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Effectiveness of Distance Learning for the Battle Staff NCO Course

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Personnel Decisions Research Institutes

United States Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences

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14. ABSTRACT *(Maximum 200 words)*:

This study compared graduates of a course taught through the Sergeants Major Academy by distance learning with graduates of the same course taught in residence, as usual. Unlike previous evaluations of distance learning, the measures used to compare groups were not students' immediate reactions to the course nor their end-of-course test scores but measures delayed until the graduates were on the job: 1) a written test of their job knowledge and 2) job performance ratings by their supervisors. Special care was taken to insure these measures were reliable and valid; the 42-item written test included only material covered in the course and the supervisors were motivated and trained on the technique of making accurate performance ratings. Knowledge test scores for a total of 172 NCOs and performance ratings for a total of 145 NCOs were collected from 8 sites. Results indicate that the different formats for the course, distance learning versus residence, had no reliable effect on either measure. NCOs received nearly the same knowledge test scores and supervisory ratings, on average, regardless of how the course was presented, supporting the conclusion that distance learning technology, as an alternative to residence-based training, does not involve a sacrifice of graduate quality.

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distance learning, training, on-the-job performance, battle staff

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Effectiveness of Distance Learning for the Battle Staff NCO Course

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FOREWORD

The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's (TRADOC) goals include increasing training opportunities for all soldiers, improving the quality of instruction, increasing access to training, and reducing the time soldiers spend away from their unit. Accordingly, there is intense interest on the part of the Army to consider distance learning as at least part of the solution toward addressing these goals. Specifically, the Army is planning to convert approximately 525 training courses to a distance learning format. This future reliance on distance learning to deliver training makes it incumbent upon the Army to evaluate the effectiveness of this training method.

This study originated from a request by the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA) to examine the long term effectiveness of distance learning. The Battle Staff NCO Course (BSNCOC) was selected due to its importance to the Army and its relative maturity in a distance learning format. The USASMA requirement stated "As USASMA continues to rely on distance learning techniques to design and develop TATS courses, we must be certain the methods we choose are effective. We are sacrificing a tried and true method that works." The U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences was tasked to oversee the study, which was conducted under contract to Personnel Decisions Research Institutes, Inc.

This study was designed to determine if distance learning, in comparison to residence training, results in similar levels of knowledge retention and job performance in the areas trained. The results of this study were briefed to TRADOC at the Sergeants Major Academy on 24 October 2000. The findings in this report have important implications for the efficacy of distance learning methods in Army Courses.

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Technical Director

EFFECTIVENESS OF DISTANCE LEARNING FOR THE BATTLE STAFF NCO COURSE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research Requirement:

At the request of TRADOC, a field study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy's Battle Staff NCO Course distance learning training in comparison with training conducted in residence. Unlike most previous evaluations of distance learning that assessed only immediate student reactions to the course or their end-of-course test scores, the present research evaluated course graduates after they were on-the-job, both on their course-relevant job knowledge, as measured by a written test, and on their job performance, as rated by their supervisors.

Procedure:

To create a basis for both the job knowledge and performance rating scales, those Battle Staff NCO task areas that are targeted by the BSNCO course were identified. Researchers worked with BSNCOC instructors to identify eight task dimensions that reflected all important job-relevant areas taught in the course. Written knowledge test items were then generated for each dimension. A pilot study was conducted with NCOs in Bosnia and Germany to select the items in the final instrument. Rating scales were also developed to measure job performance in each of the eight task areas. Task labels and definitions were crafted, along with behavioral statements to anchor ineffective, mid-range, and effective performance levels for each dimension; such behavioral anchors help raters make more reliable and valid job performance ratings. A training video, with introductory remarks by the Sergeant Major of the Army, emphasized the importance of participation in the study and explained to the supervisors how to use the behavioral anchors in making performance ratings. Finally, a work experience questionnaire was developed to assess how much opportunity each graduate had to perform in each task area on the job.

Criterion data were collected for three groups: 1) NCOs who took the entire Battle Staff Course in residence at Fort Bliss; 2) NCOs who completed a pre-resident self-study phase and then took a shortened course via distance learning technology; and 3) a group that completed a pre-resident self-study phase and then completed a compressed course in residence at Fort McCoy. Once the criterion measures were finalized, project staff traveled to Fort Bragg to collect data. Based on the experience there, a final protocol was established that was used to collect data in subsequent locations (Schofield Barracks and Fort Sill). To increase the sample size, a mail-out version of the data collection materials was developed. A total of 427 packets were sent to Army installations for distribution (67 of these were returned as undeliverable). This allowed data collection in locations where it was not feasible to have project staff conduct sessions. The combined data were analyzed to determine whether there were differences in retained job knowledge and rated job performance among the NCOs who had taken the BSNCOC through the different delivery modalities.

Findings:

Few differences were found in the job performance or job knowledge levels for graduates of the different versions of the course. That is, NCOs performed almost equally well on the job knowledge test and received similar supervisory ratings, regardless of the type of BSNCOC they attended. We conclude that the distance learning version of the course results in subsequent job performance that is virtually equivalent to that of NCOs trained via a residence course.

Utilization of Findings:

These results indicate that distance learning technology is a viable alternative to residence based training. Such findings have important consequences on the planned conversion of several other residential courses to distance learning.

EFFECTIVENESS OF DISTANCE LEARNING FOR THE BATTLE STAFF NCO COURSE

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Background of Distance Learning

Distance learning can be defined as "structured learning that takes place without the physical presence of the instructor" (Moore & Kearsley, 1996). Contemporary approaches typically take advantage of information and communications technology including compressed video, streaming audio, interactive graphic images, and teleconferencing services. Broadband communication channels enable remote locations to experience full-motion video from the originating site.

In recent years, technology-based instructional formats, including distance learning, have become increasingly popular. For example, in higher education in 1997, more than 50,000 courses were taught at 1,000 universities to more than 7 million students. Also, 16% of corporate training was delivered online in 1997, and in 1998, this number was anticipated to be 28% (Phillips, 1998).

Distance learning technology can greatly reduce travel expenses, enable soldiers to stay at home with their families, and soldiers in the reserve component can keep their regular jobs while still receiving training (Wisher et al., 1999). In fact, Wisher and Priest (1998) referred to an example in which using audio teletraining reduced costs by more than $1000 per person for a three week course. The Defense Department has a yearly training load of 165,000 students and could save a substantial amount of money by increasing its utilization of distance learning technology. The Army's future reliance on distance learning to deliver training makes it critical for the Army to evaluate the effectiveness of this training method.

There has been considerable research conducted on distance learning, mainly in civilian education settings and mostly using student attitudes or end-of-course learning outcomes as criteria for effectiveness. Results of these studies vary considerably. Some studies find satisfaction with training among distance learning students to be somewhat lower than satisfaction associated with residence training (Maki & Maki, 2000). In contrast, a few studies report that distance learning students are as satisfied as traditional classroom students (Chute, Balthazar & Poston, 1988; Garrison, 1990; Simpson, Pugh, & Parchman, 1993). Payne (1999) also points out that satisfaction and achievement are largely independent. Thus, although some students do not like distance learning as well, it does not seem to prevent them from effectively learning the material.

Regarding learning outcomes, most studies have found that distance learning students perform as well or even better than their residence course counterparts on end-of-training knowledge tests (Chute et al., 1988; Keene & Cary, 1990; Payne, 1999; Simpson, Wetzel, & Pugh, 1995; Wisher, Seidel, Priest, Knott, & Curnow, 1997). For instance, Simpson et al. found that Navy officers performed equally well regardless of whether their course was conducted via a traditional classroom setting, or local or remote video teletraining (VTT). However, student participation and interaction was lower in the two VTT classrooms.

This research on student satisfaction and learning during the course is important. However, more central to the efficacy of distance learning in the Army is the subsequent on-the-job performance of soldiers. Does distance learning, in comparison to residence training, result in similar job performance in the areas trained? In other words, the effectiveness of a training program targeted to impart specific job skills is best evaluated by assessing relevant actual job perform-

ance subsequent to the training. The present study was designed to evaluate the Battle Staff NCO Course (BSNCOC) in just this way.

Project staff administered job knowledge tests and obtained job performance evaluations of the NCOs from each of the three groups (residence, partial residence, and VTT) 5 to 16 months after graduation from the BSNCOC. Their job performance and scores on the job knowledge test were then evaluated to assess the relative effectiveness of the three versions of training delivery.

Method

The Battle Staff NCO Course

The Battle Staff NCO Course is designed to train battalion and brigade staff noncommissioned officers (NCOs) to serve as integral members of the battle staff and manage daily operations of battalion or brigade command posts. NCOs learn their specific staff duties and become familiar with the duties of other staff sections.

Soldiers with the "2S" designation assigned to a Staff NCO position in sections S1-S4 (S1 Personnel Section, S2 Intelligence Section, S3 Operations Section, or S4 Logistics Section) are eligible to attend. The version of the course that a soldier attends is based primarily on cost. Naturally, if a VTT site is available where the soldier is stationed, the soldier will attend this course. Most reserve soldiers attend the course at Fort McCoy because the compressed schedule of working through the weekends allows them to return to their civilian jobs more quickly. Active Component soldiers more often attend the course at Fort Bliss, although they may attend any of the three versions best suiting their schedule. The versions of the course are presented in Table 1 and described in detail below.

Table 1
Battle Staff NCO Course Versions

Fort Bliss	6 weeks and 2 days of live instruction in residence at Fort Bliss, TX	
Video Teletraining (VTT)	*Phase 1*: 60 days of pre-resident, paper-based self-study	*Phase 2*: 24 days of VTT instruction at remote sites
Fort McCoy	*Phase 1*: 60 days of pre-resident, paper-based self-study	*Phase 2*: 21 days of live instruction in residence at Fort McCoy, WI

The Residence Course at Fort Bliss

The former course at Fort Bliss, Texas was six weeks, two days in length and was administered entirely in residence. NCOs in this course worked weekdays, taking the weekends off. It is important to note that this version of the course has now been changed to include a pre-resident phase, and the actual resident portion has been shortened to 21 days. Thus, the new course is quite similar to the Fort McCoy version described below.

