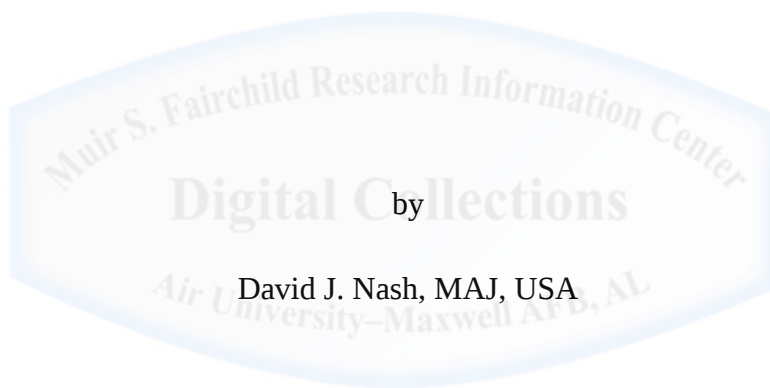


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AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

COMPANY LEVEL COMMANDER DEVELOPMENT IN THE US ARMY



A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements

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Disclaimer

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ABSTRACT

This research paper looks at how combat arms officers in the United States (US) Army are prepared for company level command and how it can be sustained and/or improved. The two schools primarily responsible for preparing combat arms officers for company level command are the Field Artillery Captains Career Course (FACCC) and the Maneuver Captains Career Course (MCCC). Each individual installation assists in the preparation of officers to become company level commanders. However, the courses at each of the installations are not fully standardized. One common thread among all of these courses is that they use a pedagogical approach to prepare officers for company level command. These courses should implement an andragogical approach to this training in order to ensure that combat arms officers are truly ready for company level command. The differences between pedagogy and andragogy in instruction can have a significant positive impact on developing combat arms officers to be successful company level commanders. Recommendations to achieve these improvements using andragogy are discussed.

In the United States (US) Army, when an officer is selected for promotion to captain (CPT), he/she is eligible to attend the Captains Career Course (CCC). This is the first step in preparing an officer for company level command. The CCC is designed to produce leaders that can lead company-size units and serve at battalion and/or brigade staff levels.¹ The course is broken into two phases, a branch specific phase and a staff phase which is applicable regardless of branch. These courses are tailored to each branch (specialty area) with the exception of Armor and Infantry officers who attend the Maneuver CCC (MCCC), and Ordnance, Quartermaster, and Transportation officers who attend the Combined Logistics CCC (CLCCC). Furthermore, these courses should support officer development in accordance with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's (CJCS) Desired Leader Attributes (DLAs) for Joint Force 2020. These DLAs are the abilities to understand the environment and the effect of all instruments of national power, anticipate and adapt to surprise and uncertainty, recognize change and lead transitions, operate on intent through trust, empowerment, and understanding (Mission Command), make ethical decisions based on the shared values of the Profession of Arms, and think critically and strategically in applying joint warfighting principles and concepts of joint operations.² When a captain is selected for command, he/she is required to attend the company Commander/First Sergeant (1SG) course at the installation in which he/she is assigned. This is the second and final step in preparing leaders to be company level commanders. It is a 40 hour course which is different at each installation. The focus of this paper is to demonstrate how the US Army prepares combat arms leaders to be company level commanders and how it can be sustained or improved. Part of the problem with the way that officers are trained to be company level commanders is the method that is used to train them. Officers are trained to be company level commanders using pedagogy. The combat arms centers of excellence should use Malcom

Knowles' andragogy framework for understanding adults as learners in order to analyze the trainees and maximize the training outcomes for company level commanders. By using an andragogical approach, the schools will get more engaged officers and the training will be much more productive. This will, in turn, produce a better caliber of company level commanders. In this paper, the author discusses the way the Field Artillery Captains Career Course (FACCC), the Maneuver Captains Career Course (MCCC) and individual installations prepare officers to become company level commanders. This paper also discusses the difference between pedagogy and andragogy then gives some recommendations on how to better train combat arms officers to be prepared for company level command.

