

Is Professional Military Education preparing BCT Commanders for command in the 21st Century?

**A Monograph
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**Advanced Operational Arts Studies Fellowship
United States Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

AY 07-08

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 22-05-2008		2. REPORT TYPE Monograph		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) Sep 2007 - May 2008	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Is Professional Military Education preparing BCT Commanders for command in the 21 st Century?				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) COL John G. Norris				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) 250 Gibbon Avenue Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2134				8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Command and General Staff College 100 Stimson Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) CGSC, SAMS	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT .See attached abstract.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Professional Military Education, BCT Commanders, command in the 21 st Century					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT (U)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 48	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Stefan J. Banach COL, U.S. Army
a. REPORT (U)	b. ABSTRACT (U)	c. THIS PAGE (U)			19b. PHONE NUMBER (include area code) 913-758-3300

Advanced Operational Arts Studies Fellowship

MONOGRAPH APPROVAL

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Title of Monograph: Is PME preparing BCT commanders for command in the 21st Century?

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Abstract

Is PME preparing BCT commanders for command in the 21st Century? by COL John G. Norris, US Army, 42 pages.

The Army of the 21st century has experienced a change in the nature of war with the asymmetric global war on terrorism. No longer is the Army facing the conventional armies of the past but is now facing an asymmetrical force which is causing the Army to change the tactical organizations and the way they fight. The Army is undergoing a major transformation process using modularization to Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) as the major maneuver element.

The BCT enabled and organized with all of the elements previously found in the divisional organization created an organization with enormous capability while simultaneously creating new strategic leader requirements. The increased intellectual skills and abilities as a result of this organizational change must be addressed in Professional Military Education (PME) in order to prepare BCT commanders for the 21st century.

Determining if PME is preparing BCT commanders for the 21st century requires an understanding of how the nature of warfare has changed and an understanding of the increased strategic role of the BCT and the strategic competencies required.

Strategic competencies once defined, must be compared against the current PME available prior to BCT command. PME available to BCT commanders prior to BCT command is limited to Senior Service College (SSC) and attendance to the Pre-Command Course (PCC). Comparison and analysis of the strategic competencies to the curriculum provided in the US Army War College (AWC) and at the Pre-Command Course (PCC) will provide the necessary assessment to determine how PME is supporting BCT commanders.

Institutionally, PME recognized the changing nature of war, the increased strategic role and competencies resulting from the modularized BCT and is providing instruction to support the new requirements of the BCT commanders. Although PME is addressing the strategic competencies, the increased mission requirements on the force and senior leaders is taking priority over professional military education and accepting risk by subordinating BCT commander PME.

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INTRODUCTION

The events of the 11 September terrorist attacks and the subsequent global war on terrorism signaled a shift from the post cold war era and necessitated that we change in order to meet this threat to our Nations security. The Army rose to the challenge and by using the original brigade modular designs created in the nineties for a more expeditionary force and accelerated the transformation process to a modularized Army that came to fruition in order to meet the expanding operational requirements of the Global War on Terrorism. The transformation's main effort was modularization and centered on a modular based brigade structure designed to transform existing brigades into brigade combat teams (BCT). This would create 76 new brigade combat teams. The larger BCT, now more capable, is specifically designed to be more robust, flexible, with increased interoperability, and capable of operating in joint, interagency and multinational environments.

In a Combat Studies Institute historical report tracing the evolution of the brigade to the future capabilities of the modular brigade, the author John J. McGrath notes, "For the first time since George Washington's reorganization in 1778, the brigade will be the Army's basic tactical combined arms unit. With the transformation of the division into essentially a controlling headquarters, the Army's future, as has been much of its past, clearly belongs to the brigade."¹ The brigade combat team is now the basic tactical combined arms unit and the main effort for the war on terrorism as well as the force for the 21st century. Has professional military education (PME) for the officer corps also transformed in order to support the expanded requirements for BCT commanders? General Campbell, Commander FORSCOM recently acknowledged this question stating, "We have not done anything institutionally to develop BCT commanders."² This

¹ John McGrath, "The Brigade: A History. Its organization and employment in the US Army" (Combat Studies Institute (CSI) press., Ft Leavenworth, Kansas 2004), 137.

² Charles C. Campbell, General. Remarks from Commander FORSCOM to AOASF students 7 December 2007 during visit to FORSCOM headquarters. During the informal discussion with General

paper examines BCT commander development and answers the research question, is the existing professional military education (PME) model preparing future BCT commander's for the challenges of the 21st century? For the purposes of this paper and to answer the central question presented, the information presented will only focus on the senior leader development, post battalion command recognized as the transition point from direct to indirect strategic leadership. It is this point in an officer's career where indirect strategic leadership skills and new requirements as a result of Army modularization have increased therefore requiring examination of professional military education to determine if it is preparing BCT commanders for future command of the modularized BCT. Other significant observations and findings identified for echelons above or below the BCT will be presented only for further research and study.

To determine if the professional military education (PME) model is preparing BCT commanders for command in the 21st century as identified by our National Security Strategy, requires several steps. Using the following methodology, the paper must first determine how the nature of warfare has changed from the post cold war era to the 21st century resulting in new or different leader requirements thus requiring the institutional Army to change existing professional military education.

The paper then reviews how the changing nature of war resulted in new national and military strategies that influenced Army operational and organizational changes resulting in the modularized brigade combat team. The creation of the modularized BCT with increased capabilities and personnel, has created new leader requirements for BCT commanders that have not existed before, therefore, requiring a review of PME.

Campbell he made several comments directly related to the subject matter of this study, the changing military and senior leaders as agents of change. He stated that our military is currently at a strategic inflection point requiring change and that we are still influenced by our Cold War strategy in how we train, modernize, and employ forces. Institutionally speaking he mentioned that we do not know how to develop BCT commanders. 7 December 2007.

The new BCT leader requirements combined with the changes to the nature of 21st century warfare create the key strategic leader competencies, knowledge, skills, and attributes, which should be addressed institutionally within PME. The strategic competencies will then be compared to the existing senior leader courses available in PME to determine if the Army is preparing BCT commanders for command of the modularized BCT.

Evaluation of our current professional military education compared with the identified key strategic leader requirements will determine how successful the current model is at addressing and preparing BCT commanders for the complexities of the 21st century's contemporary operating environment (COE). Based on the findings, key observations and suggested improvements will be presented in an effort to better prepare BCT commanders for command. This study examines institutional programs with the intent to focus and isolate the role that professional military education plays in developing leaders to lead in a complex full spectrum environment.

21st CENTURY CHANGES

The National Security Strategy for the United States of America published in 2002 by the White House, stated that the enemy threatening the security of our Nation in the 21st century has changed dramatically. No longer are we facing large conventional armies. Now we are facing, for an uncertain duration, terrorism.³ The White House again acknowledged in 2006 their assessment in the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* “the war on terror will be a long war.”⁴ The events of the 11 September terrorist attacks and the subsequent global war on terrorism necessitated that the United States must change in order to meet this new threat to our Nations

³ The President of the United States, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington, D.C., September 2002),1.

⁴ The President of the United States, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, (Washington, D.C., September 2006), 19.

security. This single catastrophic event marked the transition from the post Cold War to a new era, where the nature of warfare would shift from war between states to an asymmetric war where the enemy would not come in the form of large standing armies but as irregular non state actors, smaller in numbers and using terror as the weapon of choice. There is no question that the attack on the twin towers was catastrophic and an eye opening experience that requires action, but how does the United States prevent this from happening again? To answer this quickly, it requires a change to our National Security and Military Strategies in order to meet the changing nature of war that is no longer representative of a nation state and a uniformed large standing army.

Our nation's history is full of examples of catastrophic or key events that necessitated changing how we approached security issues and the role of the military. The process to review, assess, and direct our national security was formalized in 1947 with the National Security Act providing a legislative mandate to continually analyze the security strategy. A direct result of this security act, and an early indicator of the emerging global security environment for the 21st century, was presented in the report by the security commission in 1999, *New World Coming American Security in the 21st Century*. In this revealing report written prior to the terror attack on 11 September 2001, the commission acknowledged the changing world from the post cold war and communicated twelve basic beliefs for the new world order with fourteen conclusions based on these beliefs. To highlight only a few of the conclusions, this report anticipated the vulnerabilities of America, the rise in information technologies, the destabilization of failing states along with the question of state sovereignty, a rise in interstate terrorism, vulnerability and that incomplete intelligence will fail to detect all of the potential dangers, and that the next century will require a completely different military and other institutions of national power that

must work closely together for success.⁵ Although this report was written in 1999 it was strikingly accurate in its assessment and conclusions. Many of the conclusions presented in this report would in fact become reality in the current security environment. An example of this prophetic warning was the vulnerability of America and that “the most serious threat to our security may consist of unannounced attacks on American cities by sub-national groups.”⁶ Although this prediction did not specifically anticipate the terror attacks on the twin towers it did highlight our vulnerabilities and anticipate the need to change the military and other elements of national power to meet this new threat.

