
Professional Development Training A New Century—A New Focus

By Mike Sheheane

As I look back over the past 30 years and my experiences as a student and, subsequently, as a trainer and training developer for the Army, I can't help but ponder how the pendulum has swung from one instructional concept to where we are today. It would be easy, but probably inappropriate, for me to reminisce about what many of us consider the good old days when the emphasis was on "task-based, performance-oriented, hands-on training."

Downsizing, automation, and monetary constraints have impacted on the change in focus and training of the future Army. The emphasis today is on shorter, more job-specific training courses supported by either Web-based or other forms of computer-based distributed training material. At the same time, the Reserve Component (RC) makes up increasingly significant percentages of the overall force structure and require quality training programs suited to the limited training time and equipment available. And finally, the junior officers of today's Army are required to possess the characteristics and competencies needed to lead combined arms units composed of multitasked soldiers. The skills, knowledge, and abilities required to function in this environment require a broader educational experience than our current branch-focused approach to professional development. To accommodate this requirement, the branch proponent schools—as they currently exist—will have to undergo a transformation.

This article describes the ongoing actions that are a result of this new focus. Perhaps it is best to start with the "change" which will be the first to occur and, in fact, is being implemented as this is being written—the conversion to The Army Training System (TATS). For several years, we have had separate training strategies for Active Component (AC) and RC soldiers. The norm was lengthy resident courses for the AC soldier and some alternative training program incorporating a variety of training media (correspondence courses; multiple-phased, short resident courses; inactive duty training) for RC soldiers. These Reserve Component Configured Courseware (RC3) training programs were more structured to provide training to a minimum standard rather than the same standards required in the institutional courses. This statement is not meant to detract or cast dispersion in anyway on my fellow RC soldiers; it is simply the way

the program had to be structured because of training time and equipment constraints.

The Army Training System course is defined in TRADOC Regulation 350-70, *Systems Approach to Training Management, Processes, and Products*, as "A single course designed to train the same military occupational specialty (MOS). It also includes . . . MOS Qualification (MOSQ, i.e., reclassification), Army leadership, functional, professional development, and civilian courses. The course ensures standardization by training all soldiers (regardless of component) to task standard." More simply stated, train the same tasks to the same standards for both AC and RC soldiers.

In the latter part of 1996, the U.S. Army Chemical School (USACMLS) selected four courses to transition to TATS format: the 54B10 Reclassification Course, the 54B20/30 Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course (BNCOC), the 54B40 Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course (ANCOC), and the Chemical Captain's Career Course. All initial-entry officers, both AC and RC, are required to attend the resident Chemical Officer Basic Course to become branch-qualified; so, technically, it already fits TATS's definition. These other professional development courses existed in two program-of-instruction (POI) configurations for each course—RC3 and institutional training.

One basic foundation on which TATS is built is the elimination of redundant training. Historically, training institutions have allotted considerable training time to "refresher training." TRADOC has established the position that once a task has been trained, little or no training time should be expended for retraining that task. As a result, significant reductions have been realized in several institutional courses. Conversely, because of the requirement to train the "same tasks to the same standards," course lengths for the RC-configured version have increased. Figures 1, 2, and 3

depict the course lengths for the three enlisted professional development courses currently undergoing transition to the TATS format.

Recently, TRADOC directed all branch schools to remove the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy-(USASMA) managed Common Core from their proponent POIs. Courses where common-core instruction is a prerequisite requirement will be designated in the Army Training Requirements and Resource System as two distinct requirements.

The 54B10 Reclassification Course is the primary means of reclassifying RC soldiers into the 54B MOS. This course has been revised to provide better training for those soldiers converting to chemical operations specialists. The course is now a two-phase program, consisting of 76 hours of inactive duty training (IDT) status and 120 hours of active duty training (ADT) status (Figure 1). This course has no institutional course equivalent.

The RC-configured version of the 54B20/30 BNCOC is a three-phase course with completion of USASMA common core being a prerequisite requirement (Figure 2). After completing the BNCOC common core, students will attend a 2-week ADT followed by an 85-hour IDT phase and a final 2-week ADT phase. These three phases are designed to be completed within two training years. The USACMLS-taught institutional version of this course has been reduced from 15 weeks 3 days to its current 2-week common-core prerequisite phase and a 9-week 2-day Chemical Branch-specific phase.

The RC-configured 54B40 ANCOC is a two-phase course with USASMA common core a prerequisite. It is designed to be completed in one training year (Figure 3). The 79-hour IDT phase includes approximately 40 hours of Web-based distributed learning material. The 2-week ADT phase includes a comprehensive field training exercise. The institutional ANCOC taught at the Chemical School was formerly a 13-week course but has been reduced to a 2-week common core followed by a 7-week 2-day branch phase.