The Video Teletraining (VTT) Course

This version had two phases. During Phase 1, NCOs studied materials at home for 60 days. Phase 2 lasted 24 academic days and was conducted via a two-way video and audio connection, that is, in a distance learning format. Delivery was through a compressed signal over T-1 lines.

Each VTT classroom was equipped with several cameras. The primary camera allowed the students to view the instructor and vice versa. It was sound sensitive in that it aimed the camera at whomever was speaking or making noise. The instructor/operator could override this feature and control the camera manually if desired. The instructor could also zoom in on students while they completed exercises. The second camera was a document camera mounted on an adjustable arm. The instructor could use it to display training materials such as paper products, models, etc. and the students could use theirs to show their work to other students at remote locations or the instructor. A third camera projected computer graphics, Internet sites, and CD-ROMs. A video cassette recorder was also available for viewing video tapes.

The Course at Fort McCoy

A comparable course, with a smaller student load, was conducted at the USARTC, Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. This version of the course also had two phases. Like the VTT version, Phase 1 consisted of a 60 day, self-study program. Phase 2 was 21 consecutive days spent in residence at Fort McCoy. This shortened course was designed to better accommodate soldiers in the Guard and Reserve Components of the Army, although Regular Army soldiers were allowed to attend as well. All three training formats covered the same content.

Development of the Performance Measures

PDRI developed two job performance measures, a job knowledge test, and performance rating scales. To accomplish this, we first worked with BSNCOC instructors to develop a task list that represented all of the important tasks taught in the course. Eight tasks resulted (e.g., Assist in Planning of Army Operations, Assist in the Military Decision Making Process; see Table 2, for the complete list, including task area definitions).

Table 2
Task Dimension List with Definitions

Dimension 1 — Assist in the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP)
Understands and participates in MDMP. Responds to requests for information regarding the MDMP.
Dimension 2 — Prepare Combat Orders or Annexes (POA)
Is knowledgeable about the 5-paragraph order format and the different variations of orders.
Dimension 3 — Prepare or Construct Graphics or Overlays (GO)
Uses graphics and overlays to convey operations orders. Understands and can produce military symbols and graphics.

Table 2 (continued)

Dimension 4 — Understanding Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) Understands and participates in the wargaming process and identifies courses of action based on IPB process and products. Gathers and uses available IPB products and resources.
Dimension 5 — Assist in Planning of Army Operations (AO) Understands Army doctrine and military operations including: the nine principles of war, tenets of combat operations; Battlefield Operating Systems (BOS); participates in the planning process.
Dimension 6 — Assist in the Planning and Execution of Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) Orchestrates CS and CSS efforts; understands the role, function, and structure of CS and CSS in support of Army operations.
Dimension 7 — Manages Recordkeeping (RR) Keeps records on staff journal log, DA Form 1594, etc. in accordance with unit Standard Operating Procedure (SOP); maintains the daily staff journal.
Dimension 8 — Prepare and Conduct Military Briefings (MB) Prepares and conducts military briefings; delivers briefings; understands different types of briefings and when to apply them.

Job Knowledge Test Development

First, with the help of a BSNCOC instructor, we wrote knowledge items for each of the task areas, approximately 8-9 items per task, resulting in 70 multiple-choice items. The 70 items were split into two forms for a pilot test to avoid burdening the soldiers with an overly lengthy exam. A total of 62 BSNCOC students near graduation in Germany and Bosnia completed one of the two versions.

The psychometric properties of these 70 items, including the difficulty, item-total correlation, and coefficient alpha without the item were evaluated. Questions that were overly easy or difficult were dropped because they do not distinguish very well among people. That is, if almost everyone answers a question correctly or incorrectly, it does not help differentiate the amount of knowledge different people retained.

PDRI staff also examined the item-total correlations for each of the test items. Items that did not correlate well with the rest of the test were also candidates for deletion. Another statistic we considered was the coefficient alpha if the item was deleted. Coefficient alpha is a measure of internal reliability or consistency that indicates how well the items of a scale relate to each other. If an item was unrelated to the rest of the test items, then the coefficient alpha is improved by deleting such items. The overall coefficient alphas for each of the tests were .43 for Form A and .50 for Form B.

Final decisions concerning which items to keep were based on the psychometric properties described above and balancing the number of items for each dimension. This resulted in the 42 items for the final test, shown in Appendix A. To control for order effects, two forms of the test were created consisting of the same questions in different orders.

Sources of Job Performance Ratings

The three sources most often used to rate job performance are self, peers, and supervisors. Logically, self-ratings should contain a great deal of information (Borman, 1991). They also distinguish among performance dimensions better than peer and supervisor ratings (i.e., less halo error; Heneman, 1974; Kirchner, 1965).

Unfortunately, self-ratings tend to be more lenient than supervisor or peer ratings (Kirchner, 1965; Parker, Taylor, Barrett, & Martens, 1959). In their meta-analysis, Harris and Schaubroeck (1988) found that self-ratings were more lenient than supervisor ratings by over half a standard deviation and were more lenient than peer ratings by a quarter of a standard deviation. This leniency becomes even more problematic if some self-raters are more lenient than others (Borman, 1991). Self-ratings also correlate lower with other raters' ratings (.22), compared to peer-supervisor rating correlations (.34, Conway & Huffcutt, 1997).

Peer raters can be a viable alternative to self-ratings because peers should have a great deal of information about a soldier's typical performance without as much of a leniency problem. However, peers often lack experience making performance ratings whereas supervisors usually have better calibrated performance norms because of their experience in evaluating subordinates (Borman, 1991).

Although supervisors may not have access to as much information as self-raters and peers, supervisors are likely to pay more careful attention to performance because it is part of their job to do so. Others may be less likely to observe performance examples, properly encode them, or retain and recall performance in a manner suitable for evaluation (Allen, Barnard, Rush, & Russell, 1996).

Perhaps the most compelling argument for using supervisory ratings is that they are more reliable (Klieger & Mosel, 1953; Pulakos & Borman, 1988; Springer, 1953). Viswesvaren, Ones and Schmidt (1996) found in their meta-analysis that supervisor ratings had higher interrater reliability (.52) than did peer ratings (.42). Similarly, Conway and Huffcutt (1997) found supervisory ratings to be more reliable (.50) than both peer (.37) and subordinate ratings (.30). Reliability is critical to performance ratings because it puts an upper limit on validity. Therefore, supervisors were deemed the most appropriate source to make job performance ratings for this study.

Job Performance Scale Development

The BSNCOC instructors worked with PDRI to create supervisory performance rating scales targeted toward the eight task areas. For each task area, we generated a definition and then prepared behavioral statements to anchor the ineffective (i.e., 1-2), mid-range (i.e., 3-5), and effective (i.e., 6-7) performance levels. These behavioral statements were intended to provide benchmarks for supervisor raters to use when evaluating their subordinates. Research (e.g.,

Borman & Pulakos, 1986) suggests that these anchors help raters to generate more reliable ratings. Thus, the PDRI staff wrote draft behavioral statements after our meetings with the instructors, obtained feedback from this group, and made revisions based on the feedback. The final behavior-based scales appear in Appendix B.

In addition, our staff prepared a rater training videotape to help supervisor raters understand the importance of the study and to make more reliable and accurate ratings of job performance. The video began with a clip of the Sergeant Major of the Army encouraging the viewer to participate conscientiously in the research. The rest of the 9 minute video: (1) explained the features of the behavior-based rating scales, especially the proper use of the behavioral anchors; (2) described common rating errors (e.g., halo and leniency) and how to avoid them; and (3) encouraged supervisors to be as accurate as possible in their for-research-only performance ratings.

Sample

Performance data were gathered by PDRI staff at Fort Bragg, Fort Sill, and Schofield Barracks. To further increase the sample size, we also conducted a mail-out data collection at 11 sites, sending a total 427 packets with 67 returned as undeliverable. For the mail version of the study, the responses were mainly from Germany, Forts Hood, Polk, Campbell, and Carson. Response rates from all sites are displayed in Table 3. The residence graduate group from in-person and mail-out administration of the performance measures consisted of 92 NCOs who took the job knowledge test and 80 who were rated by their supervisor. The VTT group consisted of 57 NCOs with test scores and 47 with supervisory ratings. Finally, 23 NCOs from Fort McCoy completed job knowledge tests and 18 supervisors rated their performance.

Table 3
Sample Totals

Job Knowledge Test				
Site	Bliss	VTT	McCoy	Total
Fort Bragg	56	12	0	68
Fort Sill	2	12	0	14
Schofield Bks	15	0	17	32
Mail Version	19	33	6	58
Total	92	57	23	172
Supervisor Ratings				
Site	Bliss	VTT	McCoy	Total
Fort Bragg	48	11	0	59
Fort Sill	3	12	0	15
Schofield Bks	9	0	12	21
Mail Version	20	24	6	50
Total	80	47	18	145

Table 3 (continued)

Job Knowledge Test: Mail Version by Location

Site	Bliss	VTT	McCoy	Total
Fort Benning	0	1	0	1
Camp Blanding	0	0	0	0
Fort Campbell	7	1	0	8
Fort Carson	4	0	2	6
Germany	0	17	0	17
Fort Hood	5	4	0	9
Fort Knox	0	0	4	4
Fort Leonard Wood	0	0	0	0
Fort Polk	0	9	0	9
Fort Riley	0	1	0	1
Fort Stewart	3	0	0	3
Total	19	33	6	58

Supervisor Ratings: Mail Version by Location

Site	Bliss	VTT	McCoy	Total
Fort Benning	0	0	0	0
Camp Blanding	0	0	0	0
Fort Campbell	6	3	0	9
Fort Carson	5	0	1	6
Germany	0	9	1	10
Fort Hood	6	6	0	12
Fort Knox	0	0	4	4
Fort Leonard Wood	0	0	0	0
Fort Polk	0	6	0	6
Fort Riley	0	0	0	0
Fort Stewart	3	0	0	3
Total	20	24	6	50

The soldiers had graduated from the BSNCOC 4.75 to 16 months before the job performance measures were administered, with an average of 9.62 months since graduation. This window of time was considered long enough for soldiers to have had the opportunity to work in the BSNCOC task areas but not so long that the class materials would be forgotten. There were essentially no differences in the number of months since graduation among NCOs from the residence course at Fort Bliss (M=9.55 months), the partial residence group at Fort McCoy (M=9.48 months), and the VTT course (M=9.79 months).