The Department of Defense (DOD) presented on 20 June 2007 a systematic process for identifying catastrophic or key events and the implications for national defense, titled, “trends and shocks.” The “trends and shock” construct is the Department of Defense systemic process for identifying trends, conducting trend and shock analysis resulting in implications for national defense and a driver for the national security strategy.⁷ The trends and shocks process builds off of the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) which created the strategic construct that listed four security challenges for the 21st century: traditional, irregular, catastrophic, and disruptive.⁸ This four-element construct is the basis for the current defense strategy. These four security challenges for the 21st century that were presented in the trends and shock presentation are out of the military’s comfort zone.⁹ The four security challenges in the “quad chart” of the 2006 QDR

⁵ *New World Coming American Security in the 21st Century*, Major Themes and Implications. Washington, D.C: The United States Commission on National Security/21st Century.; September 15, 1999. 7.

⁶ Ibid. 8.

⁷ Department of Defense *Trends and Shocks Presentation*,. The trends and shock construct is the Department of Defense systemic process for identifying trends, conducting trend and shock analysis resulting in implications for national defense and the driver for the national security strategy. The trends and shocks process builds off of the Quadrennial Defense Review where it created the strategic construct that lists four security challenges for the 21st century. (Washington, D.C. 20 June 2007)

⁸ Department of Defense Quadrennial Defense Review, (Washington, D.C. 2006) 19.

⁹ Department of Defense *Trends and Shocks* presentation, (Washington, D.C. 20 June 2007).

reflect the changing nature of 21st century warfare, clearly moving away from the post Cold War era toward a very complex and asymmetrical environment. Analysis of the four challenges identified difficult problems that would ultimately shape and influence our national security strategy, and national military strategy and how we would organize, employ, and use our military. The 2006 QDR listed four key requirements leading our strategy: build partnerships to defeat terrorist extremism, defend the homeland in depth from weapons of mass destruction (WMD), prevent acquisition or use of WMD by hostile actors and shape choices of countries at strategic crossroads.¹⁰ The shocks and trend analysis reflected continued analysis and refinement of the *National Security Strategy* and the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*. The requirements listed in the emerging strategy would begin to shape and influence the organization of the military that would serve as a central actor in implementing this new strategy.

Another look at the challenges of the 21st century with recommendations is captured in the study conducted by the Beyond Goldwater-Nichols (BG-N) study team in March 2004. The team working with the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) conducted the study supported by 120 experienced civilian and military officials to identify the challenges and problems of the new strategic era facing our nation and to provide recommendations. The study identified that significant reforms are required in order to meet the challenges of the new strategic era. The study summarized that “the organizational structures and processes initially constructed to contain a Cold War superpower in the Industrial Age are inappropriate for the 21st century missions in an Information Age.” Six reforms were identified that would begin to solve the most serious problems. The third reform emphasized the need for increased jointness, interagency and coalition operations. The need for increased interagency coordination is now required at all levels from strategic to tactical. According to the study, Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom are still not achieving the desired interoperability of the full range of military power and

¹⁰ Department of Defense Quadrennial Defense Review, (Washington, D.C. 2006) 3.

must be addressed in order to confront the dangers of the 21st century. Joint and interagency reform will need to be reflected in future organizations and professional study. ¹¹

Colin Gray and the analysts from the multiple agencies, think tanks, and departments present one common theme concerning the future of 21st century warfare. Although uncertain in many aspects and difficult to predict, the 21st Century will require a competent military with flexibility, interoperability and other national capabilities.¹² This key observation was reflected in the United States Commission on National Security for the 21st Century. This study team produced a document titled *New World Coming: American Security in the 21st Century*. Phase I of the 1999 report took a closer look at the emerging global security environment, describing the desired military force required for the new era. One of the key recommendations from this study acknowledged the emerging security environment for the next century would require different military and national capabilities. Additionally, the United States must work together with our allies and all other elements of national power, diplomatic, economic, and military. The conflict that will face the nation will require a sustainable military with unique capabilities characterized by strategic mobility, superior intelligence, stealth, speed, range, lethal, with precision weapons and maintaining technological superiority.¹³ The military capabilities described in this report would be included in the modular brigade combat team organization that will be examined later in this paper.

¹¹ Beyond Goldwater-Nichols BG-N *Defense Reform for new Strategic Era*, Phase I report, Center for Strategic and International Studies CSIS. The report listed six reforms in order to meet the challenges of the new strategic era. The six reforms are as follows: first, preserve civilian control over the military; second, maintain the institutional vitality of the military services; third, extend and improve jointness, interagency and coalition operations; fourth, continue to resource, organize and budget along Service lines; fifth, continue to conform to the basic organization that Combatant Commanders, Military Services and defence agencies are the operating elements of DoD; and lastly, ensure healthy competition of ideas among the CoComs, Services, Joint Staff and OSD (Washington, D.C. March 2004.) 8.

¹² Colin Gray, "How Has War Changed Since the End of the Cold War?" *Parameters*, Spring 2005, 16.

¹³ The United States Commission on National Security/21st Century. "New World Coming: American Security in the 21st Century." September 15, 1999, 7.

Chapter 9 of the 2006 *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* identified in very general terms how the national security institutions must transform in order to meet the challenges. This section focused directly on several elements of national power and included the strategy that the military needs to transform. Recognizing that our *National Security Strategy* and educational institutions were all designed and functioning using a post cold war construct facing a conventional enemy, the President stated in his counter terrorism strategy that all educational institutions must be transformed in order to meet the new threat.¹⁴ The military's highest priority has not changed; to defend the United States and protect U.S citizens and their interests at home and abroad. What has changed is the strategy chosen to provide security and defend the nation. Key components included in the counter terrorism strategy is directed at taking full advantage of science and technology, to look at new approaches to warfare, increase and strengthen joint operations, transform our intelligence capabilities that must be completely integrated with other national security institutions. The new counter terrorism security strategy calls for a preemptive approach indicating that we would engage and strike first any potential enemy in order to prevent them from attacking and harming Americans and our country. The strategy further stated that the U.S could no longer solely rely on a reactive posture and let our enemies strike first. Deterrence was no longer effective against the ideology of terrorists thus leading to a strategy of preemption.¹⁵ The *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* changed in response to the changing nature of war.

In order to ensure that the military could support a preemptive strategy it would be required to transform to a force that would be expeditionary and capable of rapid and precise

¹⁴ The President of the United States, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, (Washington, D.C., September 2006), 21.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 1.

operations.¹⁶ It is important to take a closer look and see how the Army would address the changing nature of war reflected in the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, internalize the guidance listed in the strategy and change to become a more capable and relevant Army that is expeditionary, interoperable, easily integrated into a Joint environment, flexible, adaptive, increased intelligence capabilities, technologically superior with lethal and non lethal expertise.

THE ARMY CHANGES

The Army is transforming to build a more capable and relevant force for the 21st Century...transformation is a continuous evolution of capabilities over time from the current operational Army, to the Future Force. The Future Force is a strategically responsive, campaign-quality Army, dominant across the range of military operations and fully integrated within the Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational Security Framework. CSA, U.S. Department of the Army 2007.¹⁷

The Army is transforming to become a more relevant future force. According to the Army Vice Chief of Staff, General Richard Cody “Our Army is undergoing the largest organizational change since World War II as we transform to a brigade-centric, modular force, and grow by 74.2K.”¹⁸ These changes are reflective of the 2007 Army Posture Statement that states, “The 21st Century necessitates a highly versatile Army that can handle a diverse array of operations and missions.”¹⁹ In order to support the new strategy the Army needs to recognize the need to change and transform from a post Cold War division centric organizational structure to one built around the brigade combat team. This conversion to a brigade based modular force is called the modular force initiative or modularization, labeled as the main effort of transformation. The BCT modularization would by design create stand alone BCTs, self-sufficient and

¹⁶ Ibid, 20.

¹⁷ Department of the Army. *2007 Army Modernization Plan*. (Washington, D.C. 2007), 2.

¹⁸ Vice Chief of Staff Army General Cody, Remarks made by to the battalion and brigade commanders attending PCC class, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, January 2008.

