

INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: Leveraging the NCO 4x6 Model to implement Army Learning Model (ALM) Learning Outcomes

1. **Purpose.** To describe the purpose of the NCO 4x6 Model in the design and development of NCO lifelong development and the model's relationship to the ALM learning outcomes.

2. Background.

a. The Institute for Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development (INCOPD) examined historical documents, strategies, concepts, and doctrine to identify the core roles and competencies of Noncommissioned Officers (NCOs). While INCOPD collected data from the NCO corps, we learned that NCOs want clarity on what is important in their development and duty performance. Unnecessary complexity in terms of how the Army describes the NCO as a leader may confuse young NCOs and hinders their development. NCOs want to know what success looks like, what they need to do to be successful, and how to manage their development to achieve success.

b. NCOs are losing sight of their core roles – **Lead, Train & Educate, Care for Soldiers & Equipment, Maintain & Enforce Standards**. The four roles are the measure of success for every NCO. Integrated throughout and supporting these four roles are six vital competencies in which NCOs must develop knowledge and skills. The six competencies are: (1) the Army Profession; (2) professional competence; (3) team building; (4) comprehensive fitness; (5) learning; (6) problem solving. We describe the combination of the four core roles and six supporting competencies as the NCO 4x6 model (see Figure 1).

c. INCOPD developed the NCO 4x6 model to ensure that NCOs focus on the primary NCO roles. The model will endure as the foundation for developing the NCO corps. The NCO 4x6 contains language that is different from other doctrinal products; however, the model includes the leader attributes and competencies from Army Doctrinal Publication 6-22 as well as the 21st Century Soldier Competencies from ALM 2015. During the Nov 11 Leader Development Forum, CG TRADOC approved the 4x6 as our framework for implementing the ALM. For each competency, INCOPD identified supporting skill areas and wrote outcomes for each NCO rank. The outcome statements broadly define the expected performance level and when coupled with critical tasks serve as the basis for building a lifelong learning curriculum. These competencies are progressive; Soldiers should fully achieve competency at each rank prior to promotion to the next rank. The supporting skills for each competency are not an exhaustive list of all the skills required to become competent; rather the skills listed represent areas of current emphasis. INCOPD anticipates that some areas of emphasis

may change over time; however, the competencies are broad enough to meet the developmental needs of the NCO corps for many years.

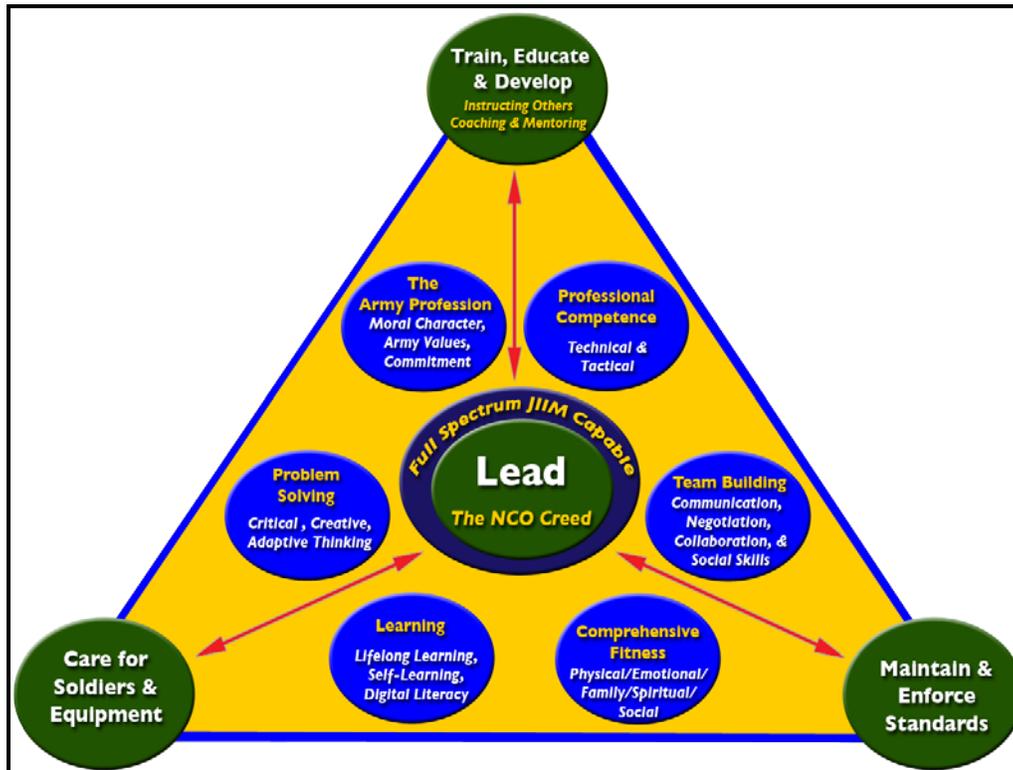


Figure 1. NCO 4x6 Model

d. INCOPD is leveraging the NCO 4x6 framework as a tool for integrating new requirements in a way that ensures the NCO learning continuum remains focused and effective while providing a solid foundation for developing the NCO corps. The NCO 4x6 provides a framework that focuses on the NCO roles and allows the flexibility to move topics in and out of the curriculum based on Army priorities, developmental goals, and leader emphasis. Individual topics are integrated into the broader skills and competencies rather than becoming separate lessons or training support packages. Figure 2 below provides a visual for how we envision leveraging the model to integrate new topics/learning outcomes.