All members of the sample were in the Active Army and most were in paygrade E-6 (42%) or E-7 (53%, see Table 4). In terms of education level, most (65%) had completed some college, and

some (11%) had finished their degrees. Overall, the average graduate was 34.4 years old with 13.74 years in service. Finally, the Fort Bliss graduates were quite evenly divided across the three service branches, with about a third of the NCOs from each area. The VTT group had substantially fewer NCOs in the Combat Support branch (17%) compared to the other two branches with 44% in Combat Arms and 39% in Combat Service Support.

Table 4
Description of BSNCOC Sample

	Bliss	VTT	McCoy	Overall
Months Since Graduation				
Mean	9.55	9.79	9.48	9.63
SD	2.80	2.64	2.54	2.74
N	109	58	27	167
Range	4.75 – 16	6 – 13.5	6 – 15	4.75 – 16
Age				
Mean	34.14	35	38.43	34.40
SD	4.86	4.85	5.62	4.65
N	111	60	7	178
Range				23 – 50
Time in Service (Years)				
Mean	13.67	14.25	16	13.74
SD	3.23	3.90	4	3.58
N	111	60	7	178
Range				5 – 24
Paygrade				
E-6	46%	36%	29%	42%
E-7	48%	59%	71%	53%
E-8	5%	5%	0%	5%
Number Missing	0	9	20	29
N	110	68	27	205
Educational Level				
High School	6%	6%	14%	7%
Some College	63%	68%	71%	65%
Associate's Degree	19%	17%	0%	18%
College Graduate	10%	7%	14%	9%
Graduate Degree	2%	2%	0%	2%
Number Missing	0	9	20	29
N	110	68	27	205

Table 4 (continued)

	Bliss	VTT	McCoy	Overall
Branch				
Combat Arms	35%	44%	29%	37%
Combat Support	35%	17%	14%	28%
Combat Service Support	31%	39%	57%	35%
Number Missing	0	9	20	29
N	110	68	27	205

Note: N/A indicates not available.

Administration

PDRI staff, along with a representative from the Sergeants Major Academy, traveled to Fort Bragg, Fort Sill, and Schofield Barracks to collect data. The staff explained to the soldiers that this study was for research purposes only and was intended to analyze the effectiveness of the BSNCOC. All soldiers were assured that their responses and scores would be kept confidential. The NCOs then viewed a video of the Sergeant Major of the Army encouraging participation. Next, the soldiers were asked to take the job knowledge test without using any references. They were encouraged to try their best and to guess if they were unsure of an answer. The NCOs then completed a self experience rating form indicating the amount of experience they had in each of the eight performance areas. Finally, they were given an opportunity to provide feedback on a comments sheet.

Then the performance rating scales were administered to supervisor groups to evaluate the job performance of their recent BSNCOC graduates. They too were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and that the study was for research purposes only. After viewing the rater training videotape, supervisors rated their subordinate NCOs on the eight performance dimensions described earlier. The raters could choose to not make a rating if a particular dimension was not part of the subordinate NCO's job; an NPJ (Not Part of Job) option was provided for that possibility. Finally, the rating directions were also in written form on the performance rating scales booklet, and raters indicated on an experience rating sheet the length of time they had known the NCO and amount of experience the soldier had in each of the eight task areas. The supervisors also had the opportunity to complete a comments sheet. The Dimension Definitions, Performance Rating Scales, the Performance Rating Sheet, and the Experience Rating Form can be found in Appendix B. For the mail-out administration, all of the above forms were sent, along with a cover sheet explaining the importance of the study and a detailed directions sheet.

Results

Job Knowledge Test

An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to analyze the results, with the NCO's self experience ratings for each dimension used as the covariate. Experience ratings were considered appropriate covariates in that graduates with less job experience in a task area essentially had their job knowledge test scores adjusted higher to allow a fairer comparison of NCOs with differing opportunities to perform in that area.

On average, the test results for the three groups were almost identical. The Fort Bliss group had an overall average of 61% correct, the VTT group 62%, and the McCoy group 63%, (F=.57, p=.57). Table 5 displays the means and standard deviations; the ANCOVA results by dimension can be found in Appendix C. Only two significant between-group differences appeared. On the knowledge test for Combat Support/Combat Services Support (CSS), there was an overall significant difference among the three groups (F=5.014, p=.008). This analysis revealed that the Fort Bliss group (M=58.15%, SD=.21) scored significantly higher than the Fort McCoy group (M=42.39%, SD=.25) on the CSS dimension (t=3.08, p=.003).

Table 5
Job Knowledge Test Results

	Bliss	VTT	McCoy	Overall
Recordkeeping				
Mean	84%	84%	86%	84%
SD	0.17	0.20	0.15	0.18
Briefings				
Mean	75%	68%	74%	72%
SD	0.24	0.22	0.27	0.24
Combat Orders				
Mean	68%	71%	78%	70%
SD	0.20	0.20	0.15	0.19
Planning				
Mean	59%	68%	65%	63%
SD	0.26	0.26	0.21	0.25
Intelligence Preparation				
Mean	59%	66%	61%	62%
SD	0.20	0.23	0.27	0.22
Combat Support/CSS				
Mean	58%	51%	42%	54%
SD	0.21	0.25	0.25	0.24
Graphics/Overlays				
Mean	55%	55%	58%	56%
SD	0.21	0.23	0.20	0.21

Table 5 (continued)

	Bliss	VTT	McCoy	Overall
Assist in the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP)				
Mean	47%	50%	50%	49%
SD	0.18	0.22	0.17	0.20
Overall				
Mean	61%	62%	63%	62%
SD	0.11	0.15	0.10	0.12
N	89	55	23	167

When the Fort McCoy group was not considered, t-test results revealed an additional significant difference in knowledge test performance for the dimension Assists in Planning Army Operations (AO). For the AO dimension, the VTT group (M=68.0%, SD=.26) outperformed the Fort Bliss group (M=59.33%, SD=.26), with t=-2.075, p=.040. Additionally, the number of months since the soldiers' graduation from the NCO course did not affect their test score performance (F=.09, p=.77).

Job Performance Ratings

The distribution of the ratings can be found in Figure 1. Notice that the ratings are approximately normally distributed with a slight negative skew, as is common in supervisory ratings. This indicates that the ratings did not contain much error due to leniency.

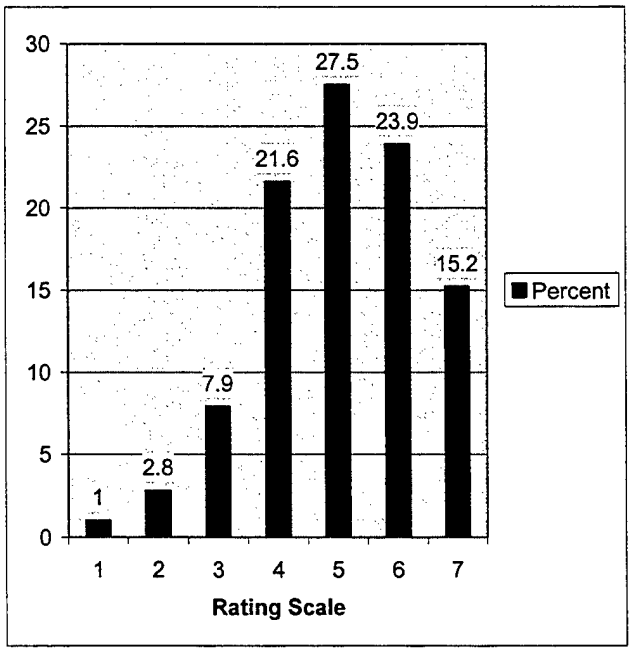

Figure 1. Distribution of supervisory ratings

The ratings were highly similar across the three groups, with a mean of 5.1 for both the Fort Bliss and VTT group and 4.7 for the Fort McCoy group on a 1 = very ineffective to 7 = very effective scale. These differences are not significant (F=1.6, p=.21). Further, only one significant difference appeared in the analysis of the dimensional supervisory performance ratings, Manages Recordkeeping (RR) had a significant overall F=3.86, p=.029. Post hoc t-tests revealed that the VTT group (M=5.89, SD=1.16) was rated marginally higher by their supervisors on Manages Recordkeeping than was the McCoy group (M=5.00, SD=1.35), with t=1.96, p=.055. A complete table of ratings is provided below (Table 6) and Appendix D displays results from the ANCOVAs.

Table 6.
Supervisory Ratings by Task Dimension (Rank ordered - 7-point scale)

	Bliss	VTT	McCoy	Overall
Recordkeeping				
Mean	5.61	5.89	5.00	5.64
SD	1.24	1.16	1.35	1.24
Briefings				
Mean	5.29	5.28	5.00	5.25
SD	1.23	1.14	1.57	1.25
Combat Orders				
Mean	5.20	4.97	4.64	5.06
SD	0.99	1.55	1.69	1.30
Planning				
Mean	5.09	4.86	4.31	4.92
SD	1.04	1.42	1.18	1.21
Intell. Prep.				
Mean	4.46	4.59	4.23	4.47
SD	1.17	1.46	1.09	1.25
Combat Support/CSS				
Mean	4.87	5.11	4.54	4.89
SD	1.01	1.55	1.45	1.26
Graphics/overlays				
Mean	5.51	5.42	5.57	5.49
SD	1.22	1.44	1.28	1.29
MDMP				
Mean	4.84	4.88	4.50	4.82
SD	1.22	1.01	1.31	1.16
Overall				
Mean	5.10	5.10	4.74	5.07
SD	0.74	1.06	0.89	0.87
N	61	37	14	113

Note: These analyses included only NCOs who completed the job knowledge test and had supervisory performance ratings, resulting in a smaller N than those listed on Table 3.