¹⁹ Department of the Army. *Army Posture Statement 2007*, (Washington, D.C. 2007) A-4.

standardized across the Army. The new modular BCT will now habitually possess the same capabilities that were previously provided by divisions and must also capture the increased capabilities as communicated in the *National Security Strategy*.

This significant change in organizational structure increases the responsibilities of the BCT commander. The modular brigades are designed to be more self-contained and strategically responsive to the entire range of military operations. Under the previous divisional organizational structure, a brigade tasked for an operational mission would be provided the forces required and task organized when directed. Modularization changes this relationship by establishing a standardized brigade combat team (BCT) that is already organized with the capabilities required for duty. The Army created standard BCT organizations for Stryker, light, and heavy forces that would improve interoperability across the force and enhance expeditionary flexibility. The standardization of the three different types of BCTs across the Army allows for flexibility for strategic and operational planners using the BCTs as the standard building block. Under this construct the BCT would be deployed independently from the parent division as demonstrated in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The modular BCTs no longer being tied to the division base improves strategic flexibility, readiness, and responsiveness.²⁰ This transformation to modularization creates more autonomy for BCT commanders and also increases the leader requirements for BCT commanders. Previously brigade commanders were primarily charged with training their organic forces and employing the task-organized forces. Modularization now requires BCT commanders to train, modernize, and employ the forces that were previously only organic to the division. The BCT now has responsibility for units and enablers not previously in his arsenal including an artillery battalion, Reconnaissance and Surveillance and Target Acquisition Squadron (RSTA) with Unmanned Aerial Reconnaissance Vehicles (UAV), Ground

²⁰ US Army Training and Doctrine Command, *Army Modular Force Briefing*, (Army Capabilities Integration Center (ARCIC) (Forward). 15 August 2006).

Surveillance Radar (GSR), and Prophet systems, Signal Company, Intelligence Company, Engineer Company and a support battalion. The organizations and capabilities of these new units have increased the BCT commander's need for different skill sets, educational requirements and his training responsibilities.

These new responsibilities, along with the reality of BCT independent operations originating from modularity, carry strategic consequences and have created a need to re-look institutional senior leader education. COL Henry Foresman emphasizes the importance of senior leader education in an article he wrote for the *Armed Forces Journal* in 2007. He argues that the success of transformation will not be due to the organizational changes but to the leaders.

The Army is transforming. In doing so, it must be willing not only to look to the past to shape how it is organized, but also to be willing to break with the past and forge new paths. This requires not only an adaptive Army but also a military of flexible and intellectually adaptive leaders. Whether transformation succeeds or fails will not be determined by how the Army is organized but, rather, how the leaders employ their forces and whether they are successful. That is the unanswered question, whether the Army can make a break with its past and the legacies of World War II to fight the wars of the 21st century.²¹

COL Foresman's comments on how the Army will be successful allude to the fact that success may not rest in the organization but is focused more on the leaders. It is the ability and the training of the leaders who lead the organizations that will determine success. Leader development is accomplished through education, training, and experience. In a *Parameters* article on transforming strategic leader education, Jeffrey McCausland and Gregg F. Martin observed, "As our Army transforms to meet emerging security challenges, and we ponder new weaponry, formations, doctrine, and training, it is imperative we also examine our approach to educating our

²¹ Henry J Foresman Jr, COL, "Culture Battle," *Armed Forces Journal* (August 2007), 41.

officers, our profession's change agents."²² One of the key change agents discussed in this paper responsible for successful transformation is the BCT commander.

The sometimes-controversial Colin S. Gray provides a counter argument on the Army transformation in a *Parameters* article, "How Has war Changed Since the End of the Cold War?" He raises questions about the transformation process the Department of Defense is undertaking. Gray describes the interwar period from the post Cold war period to its cataclysmic end with the terror attack on 11 September 2001. According to Gray this end also brought in a revolution in warfare. He argues caution and states that there is danger in committing to this transformation that is based on a shaky understanding of the future of warfare we would face. "Are we confident that the process of information led military transformation will produce military capability able to answer the questions that future policy and strategy will throw its way?" In Colin Gray's words, "the future has not happened; the future is not foreseeable, period." He continued in his criticism of the transformation process "from the evidence so far, it would seem fair to observe that the transformation that is now under way should enable the US armed forces to do better what they already do well." It is not obvious that transformation will help improve America's strategic performance or that it is inspired by strategic need. His criticism is based on the assessment that the future enemy has been, since the Cold War, an asymmetrical foe, a third rate performer, a belligerent of the third rate or less. He further presents that transformation is more about technological opportunity and the desire to perform more efficiently and less on a design to counter the emerging foe. To defeat the new threat we should be focused less on technology and transformation and more focused on the social, cultural and political contexts and enablers of our national power that do not reside exclusively in the military domain.²³ Gray points out that less

²² Jeffrey D. McCausland and Gregg F. Martin, "Transforming Strategic Leader Education for the 21st Century," *Parameters*, (Autumn 2001), 3.

²³ Colin Gray, "How Has war Changed Since the End of the Cold War?" *Parameters* (2005), 21.

emphasis should be placed on technological transformation and more on the other elements of national power. This is an important observation and reinforced by the current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan where successful operations depends more on the full integration, synchronization and employment of all elements of our national power. Integration and synchronization of U.S interagency assets is a skill set that will be required for BCT commanders and will require leader education for proper application.

Understanding how best to employ interagency assets and national power emphasizes the focus more on individual leader education and interagency cooperation and less on the organization itself. Interagency cooperation and knowledge about the synchronization and application of our national power can now occur at the BCT level thus increasing the strategic role of BCT commanders. These increased requirements at the BCT level represent a transition period for leaders from direct to indirect leadership. This transition point from direct to indirect leadership is an important point for this study and for providing focus for institutional implementation of strategic leader competencies. Recognizing the career transition point from battalion level command to brigade level command also represents an important shift from tactical to operational to strategic leadership. The leadership scale shown in figure 1 was created by the author to provide a visual image of the changing leadership competencies that transition to the strategic level from battalion to brigade level command. This point is labeled the strategic transition point. As shown in the figure, battalion level command falls within the spectrum of direct leadership where brigade command is the transition point to more indirect leadership skills. Each level of leadership has different core competencies. Amplifying the significance of this transition point is the transformation to modularity placing BCT commanders more independently in the contemporary operating environment. Independent BCT operations separated from the divisional structure are already occurring in OEF and OIF providing the BCT with more autonomy in the operational environment. Due to increased BCT autonomy, it is apparent that BCT commanders will assume greater strategic responsibilities.

STRATEGIC LEADER COMPETENCIES

The 21st Century has already proven to be a very complex environment. The Army must change in order to remain relevant. As discussed earlier, the nature of warfare has changed, the Army has recognized this, and began implementing the modular transformation process. Understanding the leader requirements representative of 21st Century warfare and the requirements born of transformation and the modular organization have created a leader gap in the transformational process. The leader gap identified is the PME strategic leader development for the BCT commanders who will serve as the agents for change during transformation and into the 21st Century.

The need for improving PME was reinforced in the 2002 *Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to the Army (ATLDP)*. The study directed by the CSA tasked the panel to review the effects of transformation related to officer development in the 21st Century. One of the findings in the report recognized the changing Army and the institutions inability to adapt the officer development programs.

The Army has recognized for a decade the need to change to remain relevant to the strategic environment. Left to its own devices, the Army has been slow to adapt. Today, it continues to fall behind in adapting training and leader development programs. The Operational Environment has changed faster than the Army has adapted its training and leader development programs. Consequently, these programs must change quickly to become relevant.²⁵

The ATLDP study went even further to emphasize how the Army is now at a strategic decision point for training and leader development with only two options available; continue with the status quo with great risk or establish new systems and methods developing leaders for full spectrum operations.²⁶ The later will require the Army to devote a significant effort and

²⁵ Department of the Army. "Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study", Report to the Army (ATLDP). (Washington D.C.: U.S.Army, 2002), OS-6.

²⁶ Ibid, OS-7

resources. The Army must be willing to break old paradigms of learning and educational development. This study argues that the institutional PME has not kept pace with transformation and is not preparing BCT commanders for future command. Recognizing that there is a gap in strategic leader education is only half of the problem. The other challenge is the slow development, or lack of a common understanding of language for strategic leader requirements or competencies that identify exactly what strategic leaders must be able to do.

