ U.S. Department of the Army, *CASAL 2010*, 18.