Because we are exploring whether or not differences among the groups exist, the effect sizes (eta-squared in Appendix D) are important. These effect sizes are quite small (median eta-squared = .014), reinforcing the finding that job performance is very similar across the three groups.

Overview of the Written Comments

Overall, both the supervisors and NCOs indicated that this course is highly important to their training and that the material they learned was useful. The comments regarding the Fort Bliss residence training were quite positive. Soldiers appreciated the group interaction at Fort Bliss and felt they could focus more effectively because they were away from their home base. Some supervisors even conceded that if the soldiers were not away from their home base, they would ask their NCOs to perform some of their regular duties while attending the course.

The comments regarding the VTT and Fort McCoy courses were more mixed. Although three soldiers commented that they received good instruction and liked the VTT format, nine believed it was more difficult to learn in that setting. They stated that they would have preferred more one-on-one instruction and cited problems with the pre-resident portion of the course. For example, one soldier believed the pre-resident portion was unnecessary and admitted to skipping that portion due to other pressing obligations. However, three soldiers believed it was vital, and they wanted more time and assistance completing the exercises. Regarding Fort McCoy, one NCO commented that the course worked well, yet three soldiers thought it was too short. The soldiers were evenly divided in their views about whether or not they should work through the weekends, with some in favor of it to save time and money and others opposing it because they desired a break. Appendices E and F contain the verbatim written comments from the supervisors and NCOs.

Conclusions

This study was designed to evaluate the relative effectiveness of the residence and distance learning versions of the BSNCOC with respect to subsequent job performance levels of the graduates. A job knowledge test was intended to assess knowledge retention in the task areas taught in the course. The performance rating scales required supervisors to evaluate the job performance of the BSNCOC graduates in the same task areas. Results suggested almost no between-group differences on either performance measure. Knowledge retention relative to BSNCOC tasks and rated job performance in these task areas were almost exactly the same for resident and distance learning graduates.

These results have important implications for the planned conversion of many residence courses to a distance learning format. They provide evidence supporting the efficacy of the VTT delivery method for military training when the target is enhanced on-the-job performance.

Thus, results of this study directly address the request made by the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA) that the U.S. Army Research Institute (ARI) evaluate the long-term effectiveness of distance learning. Based on the findings presented here, it appears that distance learning delivery of Army courses will result in no decrements to knowledge retention or subsequent job performance compared to residence course delivery of training.

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Appendix A – Final Knowledge Test Items

Battle Staff Knowledge Test

Instructions

We are asking you to take this test as part of an important, Sergeant Major of the Army sponsored research project to evaluate NCOs retention of Battle Staff Course material. Please try your best to answer the questions correctly. **Your responses are anonymous and will be used for research purposes only. Please complete this test alone and without using any reference materials.**

For each of the 42 questions, indicate your answer by marking an X next to the response option you believe is correct. **If you do not know the answer to a question, you may guess.** There is no penalty for guessing. The test is not timed so you may take as long as you like.

Thank you for helping with this important research project.

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1. The role of doctrine is:

_____ a. Defined in the Ranger Handbook, (SH 21-75)

_____ b. A statement of how America's Army fights

_____ c. Strategy as outlined in the Monroe Doctrine

_____ d. Both a and b are correct

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2. The sequence of the five (5) paragraph OPORD is:

_____ a. Situation, mission, execution, service and support, risk assessment

_____ b. Mission, situation, service and support, risk assessment, execution

_____ c. Execution, mission, situation, command and signal, service and support

_____ d. Situation, mission, execution, service and support, command and signal

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3. US Army and allied ground forces are depicted on an overlay in the color of:

_____ a. Green

_____ b. Yellow

_____ c. Red

_____ d. None of the above

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4. The principles of war first introduced in 1921, although slightly revised, contain how many principles today?

_____ a. 11

_____ b. 7

_____ c. 9

_____ d. 6

CSS0603

5. The acronym WSRO refers to:

_____ a. Wanted supplies request order

_____ b. Weapons system replacement operations

_____ c. Weather system radar operator

_____ d. Weapon system request order

G&O0308

6. Standardized unit labeling field (Foxtrot) refers to:

_____ a. The size of a unit

_____ b. A unit that has been reinforced or detached

_____ c. The parent headquarters of the unit

_____ d. Team or task force designation

G&O0304

7. The Field Manual used for US. Army and USMC land-based warfighting symbology is:

_____ a. FM 101-5

_____ b. FM101-5-1, MCRP 5-2A

_____ c. Military Standard 2525A

_____ d. FM 22-5, MCRP 21-20C

IPB0403

8. The acronym MCOO is defined as:

_____ a. Military combination overlay overview

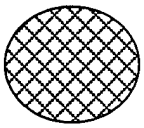
_____ b. Modified combination overlay overview

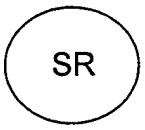
_____ c. Modified combined obstacle overlay

_____ d. Military combined obstacle overlay

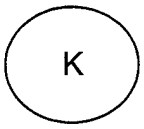
IPB0405

9. Which is the correct illustration of severely restricted terrain?

____a. 

____b. 

____c.

____d. 

IPB0401

10. Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) consists of how many steps?

_____ a. 4

_____ b. 6

_____ c. 7

_____ d. 5

MB0801

11. The types of military briefing include:

_____ a. Operational, logistical, informational

_____ b. Staff, information, operations, decision

_____ c. Personnel statistics, incident, safety, coordination

_____ d. Decision, tactical, staff, information

MDMP0105

12. Coordinating responsibility for war-gaming belongs to:

_____ a. S-3/G-3 Operations Officer

_____ b. S-2/G-2 Security Officer

_____ c. CofS/XO Executive Officer

_____ d. CSM/Operations NCO

MDMP0101

13. Select the correct response:

_____ a. MDMP is the Army's single, established, and proven analytical process and an adaptation of the Army's analytical approach to problem solving.

_____ b. The Commander manages, coordinates, and disciplines the staff's work and provides quality control.

_____ c. Step#1 of the MDMP is Course of Action (COA) development.

_____ d. MDMP is a process which applies only to Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield, (IPB).

MDMP0102

14. The Military Decision Making Model consists of:

_____ a. A five (5) paragraph format

_____ b. A seven (7) step process

_____ c. Decisions based on risk management only

_____ d. Decisions made only by Staff Officers

MDMP0103

15. The first step of Mission Analysis is:

_____ a. Write the restated mission

_____ b. Conduct IPB

_____ c. Analyze the higher headquarters order

_____ d. Record staff estimates and input

POA0204

16. Classification marking and procedures:

_____ a. Are outlined in AR380-5

_____ b. Are placed at the bottom of each page

_____ c. Only the original signed copy needs classification markings

_____ d. Both b and c are correct

POA0205

17. Additions to an OPORD that you may use are:

_____ a. An event matrix

_____ b. A graphic overlay

_____ c. An annex

_____ d. All of the above

POA0201

18. Operation Orders (OPORDs) are:

_____ a. A stand-alone order, which facilitates a unit's movement.

_____ b. The same as an Operation Plan (OPLAN).

_____ c. Directives a Commander issues to subordinate commanders to coordinate the execution of an operation.

_____ d. Used in lieu of a Warning Order (WARNO).

POA0202

19. The two (2) general categories of orders are:

_____ a. Operations Orders and Warning Orders.

_____ b. Garrison Orders and Field Orders.

_____ c. Administrative Orders and Combat Orders.

_____ d. Commander's Orders and Staff Orders.

POA0203

20. All operation plans and orders:

_____ a. Have five (5) paragraphs; provide task organization and scheme of maneuver.

_____ b. Provide a clear, concise mission statement, based on mission assigned from higher headquarters.

_____ c. None of the above

_____ d. Both a and b

R&R0705

21. All staff journals should be archived using MARKS.

_____ a. True

_____ b. False

G&O0309

22. Which of the following depicts the correct symbol for a demonstration?

____a. MASS

____b. JOKER

____c. DEMO

____d. RIOT

R&R0701

23. The Army approved form for maintaining a journal within the operations cell is:

_____ a. DD 1594

_____ b. DA 1610

_____ c. DA 1594

_____ d. DD 1660

R&R0702

24. The data posted within the journal should reflect:

_____ a. Information deemed necessary for the conduct of the operation

_____ b. Any orders, messages, meetings, or meaningful radio traffic

_____ c. Other criteria as outlined by unit SOP and the Commander

_____ d. All of the above

R&R0703

25. The governing protocol for the staff journal is:

_____ a. AR 220-15

_____ b. Unit SOP

_____ c. Commander's guidance

_____ d. All of the above

AO0507

26. The purpose of defensive operations is:

_____ a. Kill as many enemy as possible

_____ b. Resupply the soldiers with Class I, III, V

_____ c. Trade time and space to gain sufficient strength to attack

_____ d. Dig in as deeply as possible and prepare for any possible attack

AO0509

27. Retrograde operations include:

_____ a. Delays, withdrawal, retirements

_____ b. Ambush, attack, envelopment

_____ c. Movement to contact, raid, patrols

_____ d. Both b and c are correct

AO0510

28. Forms of maneuver include:

_____ a. Envelopment, turning movement, infiltration, penetration, frontal attack

_____ b. Raids, attacks, deliberate/hasty, patrols, ambush, pursuit

_____ c. Both a and b are correct

_____ d. None of the above

CSS0606

29. The logistic characteristics are:

_____ a. Accountability, recording, recordkeeping, proper distribution

_____ b. Anticipation, integration, continuity, responsiveness, improvisation

_____ c. Arming, repairing, manning

_____ d. Anticipation, integration, responsiveness, readiness

CSS0607

30. The term CEB refers to:

_____ a. Clothing exchange bath

_____ b. Combat engineer brigade

_____ c. Combat engineer battalion

_____ d. Combat engineer bridge

CSS0608

31. Who assembles Logpacs and at what location?

_____ a. Unit/TF Supply Sgt/Support Plt Ldr/ HHC Commander at the field trains

_____ b. CSM/TF Supply Sgt/First Sgt/TF Executive Officer in garrison

_____ c. Individual soldiers supervised by the leader in the combat trains

_____ d. Mechanics under the supervision of the BMO in the motorpool

G&O0303

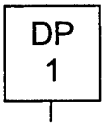
32. Which correctly depicts decision point #1?