Field Artillery Captains Career Course (FACCC)

The FACCC begins the training of future battery commanders through eight weeks of basic staff officer/leadership skills, followed by four weeks of gunnery training (technical proficiency in artillery), three weeks of fire support training (technical proficiency in artillery), three weeks of FA battalion operations training, two weeks of battery command training and two weeks of advanced fire support training.³ At the completion of the CCC, the officers are required to be able to execute any captain level positions in their branch. For example, a captain can be assigned as any staff officer position (from the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) or Battalion/Squadron level), responsible for the planning and execution of complex missions, depending on the staff section they are assigned; a Battalion level Fire Direction Officer (FDO) responsible for the calculation, processing, synchronization and safety of all fire missions fired from the battalion, and the training and associated equipment of all personnel assigned to him/her, a Battalion level FSO who is responsible for the planning and synchronizing of all joint fires and effects for the battalion and their integration into the BCT plan; an assistant Brigade

level FSO, responsible for the planning and synchronization of all joint fires and effects for the BCT; or a battery commander responsible for the training and associated equipment of all personnel assigned to him/her, planning and execution of all assigned operations and countless other responsibilities.

During the battery command block, captains are given a cursory glance on the duties of being a battery commander. It focuses on some common violations of the Uniformed Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and the regulations that govern the Command Supply Discipline Program (CSDP). The CSDP is a program established by the commander to ensure the proper accountability and care of all assigned equipment. Failure to properly care and account for equipment is what causes a lot of commanders to get in trouble. A poor CSDP can cause a commander to lose accountability of his/her equipment which he/she can be held financially liable.

This is all of the training that captains receive from the Fires Center of Excellence prior to becoming a battery commander. While this training is inadequate for the needs of a battery commander, it does begin the development of the CJCS' DLAs, **which enhance a battery commander's ability to successfully execute his/her job**. For example, the artillery community focuses heavily on the sixth DLA (the ability to think critically and strategically in applying joint warfighting principles and concepts to joint operations) and is very proficient in training their leaders to be joint leaders because it is drilled into officers from the beginning of their careers. Artillery is almost by definition joint. Due to the fact that an FSO (from the company level all the way through the highest levels of staff) is responsible for integrating and deconflicting **all** joint effects, he/she is trained how to execute missions from naval gunfire through close air support (which may come from Air Force, Navy, or Marine Corps aircraft). This is just as

important for a battery commander who might have joint assets assigned to him/her. However, for other battery command specific training the intent is for officers to receive that training from their unit. Although there is a set of minimum standard tasks set by the Department of the Army (DA), the installations have the flexibility to add additional blocks of instruction to their courses and some installations do not even adhere to the minimum standard tasks established by the DA.

Maneuver Captains Career Course (MCCC)

The MCCC, which trains Armor and Infantry officers, trains their future company/troop commanders in a slightly different way. The course begins with approximately one week of basic officer/leadership skills, followed by approximately nine weeks of company level operations in an Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT), Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), and Striker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT), followed by approximately three weeks of Battalion level operations, followed by approximately one week of company command training⁴. Upon completion of the MCCC, officers are required to be able to execute any captain level positions in their branch. For example, a captain can be assigned as any staff officer position (from the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) or Battalion/Squadron level), responsible for the planning and execution of complex missions, depending on the staff section they are assigned, or a company/troop commander responsible for the training and associated equipment of all personnel assigned to him/her, planning and execution of all assigned operations and countless other responsibilities.