According to a 2003 study conducted by the Army Research Institute (ARI) *Leadership Competencies: Are we all saying the same thing?* “competencies have become a more prevalent method of identifying the requirements of supervisory, managerial, and leadership positions, rather than job or task analysis techniques, because they provide a more general description of responsibilities associated across these positions.”²⁷ Additionally it is argued in this ARI study “competencies may be more appropriate for describing successful leadership behaviors in future terms.”²⁸ There is clearly no shortage of material on the subject of competencies; the difficulty lies in the sources, prioritization, and selection of strategic leader competencies. According to the Army War College (AWC) *Strategic Leadership Primer*, the search for strategic leader competencies defined as, knowledge, skills, attributes, and abilities (KSA), began to emerge in the leadership arena in the 1980s.²⁹ Competency lists continued to gain popularity and were introduced into military doctrine. In the AWC leadership primer it states, “strategic leader competencies are built on the leadership requirements at lower levels but some strategic leader competencies are qualitatively different and new.” The strategic leader not only has the responsibility of short-term requirements, but now must also focus on mid and long term

²⁷ Jeffrey Horey and Jon J. Fallesen, Ph.D, “Leadership Competencies: Are we all saying the same thing?” Caliber Associates Cocoa Beach FL,(Army Research Institute., Ft Leavenworth, KS.2003), 2.

²⁸ Ibid, 11.

²⁹ United States Army War College, “Strategic Leadership Primer,” 2nd Edition., Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, (U.S Army War College 2004), 54.

requirements. Additionally, a competency can be based on natural ability or derived from education, training, or experience.³⁰ Identifying these requirements presents a challenge for implementation in PME because there are many different opinions on competency lists and their use.

Although competencies are the most common method for describing leadership requirements they may not necessarily be the best method, according to a group research effort by George Reed, Craig Bullis, Ruth Collins and Christopher Papparone. In their 2004 *Parameters* article, “Mapping the Route of Leadership Education: Caution Ahead,” they argue that competency mapping is a highly systematic approach to training and leader development and more suited for the industrial age verses the contemporary operating environment where information is dominant. Utilizing the list approach, or the competency map, leads away from the agile, adaptive, self-aware leaders that we are trying to create for the 21st century. The general thesis of their argument is that detailed and prescriptive lists ultimately will “restrict what is taught to only that which is provided on the list.” Instead, they argue that a more systemic approach to curriculum development be used that is collaborative in nature with assessments and feedback from the field experts on a continuous basis that continually reframes professional military education adjusting to emerging requirements.³¹ The argument presented by the authors falls short in its approach by failing to provide an institutional framework, a “starting point” by continually reframing the problem, therefore never establishing a solid beginning for PME to adjust from.

Frameworks with competency listing are important for curriculum development. According to Samuel P. Huntington, in his book, *The Clash of Civilizations Remaking of World*

³⁰ Ibid, 37.

³¹ George Reed, Craig Bullis, Ruth Collins, and Christopher Papparone, “Mapping the Route of Leadership Education: Caution Ahead,” *Parameters* (Autumn Issue 2004) 46-60.

Order, he describes the use of maps and paradigms and states that a model is necessary and without a framework there will be confusion. “Simplified paradigms or maps are indispensable for human thought and action.” Explicit models are required to provide order, understanding, anticipation, and to distinguish what is important from the unimportant as well as provide direction in order to achieve goals.³² A competency-based model provides order and a direction for the institutional Army to establish the starting point for curriculum development.

The use of competencies provides a foundation for PME to organize curriculum, but even those endorsing the use of competencies recognize that there are drawbacks. It is important to understand the drawbacks of competency modeling before it can be accepted as the starting point for strategic leader development. One challenge with competency listing is that they are too comprehensive and contain every possible competency that a leader is expected to be able to do. One of the earlier attempts at defining leadership competencies that illustrates this point was in the 1999 FM 22-100 *Army Leadership* manual. FM 22-100 contained a very comprehensive list of forty-one competencies covering the direct, organizational, and strategic levels. Twenty-one competencies focused on the strategic level alone.³³ One of the key concerns by many of the experts in the field of leadership study during this period suggested that competency lists similar to the list provided in FM 22-100 were too comprehensive preventing PME from focusing.

One of the experts in the field of leadership study who agreed with this statement and provided a possible solution to the exhaustive and comprehensive lists was Dr. Leonard Wong from the U.S. Army War College. Dr. Wong, an authority in leader development specializing in strategic leader development, has written extensively on this subject of strategic leader competencies. In 2003, he was tasked by the Chief of Staff of the Army to take a closer look at

³² Samuel B Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations Remaking of World Order*, (New York: Touchstone Books, Simon and Schuster 1996), 30.

³³ Department of the Army, FM 22-100 *Army Leadership*. 1999, CH 7.

the strategic leader competencies required for the 21st Century. The findings presented in the 2003 study Strategic Leadership Competencies is a product of a group effort conducted by four war college students, Stephen Gerras, William Kidd, Robert Pricone, and Richard Swengros with Dr. Wong in the lead.

The study group's findings are specifically targeted for the brigade level of leadership-- indicating that strategic leader capability is no longer restricted to the general officer corps but also required of the brigade commander. The report begins by identifying and defining who and what "strategic leader" means. Dr. Wong makes the argument that the strategic leader has changed with transformation and the 21st Century. No longer can it be assumed that general officers are the only strategic leaders.³⁴ This change implies that strategic leader responsibilities can now reside at the brigade level--signaling the transition point from direct to indirect leadership. Another important distinction that Dr. Wong makes in his study is that the term strategic refers to a way of thinking, not just a level of war.³⁵

A key finding of Dr. Wong's study is that institutionally strategic leader tasks are too expansive and recommends they be reduced in order to provide focus. In his summary statement he stated "it is difficult to assess one's leadership ability when the lists suggest that a strategic leader must "be, know, and do just about everything." At the institutional level, the long lists make it difficult to focus an institution's attention and resources on leader development when the desired endstate is so broad."³⁶ In an effort to focus the institutional efforts for addressing strategic leader competencies and creating something more manageable for curriculum development, Wong recommends reducing the exhaustive and comprehensive competency lists to only six meta-competencies; identity, mental agility, cross-cultural savvy, interpersonal maturity,

³⁴ Leonard Wong Ph. D, "Strategic Leadership Competencies," U.S. Army War College, (Carlisle PA. September 2003.), 1.

³⁵ Ibid,1.

³⁶ Ibid,5.

world-class warrior, and professional astuteness. These six meta-competencies based on his research and analysis is a synthesis of existing competencies with analysis of the future force requirements.³⁷ Dr. Wong's six meta-competencies ultimately were included in doctrine with additional competencies.

The *AWC Leadership Primer* is another example of a reduced competency list with strategic leadership focus. This document was later combined with Dr. Wong's six meta-competencies and included in doctrine. Chapter 6 of the *AWC Leadership Primer* identifies six strategic leadership tasks; provide vision, shape culture, build and shape joint, interagency, multi national and intra agency relationships, build and shape national level relationships, represent the organization and lead and manage change.³⁸ The six leadership tasks recommended in the *AWC primer* are more reflective of the strategic requirements created by the contemporary environment and included in the current *FM 6-22 Army Leadership* doctrine.

In 2004 the United States Army Research Institute (ARI) produced technical report 1148 *Competency Based Future Leadership Requirements* for the Center for Army Leadership (CAL). This report was designed to provide a recommendation for a standardized leadership competency framework to be incorporated in *FM 6-22*, the replacement for *FM 22-100 Army Leadership* manual.³⁹ A leadership competency framework was presented to the Center for Army Leadership. It was believed to be a more descriptive concept of leadership requirements. The proposed framework was a departure from the knowledge, skills, and attributes found in the old *FM 22-100* and from Dr. Wong's recommendations. The findings that were presented in this framework for

³⁷ Ibid,1.

³⁸ *AWC Strategic Leadership Primer* 2nd Edition., Department of Command, Leadership, and Management (United States Army War College 2004), 44.

³⁹ Army Research Institute Technical Report 1148., "Competency Based Future Leadership Requirements," The U.S. Army Center for Leadership (CAL) Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, conducted this study to develop leadership requirements for the future force. The research developed a core leadership competency framework that included eight competencies and 55 components that could be used in doctrine. July 2004, V.

Army strategic leadership were organized with eight competencies and 55 sub components. The eight core competencies follow the acronym “LEVERAGE” with the intent that using this acronym would in concept remind leaders how to get things done. The LEVERAGE competency framework consists of; leading others to success, exemplifying sound values and behaviors, vitalizing a positive climate, ensuring a shared understanding, reinforcing growth in others, arming self to lead, guiding successful outcomes, and extending influence. The study team asserted that the institution could coordinate and assess PME leadership training more effectively with the use of a common leadership competency model such as the LEVERAGE model.⁴⁰ This study, leadership doctrine, and Dr.Wong all agree that there is a need for common leadership competency framework and it should be included in doctrine. The ARI research team, consisting of numerous military and civilian subject matter experts acknowledges, “Army leadership doctrine is the starting point for all leadership initiatives.”⁴¹ The findings and recommendations presented in this study were presented for inclusion for the new leadership manual FM 6-22. Although they were not included in their entirety, they did influence the doctrine, and identifying an awareness for strategic leader development in professional military education.