____a.

____b.

____c.

____d.



MB0806

33. When conducting a briefing of any type, the room should be cleared before-hand if the subject is sensitive in nature or classified.

_____ a. True

_____ b. False

_____ c. True, but only at the discretion of the Commander

MDMP0106

34. The three (3) recommended techniques for war-gaming are:

_____ a. Passage of line's method, operation by force, reconnaissance by force

_____ b. Belt technique, avenue in depth, box technique

_____ c. Close technique, rear technique, deep technique

_____ d. None of the above

MDMP0107

35. The synchronization matrix method allows:

_____ a. Tanks, trucks, and personnel to arrive on time

_____ b. The Operations Officer to have a better idea of all battle assets

_____ c. The staff to synchronize the COA across time and space in relation to the enemy COA

_____ d. All assets to be on the objective at the same time

MDMP0109

36. A key tool in saving time in the MDMP is:

_____ a. Knowing the IPB process.

_____ b. Keeping the S-3, XO, and other staff members informed.

_____ c. Issuing the Commander's guidance.

_____ d. Notifying the subordinate Commanders that an order is being developed.

P O A 0 2 0 9

37. Message reference number refers to:

_____ a. How many recipients will receive a copy of the order

_____ b. The sequence in which you will number the pages within the OPORD

_____ c. Internal control numbers assigned by the Unit Signal Officer, IAW unit SOP

_____ d. The location of the Headquarters issuing the OPORD

R & R 0 7 0 8

38. When possible, it is recommended that a "Letter Code" S-Staff, M-Map, D-Distributed, etc. be used for ease in getting information to addressees, and creating an audit trail, placing this in the action taken column.

_____ a. True

_____ b. False

R & R 0 7 0 6

39. Persons authorized to sign and control the staff journal are:

_____ a. Support PSG, Support Platoon Leader, and Battalion Maintenance Officer

_____ b. RTOs, Battle Captain, Operations Sgts, and those prescribed by the unit SOP

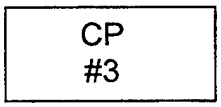
_____ c. Only the TF Commander

_____ d. Only the TF CSM

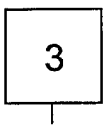
G & O 0 3 0 2

40. Which correctly depicts contact point #3?

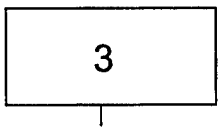
____a.



____b.



____c.



____d.

IPB0407

41. Key terrain is described as:

_____ a. Any locality or area where the seizure or retention of it affords a marked advantage for either combatant

_____ b. The best place to focus the reconnaissance effort

_____ c. A key place for ground surveillance radar

_____ d. Where the Tactical Operations Center (TOC) is placed

MB0804

42. If giving an information briefing, the purpose is to convey information to the target audience in a logical, professional, manner.

_____ a. True

_____ b. Sometimes

_____ c. False, does not apply to this type of briefing

Appendix B – Supervisor Performance Rating Forms

Dimension Definitions Sheet

Dimension 1 — Assist in the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP)

Understands and participates in MDMP. Responds to requests for information regarding the MDMP.

Dimension 2 — Prepare Combat Orders or Annexes

Is knowledgeable about the 5-paragraph order format and the different variations of orders.

Dimension 3 — Prepare or Construct Graphics or Overlays

Uses graphics and overlays to convey operations orders. Understands and can produce military symbols and graphics.

Dimension 4 — Understanding Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB)

Understands and participates in the wargaming process and identifies courses of action based on IPB process and products. Gathers and uses available IPB products and resources.

Dimension 5 — Assist in Planning of Army Operations

Understands Army doctrine and military operations including: the nine principles of war, tenets of combat operations; Battlefield Operating Systems (BOS); participates in the planning process.

Dimension 6 — Assist in the Planning and Execution of Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS)

Orchestrates CS and CSS efforts; understands the role, function, and structure of CS and CSS in support of Army operations.

Dimension 7 — Manages Record Keeping

Keeps records on staff journal log, DA Form 1594, etc. in accordance with unit Standard Operating Procedure (SOP); maintains the daily staff journal.

Dimension 8 — Prepare and Conduct Military Briefings

Prepares and conducts military briefings; delivers briefings; understands different types of briefings and when to apply them.

Performance Rating Scales

Rating Instructions

This booklet contains eight task categories you will use to make performance ratings as part of this USASMA-sponsored project under the direction of the Sergeant Major of the Army. Each category contains Rating Standards provided above the seven-point rating scale. These broad summary statements describe proficiency at different effectiveness levels that you can use as comparison points to help make your ratings more objective.

Making Your Ratings

For each category, read the label and rating standards. Then, **compare the NCO's current effectiveness with the rating standards** for that category.

For example, if you feel that the middle statements describe the person's *most typical* effectiveness, choose a "4." If the statements describing high effectiveness on the right of the scale closely match his/her most typical behavior, choose a rating of "7." Likewise, if the statements on the left of the scale match the NCO's most typical effectiveness, choose a rating of "1."

If the NCO you are rating behaves as described in the low statements some of the time *but* performs like the middle statements *more* of the time, a rating of "3" would be best. Similarly, if both the middle and high level statements describe the NCO at various times but the high statements are more descriptive, the fairest rating to give him/her is probably a "6."

Please use these statements to help make your ratings more objective.

Once you have selected a rating, make your rating by blackening the appropriate circle on the Performance Rating Sheet. Please make no marks in this booklet.

Finally, we very much want you to make these ratings on the 1-7 scale. However, if a task category is not at all part of the ratee's job, you can mark the Not Part of Job or "NPJ" circle for that category.

Important Points to Remember

1. Try not to give an NCO the same rating for all eight categories. Most people will perform well in some categories and less effectively in others. **Your ratings should show the NCO's strengths and weaknesses, as appropriate.**

2. **Avoid being influenced by such things as appearance, family background**, and other personal characteristics that are not directly related to performance.

3. Please **rate independently** (do not confer with others).

4. The most important point is to **make your ratings as accurate as possible**. This is the best way to help us on this important project.

1. Assists in the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP)		
• Is not knowledgeable about MDMP.	• Is generally knowledgeable about and understands MDMP.	• Is very knowledgeable about and thoroughly understands MDMP.
• Reluctantly participates in this process.	• Effectively responds to requests for information regarding the MDMP.	• Proactively participates and contributes to this process.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. Prepares Combat Orders or Annexes		
• Is not familiar with or knowledgeable about the 5-paragraph format or its variations.	• Is generally knowledgeable about the 5-paragraph format.	• Is highly knowledgeable about the 5-paragraph order format and the different variations of orders.
• Often fails to recognize key events; may take inappropriate actions when he/she does recognize such an event.	• Recognizes key events and usually takes appropriate actions.	• Always anticipates key events and consistently takes appropriate actions.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. Prepares or Constructs Graphics or Overlays		
• Is not able to keep situation map current.	• Can update situation map.	• Very effectively uses graphics and overlays to convey operations orders.
• Does not have adequate knowledge of military symbols and graphics.	• Can interpret most military symbols and graphics.	• Thoroughly understands and can accurately produce military symbols and graphics.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. Understands Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB)		
• Does not understand IPB process or products.	• Understands some elements of IPB products and the wargaming process.	• Very effectively uses all available IPB products and resources.
• Does not participate in or understand wargaming.	• Is able to gather some critical elements of IPB information.	• Thoroughly understands and proactively participates in the wargaming process, and is excellent at identifying courses of action based on IPB process and products.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. Assists in Planning of Army Operations		
• Does not understand Army doctrine or the full range of military operations.	• Understands most aspects of Army doctrine in support of military operations.	• Thoroughly understands Army doctrine and the full range of military operations including: the nine principles of war; tenets of combat operations; and Battlefield Operating Systems (BOS).
• Is unable to contribute to the planning process.	• Contributes to the planning process when asked or prompted.	• Actively and effectively participates in the planning process.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. Assists in the Planning and Execution of Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS)		
• Does not understand CS and CSS.	• Is typically able to assist in developing CS and CSS plans.	• Very effectively orchestrates CS and CSS efforts.
• Is unable to contribute to the CS and CSS planning process.	• Has a basic understanding of the structure of CS and CSS.	• Thoroughly understands the role, function, and structure of CS and CSS in support of Army operations.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. Manages Record Keeping		
• Does not understand the importance of the staff journal.	• Usually keeps accurate and timely records on Staff Journal Log, DA Form 1594, etc.	• Keeps highly accurate and timely records on Staff Journal Log, DA Form 1594, etc.
• Does not usually distribute reports, messages, etc., in a timely manner.	• Distributes reports, messages, etc., as required.	• Always distributes reports, messages, etc., to the right people in a timely manner.
• Often fails to recognize the relevance/urgency of reports, messages, etc.	• Maintains staff journal in accordance with unit Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).	• Proactively ensures the integrity and clarity of the daily staff journal.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. Prepares and Conducts Military Briefings		
• Is unable to prepare or conduct military briefings.	• Is able to assist in preparing and conducting military briefings.	• Is excellent at preparing and conducting military briefings; is poised, confident, and professional when delivering briefings.
• Does not understand the purposes of different types of briefings and when each is appropriate.	• Can adequately deliver most types of military briefings.	• Thoroughly understands different types of briefings and when to apply them.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Overall Effectiveness		
Below Average	Fully Adequate	Exceptional

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Ratee Code: _____ Rater Code: _____

Performance Rating Sheet

Ratee Name: _____

Length of time you've worked with the ratee: _____ Months

Mark your responses by darkening the appropriate circle. You may use a pencil or a pen. *Note: NPJ = Not Part of the Job*	
1. Assists MDMP	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ (NPJ)
2. Prepares Combat Orders/Annexes	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ (NPJ)
3. Prepares Graphics/ Overlays	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ (NPJ)
4. Understands IPB	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ (NPJ)
5. Assists in Planning Army Operations	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ (NPJ)
6. Assists in CS and CSS	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ (NPJ)
7. Manages Record Keeping	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ (NPJ)
8. Prepares/Conducts Briefings	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ (NPJ)
Overall Effectiveness	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦

Ratee Code: _____ Rater Code: _____

Experience Rating Sheet

How much experience has this person had, in his/her present position, in each of these battle staff task areas?