During the company/troop command block, captains are given a cursory glance on the duties of being a company/troop commander. It focuses on the unit maintenance program, the Family Readiness Group (FRG), the CSDP, and various other blocks of instruction on how to be a company/troop commander. At first glance, it may seem that the MCCC also provides very

little instruction on how to be a company level commander. However, the entire nine weeks of company level training in each of the BCTs is essentially training officers to be company/troop level commanders. Even though they do not get a lot of lessons on the administrative side of command (UCMJ or CSDP), the officers learn company/troop level tactics that will be invaluable when they take command. The MCCC complies with the CJCS' DLAs but does not emphasize the sixth DLA (the ability to think critically and strategically in applying joint warfighting principles and concepts to joint operations) as much as the FACCC because a maneuver commander will have an FSO that will integrate all of the joint effects. However, the MCCC does a good job of preparing officers for company/troop command in terms of tactics and maneuvering an infantry/tank company. Due to the fact that Armor and Infantry officers are much more limited in the type of jobs that they can hold, the MCCC is able to focus more on company level tactics than the FACCC. However, they do not do a good job in preparing officers for all of the administrative aspects of command. These are quite often where company level commanders struggle the most.

Company Commander/1SG Course

The Company Commander/1SG course is designed to prepare new company commanders and 1SGs for their new position. Technically, this course is Professional Military Education (PME) and is also required to meet the CJCS' DLAs. Having said that, the courses that the author has researched only meet three of the six DLAs, at best (the ability to anticipate and adapt to surprise and uncertainty, the ability to recognize change and lead transitions, and the ability to operate on intent through trust, empowerment, and understanding (a.k.a Mission Command)). These DLAs receive only a cursory overview and rely heavily on instruction from several prior programs rather than a truly dedicated effort to develop the DLAs in the CCCs.

As stated earlier, this course varies from installation to installation but there are standard tasks assigned by Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA). The standard tasks are the command responsibilities to include establishing and maintaining a positive command climate, maintaining good order and discipline within the organization, support of the Army campaign plan for health promotion /risk reduction, suicide prevention, Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP), Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP), Equal Opportunity (EO), leader development, planning , preparing and executing individual and collective training, company administrative requirements, CSDP, conducting comprehensive Soldier fitness program, unit FRG program, Soldier medical readiness, the Army retention program, stewards for the profession of arms, support of the Army concussion/Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (MTBI) campaign, the protection of classified and sensitive information, unit safety and Composite Risk Management (CRM)⁵.

These tasks are a good overview of what a company level commander is required to be familiar with. However, there are no guidelines for how much time is required to instruct each of these topics. Also, some units do not specifically follow this guidance. Figure 1 illustrates the company commander/1SG course schedule for Fort Shafter, Hawaii from 2012 and shows the standard tasks that are accounted for highlighted in red. The standard tasks that are not accounted for in the training are the command responsibilities for conducting comprehensive Soldier fitness program, the command responsibilities for the unit FRG program, the command responsibilities for the protection of classified and sensitive information, and the command responsibilities for unit safety and CRM. The rest of the lessons that are provided are all services that are provided by the installation and are available to all Soldiers. This is extremely useful to commanders and 1SGs if they attend this course prior to taking command. However, a large

number of captains and 1SGs attend this course while they are in their current job as a Commander or 1SG. There are two major problems with this. The first problem is that when the commander is in this course, he/she is not at his/her company/battery.



Mission Support Element - Hawaii

Current CCFSPCC Schedule (Oct 12)