I am a product of the “old school” and have a genuine appreciation for *hands-on, performance-oriented* (HOPO) training programs. I have frequently expressed my belief that if distance learning (DL) is such a great thing, then why isn’t “Jump School” being trained via DL. Obviously the answer is that some things just don’t lend themselves to

54B10—Reclassification			
Prerequisite	Phase 1	Phase 2	Total
MOSQ (other)	79 hours IDT	120 hours ADT	199 academic hours

Figure 1

being trained in any format other than HOPO training. Even I must accept the fact that the time students spend in a classroom in the future will be significantly less than in the past.

USACMLS is in a somewhat unique situation in that the opportunities for using DL technologies are lessened by the considerable technology-/equipment-based training in our courses. The training of tasks associated with operating and maintaining equipment is extremely difficult, unless done in a “virtual training” environment. In most cases, the technology doesn’t exist yet or the costs are so prohibitive that equipment

54B BNCOC					
Comp	Prerequisite	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Total
AC	Common Core 2 weeks 3 days	9 weeks 2 days -----			12 weeks
TASS	Common Core 85 hours IDT	120 hours ADT	77 hours IDT/DL	134 hours ADT	331 academic hours

Figure 2

training is done in a hands-on format. That is not to say that progress is not being made because considerable resources are, in fact, dedicated to the design and development of DL products to support individual training requirements as well as self-development efforts. In the next few months, students will be able to enroll in and complete the entire Operational Radiation Safety Course via a Web-based course. A significant piece of the NBC defense course will be DL. Blocks of instruction within the 54B BNCOC course will be self-paced via computer-based instruction as well as the previously mentioned 40 hours of DL in the ANCOC. Additionally, an assortment of

54B ANCOC				
Comp	Prerequisite	Phase 1	Phase 2	Total
AC	Common Core 2 weeks 3 days	7 weeks 2 days -----		10 weeks
TASS	Common Core 83 hours IDT	79 hours IDT/DL	128 hours ADT	207 academic hours

Figure 3

training materials and job aids are available on CD-ROM to support unit and self-development requirements in the field. A list of these products and how they may be obtained can be found on pages 33 and 34.

Earlier I mentioned a term that is frequently heard these days in relation to many actions and initiatives—*Transformation*. Suffice it to say that the traditional branch schoolhouses, as we know them now, will be transformed. Besides the changes that are happening as TATS is implemented and DL products are developed, other changes will take place that are designed to enhance the educational experiences of the students. All courses will be revised to ensure that they are challenging, developmental (provide new information), and relevant (current and technically valid).

Besides eliminating redundancy from the curriculum, all POIs will be reviewed diligently and frequently to ensure the training received fits the job the student is preparing to perform. Perhaps the first visible example of this transformation is the “pilot” program now being conducted at the Infantry School. The term “Officer Basic Course” has been around as long as I have, but it appears that newly commissioned officers will begin attending the Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC). It also is very likely that this course will be a two-phase course, with the first phase the same for all initial-entry officers regardless of branch assignment. This new concept in officer training is still being designed and will no doubt see numerous changes in format and structure. The concept itself, however, will most likely become the way new lieutenants will begin their careers. Without going into lengthy details and keeping in mind that the final product must receive

Basic Officer Leader Course		
Phase 1	6-7 weeks	(Fort Benning)
	> Physical Fitness	
	> Combat Skills	
	> Field Crafts	
Phase 2	12-13 weeks	(Fort Leonard Wood)
	> Nuclear	
	> Biological	
	> Chemical	
	> Smoke	

Figure 4

approval at the highest levels, it is probably safe to say that Phase 1 of the BOLC will be 6 to 7 weeks of leadership development training with emphasis on physical fitness, combat skills, and field crafts.

Upon completion of Phase 1, lieutenants would move to their assigned branch school for the proponent phase of BOLC. For chemical lieutenants, that would be 12 weeks 4 days of training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri (Figure 4). Remember, this new course for lieutenants is still being worked and will probably change several times before the final product is implemented.

Hopefully this article will shed some light on the rapidly changing manner in which soldiers will train in the near future. So many radically new proposals are being initiated that even those of us who work with them everyday have trouble keeping things straight. I hope to write more articles in future issues to keep the chemical community up to date on changes as they develop and occur. At this time, the best advice I can give is *be patient—be flexible*.