(Circle the appropriate response)

	No Experience		Some Experience But Not A Lot		Considerable Experience
Assists MDMP	1	2	3	4	5
Prepares Combat Orders/Annexes	1	2	3	4	5
Prepares Graphics/ Overlays	1	2	3	4	5
Understands IPB	1	2	3	4	5
Assists in Planning Army Operations	1	2	3	4	5
Assists in CS and CSS	1	2	3	4	5
Manages Record Keeping	1	2	3	4	5
Prepares/Conducts Briefings	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix C - Knowledge Test Results

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: Overall Percentage on the Job Knowledge Test			
GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	0.61	0.11	89.00
2.00	0.62	0.15	55.00
3.00	0.63	0.10	23.00
Total	0.61	0.12	167.00

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Overall Percentage on the Job Knowledge Test						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	0.09	3.00	0.03	1.95	0.12	0.04
Intercept	2.25	1.00	2.25	153.13	0.00	0.48
EXPTOT	0.07	1.00	0.07	5.01	0.03	0.03
GROUP	0.02	2.00	0.01	0.57	0.57	0.01
Error	2.40	163.00	0.01			
Total	65.54	167.00				
Corrected Total	2.48	166.00				

a R Squared = .035 (Adjusted R Squared = .017)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: Assist in the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) Percentage			
GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	0.47	0.18	89.00
2.00	0.50	0.22	55.00
3.00	0.50	0.17	23.00
Total	0.49	0.20	167.00

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Assist in the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) Percentage						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	0.08	3.00	0.03	0.70	0.55	0.01
Intercept	3.57	1.00	3.57	93.11	0.00	0.36
EEMDMP	0.03	1.00	0.03	0.79	0.38	0.01
GROUP	0.06	2.00	0.03	0.80	0.45	0.01
Error	6.24	163.00	0.04			
Total	45.61	167.00				
Corrected Total	6.33	166.00				

a R Squared = .013 (Adjusted R Squared = -.005)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: Prepare Combat Orders or Annexes (POA) Percentage			
GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	0.68	0.20	89.00
2.00	0.71	0.20	55.00
3.00	0.78	0.15	23.00
Total	0.70	0.19	167.00

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Prepare Combat Orders or Annexes (POA) Percentage						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	0.33	3.00	0.11	3.02	0.03	0.05
Intercept	10.62	1.00	10.62	293.39	0.00	0.64
EEPOA	0.14	1.00	0.14	3.94	0.05	0.02
GROUP	0.18	2.00	0.09	2.48	0.09	0.03
Error	5.90	163.00	0.04			
Total	89.00	167.00				
Corrected Total	6.23	166.00				

a R Squared = .053 (Adjusted R Squared = .035)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: Prepare or Construct Graphics or Overlays (GO) Percentage			
GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	0.55	0.21	89.00
2.00	0.55	0.23	55.00
3.00	0.58	0.20	23.00
Total	0.55	0.21	167.00

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Prepare or Construct Graphics or Overlays (GO) Percentage						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	0.49	3.00	0.16	3.76	0.01	0.07
Intercept	3.15	1.00	3.15	72.41	0.00	0.31
EEGO	0.47	1.00	0.47	10.88	0.00	0.06
GROUP	0.01	2.00	0.00	0.09	0.91	0.00
Error	7.09	163.00	0.04			
Total	59.00	167.00				
Corrected Total	7.58	166.00				

a R Squared = .065 (Adjusted R Squared = .047)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: Understanding Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) Percentage			
GROUP	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**N**
1.00	0.59	0.20	89.00
2.00	0.66	0.23	55.00
3.00	0.61	0.27	23.00
Total	0.62	0.22	167.00

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Understanding Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) Percentage						
Source	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**	**Eta Squared**
Corrected Model	0.64	3.00	0.21	4.61	0.00	0.08
Intercept	4.74	1.00	4.74	101.92	0.00	0.39
EEIPB	0.49	1.00	0.49	10.56	0.00	0.06
GROUP	0.21	2.00	0.11	2.30	0.10	0.03
Error	7.58	163.00	0.05			
Total	71.75	167.00				
Corrected Total	8.22	166.00				

a R Squared = .078 (Adjusted R Squared = .061)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: Assist in Planning of Army Operations (AO) Percentage			
GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	0.59	0.26	89.00
2.00	0.68	0.26	55.00
3.00	0.65	0.21	23.00
Total	0.63	0.25	167.00

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Assist in Planning of Army Operations (AO) Percentage						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	0.33	3.00	0.11	1.72	0.17	0.03
Intercept	6.30	1.00	6.30	98.29	0.00	0.38
EEAO	0.06	1.00	0.06	0.96	0.33	0.01
GROUP	0.28	2.00	0.14	2.17	0.12	0.03
Error	10.44	163.00	0.06			
Total	77.04	167.00				
Corrected Total	10.77	166.00				

a R Squared = .031 (Adjusted R Squared = .013)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: Assist in the Planning and Execution of Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) Percentage

GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	0.58	0.21	89.00
2.00	0.51	0.25	55.00
3.00	0.42	0.25	23.00
Total	0.54	0.24	167.00

Note: Groups 1 & 3 have t-test value of t=3.080, p=.003

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Assist in the Planning and Execution of Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) Percentage

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	0.58	3.00	0.19	3.64	0.01	0.06
Intercept	4.25	1.00	4.25	79.55	0.00	0.33
EECSS	0.07	1.00	0.07	1.32	0.25	0.01
GROUP	0.54	2.00	0.27	5.01	0.01	0.06
Error	8.70	163.00	0.05			
Total	57.25	167.00				
Corrected Total	9.28	166.00				

a R Squared = .063 (Adjusted R Squared = .046)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: Manages Recordkeeping (RR) Percentage			
GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	0.84	0.17	89.00
2.00	0.84	0.20	55.00
3.00	0.86	0.15	23.00
Total	0.84	0.18	167.00

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Manages Recordkeeping (RR) Percentage						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	0.04	3.00	0.01	0.37	0.77	0.01
Intercept	9.27	1.00	9.27	295.40	0.00	0.64
EERR	0.03	1.00	0.03	0.87	0.35	0.01
GROUP	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.07	0.94	0.00
Error	5.12	163.00	0.03			
Total	124.20	167.00				
Corrected Total	5.15	166.00				

a R Squared = .007 (Adjusted R Squared = -.011)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: Prepare and Conduct Military Briefings (MB) Percentage			
GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	0.75	0.24	89.00
2.00	0.68	0.22	55.00
3.00	0.74	0.27	23.00
Total	0.72	0.24	167.00

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Prepare and Conduct Military Briefings (MB) Percentage						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	0.17	3.00	0.06	1.03	0.38	0.02
Intercept	6.40	1.00	6.40	113.93	0.00	0.41
EEMB	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.95	0.00
GROUP	0.17	2.00	0.08	1.49	0.23	0.02
Error	9.16	163.00	0.06			
Total	97.00	167.00				
Corrected Total	9.33	166.00				

a R Squared = .019 (Adjusted R Squared = .001)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Appendix D – Supervisory Performance Rating Results

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: Average of Supervisory Performance Ratings Across all Eight Dimensions			
GROUP	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**N**
1.00	5.10	0.74	61.00
2.00	5.13	1.04	38.00
3.00	4.74	0.89	14.00
Total	5.07	0.87	113.00

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Average of Supervisory Performance Ratings Across all Eight Dimensions						
Source	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**	**Eta Squared**
Corrected Model	8.44	3.00	2.81	4.01	0.01	0.10
Intercept	68.95	1.00	68.95	98.21	0.00	0.47
EXPTOT	6.76	1.00	6.76	9.63	0.00	0.08
GROUP	2.21	2.00	1.11	1.58	0.21	0.03
Error	76.53	109.00	0.70			
Total	2986.18	113.00				
Corrected Total	84.97	112.00				

a R Squared = .099 (Adjusted R Squared = .075)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: Assist in the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) Percentage			
GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	4.84	1.22	57.00
2.00	4.88	1.01	34.00
3.00	4.50	1.31	12.00
Total	4.82	1.16	103.00

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Assist in the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) Percentage						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	10.48	3.00	3.49	2.72	0.05	0.08
Intercept	118.63	1.00	118.63	92.47	0.00	0.48
EEMDMP	9.09	1.00	9.09	7.09	0.01	0.07
GROUP	1.42	2.00	0.71	0.55	0.58	0.01
Error	127.01	99.00	1.28			
Total	2526.00	103.00				
Corrected Total	137.50	102.00				

a R Squared = .076 (Adjusted R Squared = .048)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: Prepare Combat Orders or Annexes (POA) Percentage			
GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	5.20	0.99	55.00
2.00	4.97	1.55	37.00
3.00	4.64	1.69	11.00
Total	5.06	1.30	103.00

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Prepare Combat Orders or Annexes (POA) Percentage						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	13.96	3.00	4.65	2.92	0.04	0.08
Intercept	231.31	1.00	231.31	145.22	0.00	0.60
EEPOA	10.63	1.00	10.63	6.67	0.01	0.06
GROUP	2.65	2.00	1.33	0.83	0.44	0.02
Error	157.69	99.00	1.59			
Total	2807.00	103.00				
Corrected Total	171.65	102.00				

A R Squared = .081 (Adjusted R Squared = .053)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: Prepare or Construct Graphics or Overlays (GO) Percentage			
GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	5.51	1.22	55.00
2.00	5.42	1.44	36.00
3.00	5.57	1.28	14.00
Total	5.49	1.29	105.00