Day 1			Day 2			Day 3			Day 4			Day 5		
Event	Task	Time (min)	Event	Task	Time (min)	Event	Task	Time (min)	Event	Task	Time (min)	Event	Task	Time (min)
ATAC	12	60	ATAC	12	60	ATAC	12	60	ATAC	12	60	ATAC	12	60
Profession of Arms	16	15	DHR (I/O process, AWOL, Flags)	10	60	Suicide Prevention	4	30	Casualty / Mortuary Affairs	10	30	ACS (Intro)		5
USAG-HI Welcome/Overview		45	Family Travel		10	EO	1,7	30	Warrior Transition Unit	3, 10, 17	15	Info & Referral		5
Inspector General	1	60	Reassignments	10	15	CSDP	11	60				Financial Read Prog & Army Emerg Relief	10	30
Training Management	9, 19	60	Transition Center		10	DOL	11	30	Leader Development / WLC	8	45	MRT	12	5
Training Division	9, 19	30	ACAP		30	25 th G-8 DTS/IMPAC		15	Range Control	9, 19	30	Survivor Outreach Svc & Care Resp Team	10	15
Military Justice	2, 6	75	TRICARE		10	Phys Therapy/ Pregnancy/ PPPT	10	30	Soldier Finance	10	45	Army Volunteer Coordinator		15
Victim Witness Program	2	15	Education Services		25	IDES	17	45	Mission Training Complex	9	30	Mobilization / Deployment	10	15
Civil Law, Claims, Legal Assistance	2	60	Army Public Health Nursing		20	HIPPA	3, 14	30	USARPAC Repl Det	10	15	Family Advocacy Program	10	60
Trial Defense	2	45	ASACS	3,6	15	MEDPROS	14	30	Retention	15	30	SHARP / SAPR	5	60
			ASAP/ A&D Rehab	3,6	90	Profiles	14	30				USAG-HI Security	2, 10	50
			Biochem Testing	6	60	Dental	14	15				DES	2, 10	45
			TBI	17	45	Behavioral Health Services	3, 14	30				25 ID Cdr	8	45
						Sick Call	10	30						
									TARP	18	60			

Figure 1 Commander/1SG Course - Mission Support Element, Hawaii
(Reprinted from MSE-HI Current CCFSPCC Schedule)

Therefore, at the end of the each day, he/she has to return to the company/battery to accomplish all of the tasks that were supposed to occur during the day. This divides the attention of the commander between the class and the unit. This is not to say that there is not a chain of command in a unit. However, some things specifically require the commander and 1SG's attention. Especially if he/she has to deal with disciplinary or administrative issues during the day when he/she is supposed to be in class. This can be detrimental to the unit and the

commander. The other problem is that if the commander has been in command for a while, he/she may have already learned the lessons from the class the hard way. If units could ensure that commanders attended the course prior to taking command, it would be very beneficial to them. However, it still would not fully prepare captains for battery/company command because it is mostly focused on the services provided by the installation and not the common issues associated with command.

Pedagogy vs. Andragogy

In the US Army, company level leaders are instructed using the concept of pedagogy. Pedagogy is a teacher driven learning process where the teacher is completely responsible for the learner's education. In the 1970s, Malcolm Knowles popularized the theory of andragogy in the US. Andragogy is a learner driven process that places the responsibility for the learner's education on the learner instead of the teacher. Malcolm Knowles provides an andragogy framework for understanding adults as learners which is based on six principles of learning. He lists these principles as: the learners' need to know, their self-concept, the role of the learners' experiences, their readiness to learn, the orientation to learning, and their motivation for learning.⁶ Figure 2 illustrates the major differences between andragogy and pedagogy. Pedagogy works well when discussing the technical aspects of the leaders' job. For example, when an FA officer is learning gunnery, the officer may have little experience in the proper techniques of executing gunnery and therefore needs the expertise of the instructor to ensure that he/she is properly trained. However, when instructing combat arms officers to be company level commanders, the author believes that the andragogical approach is better suited.

Pedagogy vs Andragogy		
	Pedagogical	Andragogical

The Learner's Need to Know	• Teacher/Instructor informs learner that they have a need to know	• Learner identifies their own need to know
Self-Concept of the Learner	• Learner is dependent on instructor for all learning • Teacher/Instructor assumes full responsibility for what is taught and how it is learned • The teacher/instructor evaluates learning	• Learner is self-directed • Learner is responsible for his/her own learning • Self-evaluation is characteristic of this approach
Prior Experience of the Learner	• Learner comes to the activity with little experience that could be tapped as a resource for learning • The experience of the instructor is most influential	• Learner brings a greater volume and quantity of experience • Adults are a rich resource for one another • Different experiences assure diversity in groups of adults • Experience becomes the source of self-identify
Readiness to Learn	• Learners are told what they have to learn in order to advance to next level of mastery	• Any change is likely to trigger a readiness to learn • Need to know in order to perform more effectively in some aspect of the learner's life in important • Ability to assess gaps between where learner is now and where he/she needs to be
Orientation to Learning	• Learning is a process of acquiring prescribed subject matter • Content units are sequenced according to logic of the subject matter	• Learners want to perform a task, solve a problem, live in a more satisfying way • Learning must have relevance to real-life tasks • Learning is organized around life/work situations rather
Motivation to Learn	• Primarily motivated by external pressures, competition for grades, and the consequences of failure	• Internal motivators: self-esteem, recognition, better quality of life, self-confidence, self-actualization