The 2006 FM 6-22 states that the core leader competencies come directly from leadership and contain three basic goals: to lead others, to develop the organization, and to accomplish the mission. FM 6-22 now makes a distinction between leader attributes and competencies. Attributes being defined as what an Army leader is and core leader competencies is what a leader must do. “The core leader competencies emphasize the roles, functions, and activities of what leaders do.”⁴² The core competencies are organized using the three basic goals of leading, developing and achieving which are further amplified with sub categories explaining

⁴⁰ Ibid, 66.

⁴¹ Ibid, 66.

⁴² Department of the Army, FM 6-22 *Army Leadership*. October 2006, 2-4.

in greater detail the principles of each basic leadership goal. (See figure 2)

FM 6-22 Leadership Requirements Model

Core Leader Competencies

“What an Army Leader does”

Leads

- **Leads others (6/20)**
- **Extends influence beyond the chain of command (4/17)**
- **Leads by example (7/35)**
- **Communicates (6/26)**

Develops

- **Creates a positive environment (9/38)**
- **Prepares self (8/33)**
- **Develops others (6/21)**

Achieves

- **Gets results (10/41)**

* (Sub Categories/Desired Actions)

Figure 2 Core Leader Competencies.⁴³

The core leadership competency ‘lead,’ is subdivided into four component categories: leads others, extends influence beyond the chain of command, leads by example; and communicates. These component categories are additionally subdivided for further clarity with associated components and desired actions. For example, the first sub category of ‘leading others’ lists six separate sub components clarifying how a leader should lead, then lists 20 additional individual associated tasks or actions. This expanding process is continued through all competencies with sub components listing in great detail what a leader does. Using only the Army three core leader competencies, it is further broken down with fifty-six sub components and two hundred and thirty one desired actions. FM 6-22, chapter 12 continues with this competency framework, expands, and

⁴³ Department of the Army, FM 6-22 *Army Leadership*. October 2006.

clarifies the requirements for strategic leaders. This chapter specifically defines the requirements for strategic leaders, using the same three core competencies of lead, develop and achieve. This list does not replace the comprehensive list provided earlier but clarifies the specific differences required of strategic leaders. (see figure 3)

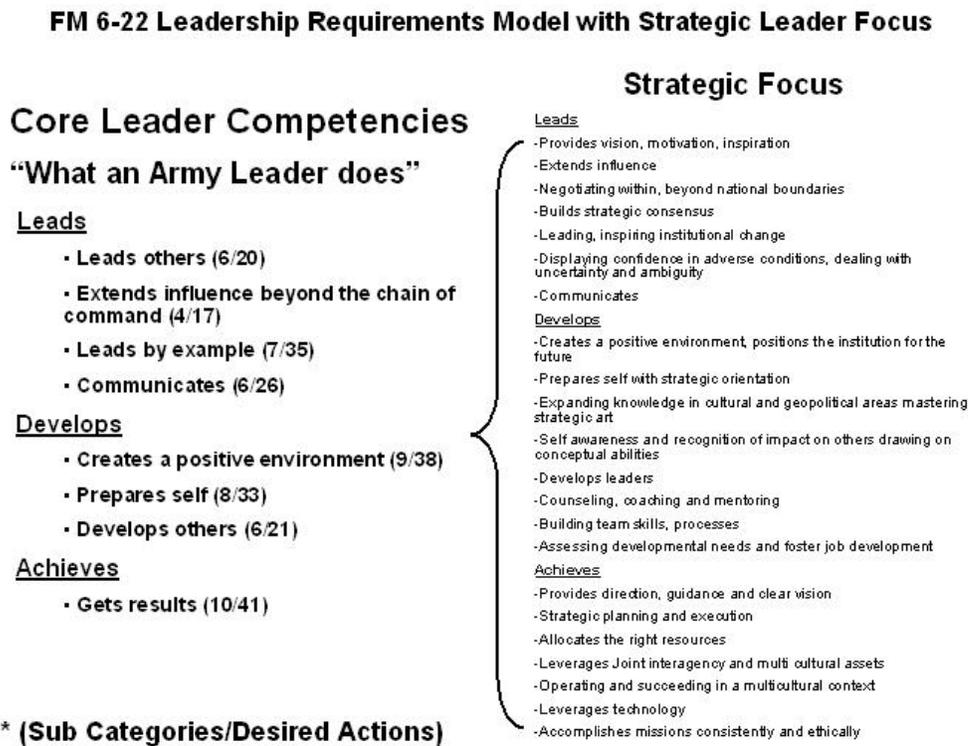


Figure 3 FM 6-22 *Army Leadership* Requirements Model with Strategic Leader Focus.⁴⁴

The challenge with the core competency listing in FM6-22 with strategic focus is potentially too comprehensive, as argued earlier by Dr. Wong, making it difficult for the institutional Army to prioritize what must be taught. Although challenging, the leadership framework does officially define competencies with desired actions providing the unifying doctrinal foundation and a starting point for strategic leader development within our professional

⁴⁴ Department of the Army, FM 6-22 *Army Leadership*. October 2006, 12-1, Appendix A.

military education system. Without a common competency reference or starting point that is based on the needs and requirements of the 21st century leaders, the Army will be unable to affect change in the professional military education system. The requirement for a common competency starting point was further reinforced in the summary statement of the Army Research Institute (ARI) technical report 1148, “only through such an established competency model and regular assessment of these influences can institutions, units, and individuals chart the course to best prepare for this complex and challenging future.” Understanding that it is impossible to fully describe and articulate every possible action, attribute, or competency required for leaders to be successful in full spectrum operations, it is possible and necessary to create a common foundation, a starting point for leadership development that can be modeled and adjusted accordingly in our professional military education.

Accepting the leadership framework and competency model listed in FM 6-22 as an institutional framework for BCT commanders, this study will now investigate if the professional military education courses offered in the officer education system reflect the competency framework and developmental needs of BCT commanders.

PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

Military officer education is inadequate. Officer schools and development programs have continued to train and promote leaders with skills and attributes to meet the needs of the 20th century, not future challenges. Dr James Carafano 2005 ⁴⁵

Dr. Carafano condemns professional military education in this Heritage Foundation report, written for the Congressionally mandated 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR).

⁴⁵ James Jay Carafano, Ph.D, and Alane Kochems.”*Rethinking Professional Military Education*,” Executive Memorandum No. 976. (Heritage Foundation. July 28, 2005), 1.

Carafano argues that the current education system is outdated, using an old Cold War construct, and notes that the future battlefield is both unpredictable and complex. He argues that current PME does not foster creative thinking skills, or addresses the kind of leadership skills required for an uncertain environment.⁴⁶ Is his opinion on the status of PME an accurate statement? More specifically, is PME developing BCT commanders for this uncertain future environment? To answer this question, a review of the officer professional military education system available to BCT commanders is required to determine if PME is reflecting the changing nature of warfare, the organizational changes of modularization, and institutionalizing the strategic competencies outlined in *FM 6-22 Army Leadership*.

U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) has the institutional responsibility and command oversight of the Officer Education System (OES). The U.S Army Training and Doctrine Command Regulation 350-10, “Institutional Leader Training and Education” Chapter 3 states that the goals and objectives of the Officer education System (OES) are to produce a corps of broadly based officer leaders who are fully competent, technically and tactically proficient. Additionally, chapter 3 states that the OES needs to produce leaders that are knowledgeable of how the Army runs; demonstrates confidence, integrity, critical judgment, and responsibility; can operate in an environment of complexity, ambiguity, and rapid change; can build effective teams amid continuous organizational and technological change; and can adapt and solve problems creatively.⁴⁷ The OES is designed to prepare officers for command and leadership positions throughout their entire career at all echelons of command from pre-commissioning, to platoon, company, battalion, and higher level organizations. Figure 4 illustrates the OES system of the officers career beginning with the Basic Officer Leader Course

⁴⁶ Ibid, 2.

⁴⁷ TRADOC Regulation 350-10 *Institutional Leader Training and Education* 2002.(Department of the Army 2002), 17.

The target of this study is the strategic leader transition point identified in figure 4 from operational to strategic, identified as the period between battalion to brigade level command within the OPME system. It is at this time in an officer's career where the officer will be assigned to leadership and command positions that require increased strategic understanding and awareness like BCT command and senior level Army and Joint staff positions are examples.