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Prepare or Construct Graphics or Overlays (GO) Percentage						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	12.04	3.00	4.01	2.50	0.06	0.07
Intercept	192.62	1.00	192.62	119.95	0.00	0.54
EEGO	11.74	1.00	11.74	7.31	0.01	0.07
GROUP	0.04	2.00	0.02	0.01	0.99	0.00
Error	162.19	101.00	1.61			
Total	3334.00	105.00				
Corrected Total	174.23	104.00				

a R Squared = .069 (Adjusted R Squared = .041)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: Understanding Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) Percentage			
GROUP	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**N**
1.00	4.45	1.17	55.00
2.00	4.59	1.46	32.00
3.00	4.23	1.09	13.00
Total	4.47	1.25	100.00

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Understanding Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) Percentage						
Source	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**	**Eta Squared**
Corrected Model	9.92	3.00	3.31	2.19	0.09	0.06
Intercept	165.78	1.00	165.78	109.77	0.00	0.53
EEIPB	8.67	1.00	8.67	5.74	0.02	0.06
GROUP	1.35	2.00	0.67	0.45	0.64	0.01
Error	144.99	96.00	1.51			
Total	2153.00	100.00				
Corrected Total	154.91	99.00				

a R Squared = .064 (Adjusted R Squared = .035)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: Assist in Planning of Army Operations (AO) Percentage			
GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	5.08	1.04	59.00
2.00	4.86	1.42	36.00
3.00	4.31	1.18	13.00
Total	4.92	1.21	108.00

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Assist in Planning of Army Operations (AO) Percentage						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	22.36	3.00	7.45	5.79	0.00	0.14
Intercept	150.54	1.00	150.54	116.93	0.00	0.53
EEAO	15.76	1.00	15.76	12.24	0.00	0.11
GROUP	6.74	2.00	3.37	2.62	0.08	0.05
Error	133.89	104.00	1.29			
Total	2767.00	108.00				
Corrected Total	156.25	107.00				

a R Squared = .143 (Adjusted R Squared = .118)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: Assist in the Planning and Execution of Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) Percentage

GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	4.87	1.01	52.00
2.00	5.11	1.55	28.00
3.00	4.54	1.45	13.00
Total	4.89	1.26	93.00

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Assist in the Planning and Execution of Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) Percentage

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	10.81	3.00	3.60	2.39	0.07	0.08
Intercept	185.97	1.00	185.97	123.42	0.00	0.58
EECSS	7.85	1.00	7.85	5.21	0.03	0.06
GROUP	3.87	2.00	1.93	1.28	0.28	0.03
Error	134.11	89.00	1.51			
Total	2371.00	93.00				
Corrected Total	144.93	92.00				

a R Squared = .075 (Adjusted R Squared = .043)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: Manages Recordkeeping (RR) Percentage			
GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	5.61	1.24	54.00
2.00	5.89	1.16	38.00
3.00	5.00	1.35	13.00
Total	5.64	1.24	105.00

Note: Groups 2 & 3 have a t-test value of 1.958, p=.055

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Manages Recordkeeping (RR) Percentage						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	16.68	3.00	5.56	3.91	0.01	0.10
Intercept	155.37	1.00	155.37	109.30	0.00	0.52
EERR	8.84	1.00	8.84	6.22	0.01	0.06
GROUP	10.47	2.00	5.24	3.68	0.03	0.07
Error	143.57	101.00	1.42			
Total	3498.00	105.00				
Corrected Total	160.25	104.00				

a R Squared = .104 (Adjusted R Squared = .077)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: Prepare and Conduct Military Briefings (MB) Percentage			
GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	5.29	1.23	59.00
2.00	5.28	1.14	32.00
3.00	5.00	1.57	14.00
Total	5.25	1.25	105.00

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Prepare and Conduct Military Briefings (MB) Percentage						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	10.93	3.00	3.64	2.44	0.07	0.07
Intercept	117.33	1.00	117.33	78.67	0.00	0.44
EEMB	9.94	1.00	9.94	6.67	0.01	0.06
GROUP	0.93	2.00	0.46	0.31	0.73	0.01
Error	150.63	101.00	1.49			
Total	3053.00	105.00				
Corrected Total	161.56	104.00				

a R Squared = .068 (Adjusted R Squared = .040)

Notes: Group 1 = Fort Bliss, Group 2 = VTT, Group 3 = Fort McCoy (used as the Independent Variable).

EXPTOT = Average experience rating from the NCO (used as a covariate).

EE prefix in front of a dimension signifies NCO experience ratings (used as a covariate).

Appendix E – Supervisors' Comments

Comments from Onsite Visits

This course was very helpful to this soldier. He had purely Artillery-based background before this. This course helped him to understand what needed to happen in an S-2 Shop. This course helped our shop during our Warfighter exercise.

This soldier has been a 96B for quite some time. However, the course seemed to be very beneficial to him because of the areas on planning and briefing that were covered.

Should be taught at the ANCOC level.

Should be taught at the ANCOC level.

This division was very successful in its Warfighter because of these outstanding Staff NCOs.

I cannot stress the importance of these NCOs enough. They run the TCOs/ALOCs/CPs for the Army. This school is invaluable to the C2 process of the Army. As both an Infantry and Intelligence Officer, I spent most of my career in TOCs either working or observing/controlling at JRTC. One can immediately tell the difference between BSNCO qualified and non-BSNCO qualified NCOs. They are absolutely critical to the success of the Army especially as we move into the 21st century. I strongly recommend that all NCOs in the rank of SSG to MSG attend this course and make it a prerequisite to promotion to E-9. This course is the CAS3 for NCOs and is extremely important.

Many slots are directed by DA. Shorter versions of the class should be given so more NCOs can attend! Junior NCOs should be given this training to better them for leadership roles. I've heard nothing but great things from this course.

The knowledge that is passed on by my subordinate is very well. Whatever you're teaching is good.

There is a considerable difference in experience, knowledge, and confidence between those who graduated from the "short" course and the seven-week Bliss course. Those grads from Bliss had a better working knowledge of Army Ops and Graphics. The short course doesn't seem to provide the "hands-on" of the long course. The short course depends considerable on the home study section and individuals vary on how well they handle and absorb knowledge using this method. NCOs have been indoctrinated and feel comfortable with resident courses and this could be a factor.

In 12 months of battalion operations I have been a supervisor for 4 separate NCOs who have graduated from the Battle Staff Course. Without exception, I have seen a glaring deficiency in the ability of Battle Staff NCOs to manage a battalion TOC efficiently. Understand that all four NCOs are solid performers, but developing battalion OPORDs in a constrained environment is not understood. Many leaders expect NCOs to come back from this course with answers on how to operate a TOC in the field. This is the number one expectation, and appears to be the least of topics addressed.

Comments from the Mail Version

As a graduate of the Battle Staff course MSG *****, exudes confidence and is always well prepared to brief the Battalion Commanders training guidance and disseminate all the tactical information to the Batteries, MSG ***** is an outstanding BSNCO who demonstrates the ability to manage a number of critical tasks simultaneously. MSG ***** would be an excellent instructor for Battle Staff, his professional, intelligent epitomizes what every BSNCO should be.

The training that NCO's receive at the Battle Staff NCO course is outstanding. It strengthens the team that is planning, preparing, and briefing a myriad of operations. Good staff NCOs going in are great NCO's contributing to the staff process positively coming out. Please continue to screen and training quality staff NCO's.

It has been my experience that senior NCO utilizes the skills they have learned at BSNCO Course. In particular the previous job experience i.e. PSG's senior squad leaders and company master gunners is critical towards becoming an integral part of any staff. They have a knowledge of "I know what we need!" When an NCO has no experience at the line company level how will they know what works...It is like a group of OFFICERS formulating a packing list for deployment despite they fact they have never "humped" w/a ruck!!

THE NEXT LEVEL of education should mirror the military science taught the SENIOR OFFICER CORP. The dedication and knowledge our senior NCO's possess, why would we not TAP that experience and teach the science/art of war? We can handle a bit more than "Head Count"!!

Depending on each units manning situation, and battle staff structure, some BSNCO's may not have the full opportunity to exercise what they've learned. My comments were based both on performance and potential. In many cases, squadron/Battalion MDMP is conducted only at the primary staff level, with BSNCO's providing support for current operations.

Provide students with a smartbooks for those NCOs who will occupy S-S OPS and S2 NCOIC slotted positions. Provide students with a CD-ROM or 2S floppy disk of current military symbols used in BN Operations and higher.

SFC ***** has a better understanding of the orders process based on his Battle Staff schooling. This is vital to an O/C.

SSG ***** has put some of this to use but he is an Observer Control Trainer for National Guards units and rarely get the time to use what he has learned in Battle Staff.

I went through one LTP at JRTC with this NCO. Out of six NCOs in my shop he has the highest level of understanding on what an OPORD is and how to help write one. SFC ***** does not understand the content and information that needs to be written into the order. We discussed the Battle Staff Course and he informed me that his training mainly focused on .the logistics portion of planning and operations. I had higher expectation concerning his ability to assist in the entire orders writing process.

Comments from the Mail Version (continued)

Items 4 (IPB), 5 (Planning Army Operations) & 8 (Prepares/Conducts Briefings) of the Performance Rating Sheet (Encl 4) could not be accurately assessed for this NCO. Though I am extremely confident in the BSNCO training, I have not had the opportunity to witness this NCO's ability to effectively participate in items 4, 5 & 8.

The reason for this is due to the lack of manpower in our BN S4 section. With few exceptions, our section has been manned solely by the S4 NCOIC and conducted by the S4 OIC while the S4 NCOIC was executing day to day operations keeping this section operational.

I think the course is worthwhile provided the Chain of Command permits the NCO full opportunity to concentrate on the course requirements. Several units do not allow the NCOs full concentration on the course and expect the NCO to perform daily duties; not fair to the NCO.

No comments. Course was well balanced in all areas. ***** wins professional. ***** support exceptional.

I think the BSNCO course fully trained SSG ***** for all the tasks in this survey. When he arrived from the course, he was motivated and eager to contribute to the S3 section. However, officers do not feel an NCO know enough about these tasks and hold on to that life their lives and depend on it. As long as an NCO can prepare graphics, get up and tear down a TOC and make sure they're fed, they feel that is a BSNCO that is fully capable. I don't agree and I've tried to implement changes, but that seems to be the status quo in this unit. We do have new CDR and S3 that is willing to include NCOs completely in all aspects of planning on the staff and I'm encouraged by that. But up until now, SSG ***** has had little opportunity to prove himself to be capable and fulfill his potential.