Figure 1: Pedagogy vs. Andragogy

(Adapted from Knowles, et al., *The Adult Learner*, 7th ed., 60-67)

Using Knowles' principles of learning, the author will illustrate why this is true. The learners' need to know concept refers to the reason that an individual is learning the material. With the exception of poor performers, combat arms officers will be selected for company level command when they are mid-level to senior captains. All combat arms officers know this and understand that they have a need to know how to be a commander. This knowledge pushes them to seek out as much information as possible to ensure that they know how to be good commanders. There are multiple sources for this including websites, books and magazines. Having said that, these sources are not officially part of an officer's training for company level command. The only official training programs are the ones that have been discussed earlier in this paper and are pedagogical in nature.

The learners' self-concept refers to the degree of dependency of their personalities. Pedagogy assumes that the learner is completely dependent on the teacher's knowledge and experience and does not have any drive to learn outside of a structured setting. This is clearly not the case for combat arms officers or there would not be the number of websites and books related to being a company level commander. An officer wants to be seen by his/her peers and others as independent and capable of self-direction. It has been ingrained in officers' minds from the moment they put on a uniform that being capable of self-direction is a critical component of being a good leader. This concept applies to everything from physical training to developing your mind through reading professional journals and books related to the officer's profession.

The role of the learners' experiences refers to the life experiences of the learner that they have accumulated over time. These may or may not be applicable to the lesson, however, they will influence how the learner views the material. This does not play a significant role in pedagogy or in the current training officers receive for company level command. During both

the Captains Career Course and the company Commander/1SG course, there is not a lot of interaction between the learner and the teacher. As discussed earlier, the majority of the training consists of doctrine and regulations or what facilities are available on a particular installation. However, given the opportunity, the officer's experience can assist them in learning how to be a good company level commander. Throughout an officer's career, he/she will work for, or at least observe, both good commanders and bad commanders. If facilitated by an instructor, officers could share these experiences with each other in a group, in order to develop some "dos and don'ts" of being a commander.

The learners' readiness to learn refers to the timing in which they are prepared to learn about a certain topic. According to Knowles, Holton and Swanson in pedagogy, the learner is ready to learn a specific topic when the teacher tells them that they must learn it in order to pass the subject.⁷ The majority of combat arms officers have an intense desire to be company level commanders. This desire makes them ready to learn how to be commanders the day they are promoted to captain. They do not need to be told by an instructor that they are "ready to learn" how to be company level commanders. This is coupled with the fact that all of the positions that a lieutenant and captain hold prior to becoming commanders prepare them for company level command.

The orientation to learning concept refers to how the learning is centered. In pedagogy, learning is very much subject centered. In essence, the learner perceives learning as the accumulation of the subject matter, which in turn will enable them to pass the test and complete the subject. In andragogy, learning is life centered, task centered or problem centered.⁸ This means that the learner perceives learning as a means to accomplish tasks or solve problems in their daily lives. In the current system, company level command training is very subject

centered. However, the US Army should incorporate some task centered and problem centered training as part of the curriculum. This would make the training more relevant and enable future commanders to apply the lessons learned to problems that they will face daily as a commander.