The governing regulation listing the U.S. Army OES policy is TRADOC REG 350-10. In this regulation the available instruction at this level begins with various senior service colleges (SSC) and, if selected for brigade command, the centrally selected command designees will attend one or more of the pre command courses (PCC) available.⁴⁹ These two programs, SSC and PCC if attended, are the only courses that support BCT commander preparation and the only educational opportunity for officers to develop at the strategic level prior to BCT command. Is this sufficient? A careful review of the two available courses will determine if they are preparing BCT commanders for the 21st Century.

SENIOR SERVICE COLLEGE

The twenty-two, senior service colleges options available to selected officers is the first opportunity in a officer's educational career that is primarily focused at the strategic level. This educational opportunity occurs approximately around the fifteen to twenty year point in the officer's career and only if selected by a central selection board. The SSC course description, as stated in TRADOC Regulation 350-10, is designed to prepare selected military, civilian, and international leaders to assume strategic leadership responsibilities in military or

⁴⁹ TRADOC Regulation 350-10 *Institutional Leader Training and Education* 2002. (Department of the Army 2002), 20.

national security organizations.⁵⁰ The course description clearly articulates the strategic focus. Careful analysis of the course curriculum compared to the identified doctrinal strategic competencies discussed earlier in this paper will determine if the SSC is keeping pace with the 21st Century leader and modularization requirements.

The U.S. Army War College (AWC) located at Carlisle Barracks, PA is selected for analysis because it is the oldest Army senior service college and where 154 of Army officers for academic year 2007-2008 attended. Out of the twenty-two senior service colleges available and a selected student population of 326 for FY 08, almost half, 154 officers, were slated to attend the Army War College in academic year 2007-2008. The next highest number of students in one SSC, was 51, and the remaining 121 students attended the other 20 senior service colleges.⁵¹

Established 27 November 1901 the AWC continued to train senior leaders in the art of war in the same vision of the founder, Elihu Root then Secretary of War, whose stated purpose was “not to promote war, but to preserve peace by intelligent and adequate preparation to repel aggression, to study and confer on the great problems of national defense, military science, and responsible command.”⁵² The Commandant of AWC, Major General David H. Huntoon, Jr’s introduction in the AWC 2006-2007 curriculum catalogue stated that the AWC has transformed three times throughout history and is again undergoing another transformation triggered by the sudden end of the Cold War and the rise of the information age.⁵³ This shift caused the AWC to reassess the mission and curriculum. As a result the AWC is in the fourth curriculum

⁵⁰ Department of the Army, TRADOC Regulation 350-10 Institutional Leader Training and Education 2002, 20.

⁵¹ Department of the Army, Human Resources Command Memorandum SSC Slating for AY 07-08. The list included 326 officers slated against 22 Senior Service Colleges, 154 AWC, Air War College 26, ICAF 51, National 30, Naval 27, all others included less than 5 students each.

⁵² U.S. Army War College “Curriculum Catalogue,” academic year 2006-2007, 1.

⁵³ Ibid, 3.

transformation. It is this fourth transformation that recognizes the changing nature of war mentioned earlier in this study, which strategic leaders now must be prepared to operate. The new mission statement of the AWC reflects this transformation and captures the requirements of the changed nature of war, “to prepare selected military, civilian, and international leaders for the responsibilities of strategic leadership; educate current and future leaders on the development and employment of landpower in a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environment; research and publish on national security and military strategy; and engage in activities that support the Army’s strategic communication efforts.”⁵⁴ The AWC program prepares students to assume strategic leadership responsibilities in the national or theater strategic environment with the graduates eventually assuming the most senior leadership positions within their organizations, leading them at the strategic level. In order to accomplish this, AWC organized the new curriculum with six core courses: fundamentals of strategic thinking; theory of war and strategy; strategic leadership; national security policy and strategy; implementing national military strategy; and joint processes and landpower development. In addition to the sequenced six core courses, officers will participate in a strategic decision making exercise, are required to take four electives and complete an individual strategic research project.⁵⁵ A review of the AWC curriculum six-core courses with a comparison of the FM 22 Leadership strategic focus points will determine if the SSC is supporting BCT commander development.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 4.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 22.

SENIOR SERVICE COLLEGE FINDINGS

STRATEGIC LEADER and AWC COMPARISON

FM 22 Leadership--Strategic Focus Points	FST	TWS	SL	NSPS	INMS	JPLD
Provides vision, motivation, inspiration			X			
Extends influence			X	X	X	
Negotiating within, beyond national boundaries	X	X	X	X	X	X
Builds strategic consensus	X	X	X	X		
Leading, inspiring institutional change			X			
Displaying confidence in adverse conditions, dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity	X				X	
Communicates	X				X	
Creates a positive environment, positions the institution for the future	X		X			
Prepares self with strategic orientation	X	X		X	X	
Expanding knowledge in cultural and geopolitical areas mastering strategic art		X		X	X	
Self awareness and recognition of impact on others drawing on conceptual abilities	X		X			
Develops leaders	X		X			
Counseling, coaching and mentoring			X			
Assessing developmental needs and foster job development			X			
Provides direction, guidance and clear vision			X		X	X
Strategic planning and execution		X		X	X	X
Allocates the right resources		X	X		X	X
Leverages Joint interagency and multicultural context	X		X	X	X	X
Operating and succeeding in a multicultural context	X		X	X	X	X
Leverages technology					X	
Accomplishes missions consistently and ethically	X		X			

FST-Fundamentals of Strategic Thinking (2 credit hours)
TWS-Theory of War and Strategy (6 credit hours)
SL-Strategic Leadership (2 credit hours)
NSPS-National Security Policy and Strategy (6 credit hours)
INMS-Implementing National Military Strategy (7 hours)
JPLD-Joint Processes and Landpower Development (4 credit hours)

Table 1 FM 22 Leadership Strategic Leader Comparison with Army War College ⁵⁶

Table 1 depicts a careful comparison and review of the AWC curriculum six core course descriptions to that of the strategic leader requirements outlined in FM 6-22.⁵⁷ The table lists the strategic leader competencies identified in FM 6-22 and compares them to the AWC six core courses in order to determine if the current curriculum is supporting strategic leader development for BCT commanders. After a careful review of each of the six core course descriptions provided in the AWC 2006-2007 curriculum catalogue, the table highlights that each of the identified strategic competencies are in fact being addressed.

⁵⁶ Department of the Army, FM 6-22 *Army Leadership*. October 2006, Chapter 12-1, Appendix A

⁵⁷ Department of the Army, FM 6-22 *Army Leadership*. October 2006, Chapter 12.

Each of the 21 strategic competencies is covered by at least one of the AWC six core courses with 16 of the 21 competencies addressed by 2 or more courses providing instruction on that competency. This does indicate favorably that PME is addressing the strategic leader educational requirements as identified by FM 6-22. What is notable from this analysis is that 5 of the competencies receive instruction in only one of the core courses where the others are addressed by multiple courses. The 5 strategic competencies that are associated with only one of the AWC core courses all fall more specifically within the realm of leadership: provides vision; motivation; inspiration; leading inspiring institutional change; displaying confidence in adverse conditions; dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity; counseling; coaching and mentoring; assessing developmental needs and fostering job development and finally leveraging technology. Although notable, this is not necessarily a negative observation in that the AWC is primarily a strategic leadership institution and not a command or personal leadership institution. We must also look at the pre command course that is designed as a command preparation course to see if they address these in greater detail how they are preparing BCT commanders for command in the 21st century.

PRE COMMAND COURSE

The second course of instruction available within the OES supporting BCT commander preparation is one of the pre-command courses (PCC). Offered only to centrally selected command designees, attendance is mandatory for all active and reserve component officers. Pre-command training is organized and developed to support the individual command needs of the officers going into command. Pre-command training is conducted at the direction of the Chief of Staff, Army (CSA), and mandatory for all

officers in accordance with AR 350-1 and the 2007 guidance letter from Colonels Management Office, Human Resources Command.⁵⁸

The available PCCs for a tactical BCT command consist of 5 weeks of pre-command training. One week is branch immaterial, two weeks of tactical command training, and two weeks of branch specific PCC training. The first week of PCC branch immaterial instruction commonly referred to as the “Chiefs Week” focuses on up to date information from the CSA and all of his primary Army staff officers addressing current policy, programs and other special items of interest under the categories of but not limited to: leader development, training management, doctrine, command team seminar, equal opportunity, safety and risk management and strategic communications. The information presented during the chief’s week is informational and usually conducted in an auditorium setting with question and answer sessions following each of the presentations.