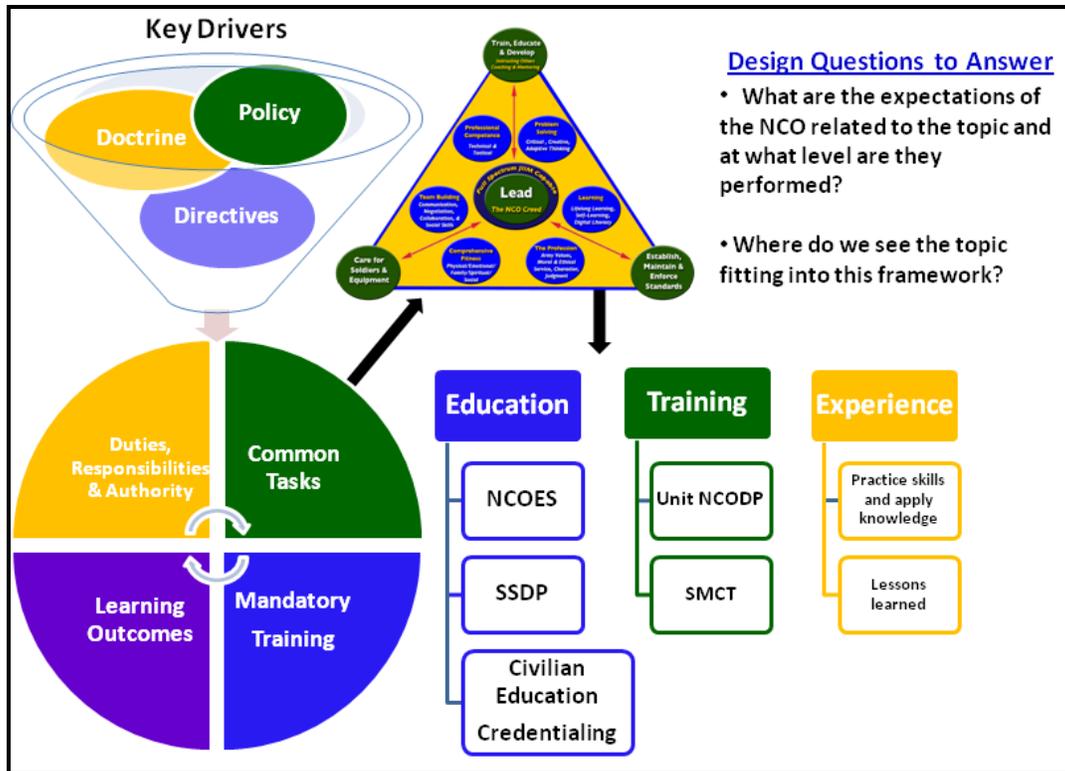


Figure 2. Curriculum Integration

3. Facts.

a. A critical point that we must consider is that context and previous knowledge/experience matters for learning. Even if we want to have standard lessons on a topic (e.g. counseling), the standard lesson will require adaptation so that it has meaning and value for the target audience. A learning methodology based on a “one size fits all” in order to achieve resource savings in training development may prove to be flawed when implemented. TRADOC tried to do this in the 1990s with a centrally developed, horizontally integrated common core that proved to be dysfunctional when implemented.

b. The ALM 2015 competency list does not fully address the entire list of what it takes to develop a NCO leader and those requirements continue to change as the Army evolves. NCOs need a framework that focuses them on what is important, clearly linked to their duties, responsibilities, and authority.

c. The desire to have a single integrated list of outcomes for Officers, Warrant Officers, NCOs, Soldiers and possibly civilians may not be realistic or appropriate. INCOPD views the outcomes as guiding lifelong development across all three domains, unit, institution and self-development. The target audience needs outcomes worded and organized so that can use them. Even if the outcomes are solely for the purpose for course design and development, the differences between training, education, and experiences across the cohorts makes it unlikely that a single outcome can serve

everyone. As an example, the officer cohort has far more resident PME time available and enters each PME level with a different set of experiences and existing knowledge when compared to NCOs. While there are some places where vertical/horizontal alignment makes sense, those instances are limited. That coupled with the importance of providing relevant context during learning also makes it unlikely that lessons can be developed and used across the cohorts. If proponents create a standardized lesson outline, then each cohort or proponent may be able to use the outline as the basis for lesson design. That approach may result in some training development efficiency.

d. The true value of vertical/horizontal alignment of learning outcomes between cohorts is exacerbated by the differences in duties, responsibilities and authority and the vast differences in assignments, especially at junior grades. Below platoon leader/sergeant, there is no clean crosswalk from Officer to NCO and even the platoon level does not provide a uniform approach across branches/MOSs. At the SGT/SSG level, you cannot accurately make comparisons across cohorts. If the real intent is to create conditions where the officer and NCO can communicate and complement each other, then there are some limited areas where a single solution will meet the needs of more than one cohort. However, there is little value (or need) in attempting to force a one size fits all approach for all learning outcomes.

4. **Conclusion.** The development of a standard list of competencies is necessary to ensure all leaders receive appropriate core skills and knowledge, however, each cohort exists to fill different roles within the Army. The NCO 4x6 is designed to serve as a framework for implementing the ALM competencies, other directed NCO PME requirements, and to provide an approach to changing NCO PME over time. The NCO 4x6 is not at cross-purposes with the intent or substance of the ALM or other ALCC governance requirements.