The learners' motivation for learning refers to the desire of the learners to learn based on external motivators. A learner will be much more inclined to learn if they have the proper motivation. In pedagogy, it is pretty basic. These motivators are usually grades, parental or teacher approval, and getting into a good college so they can get a good job. In andragogy, these motivators can be much more complex. Often they are related to higher paying jobs or promotions but adults can also have an internal desire to improve themselves based on a plethora of different reasons. For combat arms officers, the motivators for learning to be a successful company level commander can vary from the selfish desire to "check the box" in order to get promoted to the selfless desire of wanting to take care of Soldiers and ensure the unit is able to exceptionally perform all assigned tasks. The majority of officers fall somewhere in the middle but the fact of the matter is that it is difficult to know a person's true motivation for wanting to be a company level commander. In the current system, it is irrelevant what the officer's motivation is because the training is pedagogical. However, if an instructor could determine each of the individuals' motivation for learning, he/she could facilitate very productive training by focusing the training in a certain direction.

The Way Ahead

When developing company grade leaders, specifically senior lieutenants and junior captains, the US Army focuses primarily on training them for staff jobs. This is due, in part, to the fact that the majority of a typical captain's time will be as a staff officer. The majority of US Army officers will be a captain for approximately 76 months (this is projected to be extended in

the next few years)⁹. During this time, an archetypal captain will only spend 12-24 months as a company level commander. Based solely on this timeline, it is logical to focus the majority of company grade leader training on how to be a staff officer. However, when one looks at the level of responsibility of a company level commander versus the responsibility of a staff officer, there should be more emphasis on preparing leaders for company level command. A staff officer at the captain level is normally an assistant staff officer and if he/she makes a mistake, the primary staff officer will most likely correct it before any harm is done. A company level commander is the decision maker for the company/battery/troop. If he/she makes a mistake, there will probably not be anyone to identify or correct it until it is too late and lives could be lost.

For the development of combat arms company level commanders, the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE) and the Fires Center of Excellence (FCoE) should assume responsibility for training company level commanders in their respective branches. Using Knowles' framework for understanding adults as learners, it is clear that combat arms officers are certainly in the category of adults that are willing to take responsibility for their own training. In order to maximize the training, the MCCC and FACCC should use andragogy to provide additional and more comprehensive training for future commanders. Scenario based training should be introduced into the curriculum in order to give officers the opportunity to observe how their peers would solve typical problems in a battery/company/troop. For example, instructors could give administrative/legal issues that occurred when they were commanders and evaluate how the trainees identify and solve the problem. Upon completion of the scenario, the group could discuss alternative solutions to the problem. There should also be an increased emphasis on the CSDP in order to properly prepare officers for the challenges associated with being responsible

for equipment worth millions of dollars. Some people argue that the administrative aspects of command are not nearly as important as the tactical aspects. However, the majority of officers have, at least, a basic understand of the tactical aspects of command prior to attending the Captains Career Course and have their training reinforced upon completion. Also, the majority of incidents that cause the most stress for company level commanders, when not in combat, are administrative. For example, legal issues with Soldiers or incidents involving the improper care or accountability of equipment. With the proper training, a lot of these incidents could be avoided by providing the officer with solutions to similar scenarios prior to taking command.

The author is not advocating that the individual installation Commander/1SG course be eliminated. On the contrary, it should be maintained but modified to focus on the services provided and facilities available to Soldiers and the command on each installation. It should also be mandatory to attend the course prior to taking command in order to ensure that officers are aware of the services before an incident occurs. This training should be standardized across the US Army in order to ensure that all commanders are provided with the tools necessary to ensure the best care for their Soldiers. The standard tasks that are listed in *ALARACT 041/2012* are a good starting point for what is necessary for the Commander/1SG course. Some of these tasks should be transferred to all of the Centers of Excellence to incorporate them into company level command training including numbers 1-3, 8-13, 16, and 18-19 (using the numbers listed in this paper).

Conclusion

In conclusion, although the Centers of Excellence all adhere to the CJCS's DLAs, the author believes that the FACCC does a poor job on training officers on how to be battery commanders. The MCCC does a good job tactically preparing officers to be company/troop

commanders, however, it falls short when training officers on the administrative side of command. While the majority of training requirements should remain as they are, the author has provided some ways to improve the course by adding requirements in order to prepare leaders to be company level commanders, including changing the method in which they teach. Both courses should use andragogy to facilitate the training of officers to be company level commanders.

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