The chief’s week is followed by two additional weeks of command preparation in the Tactical Commanders Development Program. This tactically focused course under the current PCC model is designed for tactical battalion and brigade combat team commanders providing training and instruction and the synchronization of combat and combat support functions covering both offense and defensive operations. The instruction in the courses, facilitated by a team of active duty former battalion commanders and experienced former brigade commander contractors, includes battlefield synchronization, intelligence preparation of the battlefield, mission planning with specific emphasis on the role of the commander during mission planning,

⁵⁸ Department of the Army, Colonels Management Office, Human Resources Command. Alexandria Virginia, “Memorandum of instruction” Subject: FY 08 Colonel Level Pre-Command Course (PCC) Guidance. 8 August 2007.

the commanders estimate, battle command, tactical vignettes with practical application.⁵⁹ The last two weeks of PCC training available to tactical commanders is branch specific training. This training is conducted by the commander's respective branches that include hands on branch specific technical, tactical training including updates on the soldiers, equipment, and training within their individual branch.

General William S. Wallace, the commander of TRADOC, recognized the changing 21st century environment and recently questioned if the OES is adapting to this change. In March of 2007 he directed the Army War College (AWC) to take a closer look at the professional education for senior leaders to determine whether our present officer education found in PCC is properly preparing our officers for Brigade Combat Team command. Additionally he requested AWC to identify any gaps in the PME and to provide recommendations for the future.⁶⁰ This AWC study focused on the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) required of BCT commanders that should be addressed by the PCC at Ft Leavenworth and the branch schools. Several key observations, both positive and negative, were presented in the AWC study: the School of Command Preparation Pre Command Course has made significant and appropriate changes in 2007 (i.e., Tactical Commanders Development Program now includes more relevant operational scenarios), progress is 70% to the desired end state of addressing the knowledge, skills and abilities required of BCT commanders. The study also observed that the second and third weeks at PCC are much more relevant than in previous years and recommend no significant changes to the new PCC. One negative observation presented in the study indicating a need for change is the branch and SCP PCCs have such a diverse audience, the specific benefit to BCT commanders is

⁵⁹ Department of the Army, *Institutional Leader Training and Education*. Training and Doctrine Command TRADOC Regulation 350-10. 12 August 2002, 20.

⁶⁰ AWC power point briefing to TRADOC Commander, *BCT Commander Preparation Observations and Recommendations*. 5 March 2007. Briefing provided by the Ft Leavenworth School of Command Preparation. This briefing was a detailed study in order to determine the gaps in leader development for BCT commanders and used as the primary source document for the development of the pilot BCT CDR PCC redesign.

significantly reduced. There is no specific program of instruction (POI) for BCT commanders and as a result, nearly half of BCT commanders do not attend PCC (Benning and SCP). Because of the large percentage of battalion commander attendees, PCCs tend to rightfully focus on battalion commander needs, rather than brigade command and most certainly not BCT Command. Another negative observation is the Combined Arms Center (CAC) & branch PCCs are not synchronized and integrated leaving the school commandants to build individual PCCs. Additionally, the study highlights the tension within TRADOC and FORSCOM over the demands for full spectrum, long-term skills & relevancy and for current fight. This tension and ambiguity causes multiple risk interpretations. The final negative observation concerning BCT commander preparation, is the training readiness oversight of deployable brigades is challenged as a result of division staffs being deployed, leaving BCT Commander training himself.

The observations presented in the AWC study that do not exist in the current PME have thus created gaps in BCT commander development. The following gaps were identified in this study: ability to move from direct to indirect leadership; running a battle staff (knowledge management; targeting; CCIR in COIN environment; DCO/CofS roles);integrating capabilities in the battle space (Joint, SOF/Black, intelligence, interagency, supporting units); knowledge about how to man, organize, train, and equip in ARFORGEN; remaining current with the COE; ability to do campaign planning (especially COIN) at BCT level; knowledge about Strategic Communications/IO; non-lethal enablers/targeting; training management and leader development of enabling forces (Arty, EN, Sustainment); knowledge of counterinsurgency doctrine; and familiarization with BCT technology enablers.

The observation and gaps identified in the AWC BCT commander study indicate that according to their analysis, “right now the School for Command Preparation (SCP) has a 70%

solution for BCT commander preparation.”⁶¹ The findings presented to General Wallace identified that although the current BCT commander training is doing well, there are still gaps in BCT commander development based on the contemporary operating environment and by the new modular BCT organization. General Wallace directed the School for Command Preparation Director under the Combined Arms Center at Ft Leavenworth, Kansas to take on the responsibility of addressing the gaps identified in the study and create a new PCC program that would better support the development of BCT commanders. The new BCT PCC course would need to acknowledge the gaps with new instruction and incorporated into the pre-command training program in order to prepare BCT commanders.

PRE COMMAND COURSE REDESIGN

The School of Command Preparation (SCP) directed by COL(R) Kim Summers organized a working group in 2007 consisting of former battalion commanders within SCP to analyze and compare the findings from the AWC study to the current PCC education program then propose recommendations for improvements.⁶² The director’s guidance allowed for

⁶¹ AWC power point briefing to TRADOC Commander, BCT Commander Preparation Observations and Recommendations. 5 March 2007. Briefing provided by the Ft Leavenworth School of Command Preparation. This briefing was a detailed study conducted by an AWC study group in order to determine the gaps in leader development for BCT commanders. The mission, conduct a gap analysis to determine whether our present officer professional development system is properly preparing our officers for brigade command and brief observations and recommendations to TRADOC CG.

⁶² Information based on personal experience of the author who was assigned as an instructor with SCP and participated in the initial BCT commander working group redesign effort. The team redesigned the PCC focusing solely on BCT commander preparation. The initial concept of the course would retain the initial week of PCC with two weeks of foundation training followed by two weeks of warfighter center training. The concept was approved by SCP, CAC and later by the TRADOC commander. SCP after several months of development is expecting to execute the pilot course in February 2008.

The actual pilot course was rescheduled for February after the desired initial pilot date of November was cancelled due to not being able to acquire the directed 5 students for validation of the pilot. Numerous reasons support the fact that the Army was unable to produce five BCT commanders, but most importantly the senior commanders are not placing enough importance on PME.

Attendance of the pilot course in February 2008 validated my findings that the course did recognize the gaps, strategic leader requirements identified and provide relevant instruction to address them. My personal observation of the pilot was that the pilot is a significant improvement over the previous

enormous flexibility in course design with very few constraints. The BCT course redesign must address the gaps listed and the overall length of the course was not to exceed the Department of the Army's authorized five weeks of pre-command training. Basically, the design team was provided an open slate in an unconstrained environment.⁶³ The new course design would break away from the old PCC model acknowledging that although there was some utility for BCT commanders, the PCC program really focused on the needs of the future battalion commanders with attending BCT commanders assisting in their development. The initial proposal and concept of the BCT commander PCC accepted by the director and subsequently approved by the TRADOC commander and the CSA entailed a completely redesigned PCC consisting of three weeks of training on the unique requirements for BCT commanders. The three weeks of education include an Intellectual Foundations (IF) week with Immersive Commanders Environment (ICE), and Warfighting Functions Updates (WFU) from each of the warfighting centers.⁶⁴

The IF education provides current and relevant instruction on the identified gaps from the AWC study and other strategic leader competencies identified in FM 6-22. All instruction is now using the small group model facilitated by a serving brigadier general, recent former brigade commander, and a contract former brigade commander. The emphasis of the course redesign is now focused on the needs of the BCT commander with the instruction provided by subject matter experts who have recent BCT command experience. The course also places emphasis on application of instruction through the use of the commanders immersive environment consisting

PCC design and is a critical course in the development and preparation for BCT commanders. The instruction provided allows commanders the opportunity to enter command more fully prepared and able to anticipate the new requirements and challenges of BCT command verses reacting and discovery learning while in command.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ School of Command Preparation, Ft Leavenworth, KS. "Brigade Combat Team Development Program Course Overview,"(Pilot Course handout February 2008).

of practical and simulated hands on exercises. After the foundation training, BCT commanders transition to the final two weeks of the course that consist of visiting the subject matter experts at the warfighting centers to summarize and synthesize the BCT commander training experience and target the remaining gaps identified in the study.

The warfighting function portion of the course is a travel period that includes stops at each of the warfighting centers. This portion of the educational experience and strategic leader development eliminates the former branch PCC visits in favor of more complete warfighting functions hands on experience by including all of the warfighting functions that make up the modular BCT. This exposure now addresses more completely the needs of the modular BCT commander. At the warfighting centers, the students receive functional instruction, updates on training, and information on all of the elements of the modular BCT. The previous model only allowed for training and informational updates in the specific individual branch of the brigade commander and did not adequately address the other warfighting functions of the modular BCT. The concept includes travel to multiple warfighting centers, Fort Benning, GA, Fort Sill, OK, Fort Rucker, AL, Fort Huachuca, AZ, Fort Lee, VA, and a Combat Training Center (CTC). Each of the centers provides exposure and specialized instruction that address the gaps identified in the AWC study and the needs of the BCT commander. Fort Benning, GA, the new home of the Infantry and Armor at the Combined Arms Maneuver Center, the BCT commanders receive updates and information on soldier training, equipment on all modular BCTs: IBCT, SBCT and HBCT. The Fort Sill, OK visit to the artillery center includes discussion on lethal and non lethal effects, fires integration, training, munitions and air defense. The aviation center located at Fort Rucker, AL, includes discussion and instruction on air ground integration, A2C2, and unmanned aerial reconnaissance UAV integration. Fort Lee, VA. Logistics education center provides instruction on strategic transportation, sustainment training and management. Fort Huachuca, AZ, the intelligence center instruction on intelligence fusion, ISR systems update, and human and signal intelligence (HUMINT and SIGINT). The Combat Training Center (CTC) visit provides a

collective, BCT synthesis on the instruction from all of the other warfighting centers. The CTC senior trainers provide discussions, observations, and insights on BCT trends reversal, techniques collected from previous BCT training rotations.

PRE COMMAND COURSE FINDINGS

To determine how the PCC was supporting the development of BCT commanders, the same methodology was used earlier in this study that compared the strategic leader competencies to the Army War College curriculum. Following the same methodology, the twenty-one strategic leader competencies identified in FM 6-22 *Army Leadership*, were compared to the curriculum offered in the new BCT commander pilot course that included instruction offered in week one, the CSA week, intellectual foundations (IF) training with application in the immersive commanders environment (ICE), and finally the warfighting function updates (WFU) at all of the warfighting centers. Table 2 was created to graphically show the findings from the comparison of the competencies to the PCC curriculum. The competencies were compared to the individual lessons taught during each of the BCT PCC modules. If the competency was addressed during a particular block of instruction either in the subject or as one of the enabling learning objectives then the assessment from this study is that the competency was being instructed. Using this comparative analysis, twenty of the twenty-one competencies received instruction in at least two or more classes with ten competencies receiving additional instruction in three or more classes.

STRATEGIC LEADER and BCT CDR PCC COMPARISON

FM 22 Leadership--Strategic Competencies	WK1	IF	ICE	WFU
Provides vision, motivation, inspiration	X	X	X	X
Extends influence		X	X	
Negotiating within, beyond national boundaries	X	X		
Builds strategic consensus	X	X		
Leading, inspiring institutional change		X		X
Displaying confidence in adverse conditions, dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity		X	X	
Communicates		X	X	X
Creates a positive environment, positions the institution for the future	X			
Prepares self with strategic orientation	X	X		X
Expanding knowledge in cultural and geopolitical areas mastering strategic art	X	X		X
Self awareness and recognition of impact on others drawing on conceptual abilities	X	X		X
Develops leaders	X	X	X	X
Counseling, coaching and mentoring	X	X		X
Assessing developmental needs and foster job development	X			X
Provides direction, guidance and clear vision		X	X	
Strategic planning and execution		X	X	
Allocates the right resources	X	X		X
Leverages Joint interagency and multicultural context	X	X		X
Operating and succeeding in a multicultural context	X	X		X
Leverages technology	X			X
Accomplishes missions consistently and ethically		X	X	

WK 1-PCC Chiefs Week -
IF- Intellectual Foundational Training
ICE-Immersive Commanders Environment
WFU-Weightlifting Function Updates

Table 2 Strategic Leader and BCT CDR PCC Comparison.⁶⁵

Unique to the BCT CDR PCC redesign is the use of the immersive commanders environment where eight of the strategic competencies saw some application in the four ICE exercises. The ICE exercises are designed to provide an opportunity for the BCT command designees to develop skills in visualizing, describing and assessing tactical operations in a full spectrum environment covering Offense, defense and stability operations.⁶⁶ The ICE exercises provide the command designees an opportunity to exercise what they have learned and receive

⁶⁵ Department of the Army, FM 6-22 *Army Leadership*. October 2006, Chapter 12-1, Appendix A

⁶⁶ School for Command Preparation, U.S Army Command and General Staff College, Brigade Combat Team Commanders Development Program, “Lesson Plan 20, Immersive Commanders Environment” (Advance Sheet. February 2008).

personal coaching and mentoring from subject matter experts with recent experience in BCT command.

CONCLUSION

The nature of war in the 21st century changed, thus triggering the Army to transform in order to remain relevant. A direct product of this transformation was the shift to modularity and the creation of the brigade combat team. The fallout from the rapid change to BCT modularization was a gap in leader development and a concern that Professional Military Education (PME) was not supporting BCT commanders. In an effort to determine the gap and the requirements for BCT commanders, numerous studies were conducted on strategic leader competencies that now reflect the requirements needed for BCT commanders. Inclusion of strategic leader competencies in doctrine is the necessary starting point for institutionalizing leader education. The competency listing with strategic emphasis was selected and included and reflected in current doctrine, *FM6-22 Army Leadership*. The competencies outlined in *FM 6-22 Army Leadership* used in this study to identify the strategic leader requirements for BCT commanders have been institutionalized into the curriculum of the two senior leader courses reviewed, SSC and PCC. The changes in the AWC curriculum resulting in the six core courses and the BCT CDR PCC redesign are a positive indicator that PME acknowledged that a leader development gap existed requiring change. Another positive change in BCT commander development was the inclusion of the immersive commanders environment exercises that enable command designees to exercise intellectually, principles of command leadership as part of their command preparation. Necessary changes were made and institutionalized indicating that PME is in fact supporting the development of BCT commanders.

Due to growing operational tempo (OPTEMPO), transformational requirements, and other priorities, many BCT commanders have deferred attendance to SSC until after command. During 2007 there were 12 BCT commanders serving in command who deferred attendance to

SSC.⁶⁷ This is a growing negative trend caused by rapid BCT growth during modularization and also by increased OPTEMPO requirements increasing the BCTs operating in Iraq. In the words of a former BCT commander now attending the AWC after his deferral for command in Iraq, “personally from my perspective, the new BCTs are significantly more complex than its predecessor. I could have benefited from a higher pre-command training experience prior to taking command in the summer of 2005.”⁶⁸ This trend has an end in sight when modularization is completed and the desired BCT end strength is achieved, but in the interim it may potentially have strategic consequences as this study points out by placing BCT commanders into a strategic environment with a new organization and limited opportunity for professional education at the strategic level. Roger H. Nye understood this point clearly when he wrote in his book *The Challenge of Command* that “the best place to begin the study of strategy is in the schoolhouse, with a specialty educated faculty and a structured program of reading, writing, and discussion. The War College program sharpens the minds of those going directly to strategic assignments.”⁶⁹ Roger Nye’s understanding of the importance of the War College for providing strategic understanding and awareness has not changed since 1986 when he wrote his book on leadership and command. The importance of the SSC program is just as important for 21st century leaders as it was for leaders during the height of the Cold War.

The research indicated that both courses offered in PME provides instruction on all of the strategic leader competencies with many of the competencies covered in multiple courses in both SSC and PCC. Currently, PME is supporting BCT commander development if utilized.

⁶⁷ John Potts LTC, Leader Development Division, Office of Personnel Management Division, Human Resources Command 30 April 2007.

⁶⁸ Private email with a former BCT commander who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom who commented on his command preparation. This commander deferred SSC attendance and felt that his PCC experience was not a adequate training experience for the challenges he faced as a BCT commander.

⁶⁹ Roger.H, Nye, “*The Challenge of Command*”, (Berkley Publishing Group, 1986), 140.

Unfortunately, as identified earlier, a significant number of BCT commanders are not able to fully utilize the existing PME due to operational requirements and other priorities. Missing the available educational opportunities for BCT command contributes to increased strategic risk that the Army needs to address. While speaking to future battalion and brigade commanders at the pre command course on 4 February at Ft Leavenworth, Kansas, Lieutenant General William Caldwell the commander of the Combined Arms Center, emphasized this key point when discussing the importance of professional military education, “we have a responsibility to those we serve to focus on leader development.”⁷⁰ It is time to prioritize professional military education and support those we serve by developing our senior leaders for the challenges of the 21st century.

⁷⁰ William Caldwell LTG, Remarks made to the students attending the Pre Command Course class at Ft Leavenworth, KS 4 February 2008.

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