This NCO is now working in a Joint Command. While much of the course is applicable to the small units at the tactical level very little transfers to the "Joint" strat/operational levels. This course will serve him well when he returns to the Regular Army.

Note: **Names and inappropriate comments were deleted.**

Appendix F – Graduates' Comments

Comments from Onsite visits

Battle Staff conducted at Ft. Bliss during a 6-week period was effective. 3 weeks saves $, however, students need time to absorb & retain as opposed to the "brain dump" during a 3-week crash course. I strongly oppose the VTT course of instruction due to students not having actual "live" face to face with instructors at Ft. Bliss.

The course helped me to understand how higher headquarters work in relation to other units & branches of the military. I feel that one should really be used more as a Battle Staff NCO to maintain the knowledge received from the course.

Battle Staff at Ft. McCoy is too short. It did not allow for real learning. Only how to reference material was any help. The course was canned. Giving out already produced orders instead of developing our own. I understand the Active Component does not use this course any longer ... That's Good! A Battle Staff should conclude with a real field exercise. Cover installation of a TOC (Tactical Operation Center). TOC Battle Drills, Receive higher HQ order, go through the MDMP process completely. Jump TOC under fire and not under fire conditions. Force students to use the file journal. Make them look up old information in the file journal to see if they can. Make them go through shift change briefings, and finally recovery the TOC at the conclusion. Even try to recover while doing their jobs in the S-2/S-3 Shop planning for the next 6-8 weeks out. Most units put so much on our plate that recovery suffers and military equipment breaks down and when we really need it ... It won't be there or it won't work!

Battle Staff is not useful to the military and will not be useful to the military until the NCOs are given a larger role within the Battle Staff operation. Too often I see NCOs charged with the menial tasks around the operation while the officers wargame & MDMP. The NCOs have years of experience on the battlefield and should be used for that knowledge. The school taught me a great deal about graphics, but I don't feel that there was enough info on maneuvering units tactically.

My personal experience with the course was very good. I want to applaud the decision on insuring that all 25th ID (LT) soldiers attend the Pre-Battle Staff Course. It definitely assisted me on the graphics however the course should have had a more in depth overview over the tested topics. In regards to the Distance Learning, I personally don't feel that it would be a good idea for this course if it is going to be expected to be retained. This course is definitely designed to be used on a continual basis back at the unit level. Due to the fact that I was at the company level, I really didn't have an opportunity to exercise some other avenues that the course taught me. Overall it has been the best military school I have attended in regards to knowledge.

Course can be shortened and thus save $ by making Saturday a work day. BSNCOC should not be changed. Small group sessions are great and by going TDY the distracters of hone units are gone. The course relies too much on "open" book tests. In real life, we do not have manuals on hand or time to reference them.

I feel that NCOs should go earlier in their career (6 yr) or need to be included in BNCOC.

Comments from Onsite visits (continued)
Great school, however NCOs are not used like they should upon return to their unit.
Course FTX exercise must provide realistic scenarios. Must be conducted outdoors not indoors.
My attendance to the Battle Staff Course was one of the most rewarding schools I have attended. I learned a lot about what goes into planning an operation and support required for sustainment. As a result, I am better qualified to assist in the planning process at a level that I couldn't before. I think that the facilities at Ft. Bliss and the class environment is very conducive to the Battle Staff program.
Battle Staff helped me become an integral part of the Staff during the Divisional Warfighter. It helped me to become aware of the entire depth of the battlefield enabling me to become an invaluable asset during the MDMP process and inside the TOC. As our officers are planning future operations it is mandatory that Battle Staff qualified NCOs constantly track and manage the entire depth of the battlefield or battle.
The BSNCOC was one of the most informative courses I've completed. The course made it possible for the senior NCOs to be proficient in tracking the battle. The course allows the NCO to track the battle without the help of the officer and allows the officer to make wiser decisions about the battle based on the input from the NCO. The course is very beneficial to soldiers in MOSs other than combat arms. I've been on both sides of the field. Combat arms soldiers get a lot of this type of experience from their daily jobs. Support soldiers are rarely familiar with battle staff operations unless they are placed in a battle staff position or attend the battle staff course. When I attended the course, a lot of actions I had previously experienced due to being an 11B in my earlier years of the military. Now that I'm a CSS soldier I find that a lot of my peers have no clue. Would have loved to work in a battle staff position for longer and put my experience to use.
First, this test seemed to lean heavily towards administrative warfighting. Most of the topics were not covered in the course. Most importantly, let's train junior NCOs. A senior NCO is already in position and expected to perform from day one. Let's focus on the MOS of CMF that is most likely to be asked to write plans, orders or annexes. For example, a SSG (13F30) is neck deep in the orders process at the company level. Let's Battle Staff train him.
Emphasis on the actual role in the MDMP. Less emphasis on Dimension 2, 7 & 8. *[He is referring to a Definition Dimension Sheet we passed out to remind them of the course content. Dimensions 2, 7 and 8 are: Prepares Combat Orders/Annexes, Manages Record Keeping, and Prepares/Conducts Briefings.]* Emphasize what only a trained Battle Staff NCO can do.

Comments from Onsite visits (continued)

I taught the Hawaii Pre-Battle Staff Course which was designed to help soldiers understand what they needed to accomplish at the resident course. I found that when looking at the total lesson plans of the actual Battle Staff Course that not enough instruction was dedicated to filling out journals or battle logs. While lots of time was dedicated to what would be primarily officer based jobs at Division Staff Level, minimum time was given to how to set up shifts, personnel management, TOC set up; things that generally fall on the senior enlisted. Individual NCOs who never worked in a TOC fail these tasks because of lack of this knowledge. An additional overview of these tasks may help in the future.

Ft. McCoy: Three straight weeks was fast and furious. Great course to better enhance the skills needed to fight and win the battle at the staff level and also good for future use in an infantry platoon to pass on to the younger soldier in order to aid him in symbols used on a map. Definitely need to send soldiers to a pre-course at home station before going to the 3-week course.

Most of the reference materials were too outdated and not related to present mode of operation. Example: Soviet doctrine.

All courses should have weekends off – so students can clear their heads. But it was still a good course.

The Battle Staff NCO is a valuable asset to the Battle Staff. With the strengths of knowledgeable NCOs in TOCs/TACs/CPs the overall capabilities of a commander to command and control his unit is expounded greatly. You can absolutely see the difference between a staff that has well trained BSNCOs and one that does not. This course is critical to the overall success of <u>all</u> operations coordinated at any higher headquarters. The NCOs who have been trained through the Battle Staff Course are better able to compliment their officer counterparts in the entire realm of combat operations, and in some cases exceed the capabilities of junior officers. The Army <u>must</u> keep this course and continue to develop it, as it already has and will continue to better prepare NCOs for their roles in future complex/joint ands strategic operations.

A pretty interesting course. All NCOs and officers should be provided the opportunity to participate in the course. Hopefully, with the new distance learning program, it will take away some of the stress and fear of the course. Should be a refresher given so Battle Staff NCOs can maintain and keep up with changing technology.

The billeting at Fort McCoy, WI is in bad need of repair and is not up to standards for soldiers living there. No refrigerator in room, door without locks, and no wall lockers.

Good course overall except some material was outdated; i.e. manuals. Some instructors wanted to go home early. More emphasis needs to be placed on MDMP at the course.

Comments from the Mail Version

I attended the DL BSNCO course at Fort Polk during the period of Jun-Sep 99. After attend the course I was selected as an AI for the CL 02-00. As an AI and a student I felt that the DL course is an excellent way for the Army to save on spending; however I still believe that one on one training is more beneficial. One on one training, in my opinion, enables me to retain the information a lot longer.

Some of the course material i.e. PE's was not available or had changed during both class 01-00 and CL 02-00.

After I completed the course I found it to be of value in performing my job as an S3 Operations NCO.

The instructors at the USASMA were quality subject matter experts who presented the blocks of instruction so that it could be clearly understood.

I expected more from Ft. Bliss Instructors. Most times they didn't' have a clue. Why not fill these positions with Subject Matter Experts from the area that is being taught.

The course made its best attempt at ramming 20 lbs. of ***** in a 5 lb. bag. I learned very little.

I usually feel a great sense of accomplishment when I complete a course/school. I did not feel this way after completing this course.

The course was a waste-except graphics & plans & orders.

Suggestion: 1) Get qualified instructors, 2) Reduce the amount of material (Germany DL grad).

VTT can be more difficult to grasp all the information being presented based on the instructor to student ration. The majority of the students I attended class with would have preferred to attend six straight weeks at Ft. Bliss.

All other comments from my class were provided directly to SGM *****(chief instructor for Battle Staff) on 6 April 00 (VTT graduate).

The evaluation is a good idea, but I feel that it should have been sent out sooner, a lot of the areas of the course are not used in my job so it was difficult answer some of the questions, but I tried to answer them to the best of my ability.

I also strongly feel that the residential course is great because it gets the NCO's away from there home station and they can concentrate on the course without any outside distractions.

Comments from the Mail Version (continued)

The Battle Staff class I attended last summer was good. The administration, billeting, evaluation and practical exercise were all good. I did not have the time to do the pre-resident phase. It turned out to be unnecessary anyway. I did very well without it.

The teleconference was a great idea. I'm sure it saved a lot of money. It could have saved even more if we had held the class here at Ft. Campbell instead of sending us to Ft. Benning.

The BSNCO course is a wonderful course. Being from a non-combat arms MOS I learned a lot from the course. I was upset though when they reduced the length of the course. I believe that when I was there for the 6 weeks that I learned more than I would have if I had to do correspondence courses prior to attending the resident portion. There is nothing better than being able to have group discussion with soldiers with all different types of backgrounds & experience. Being able to learn from the instructors & classmates made me a better BSNCO. It allowed me to see other MOS's point of view on situations. I appreciate being chose to take this test.

I attended the course at Ft. McCoy, I found the pre-resident material very good but I received it only about 20 days prior to the course. More time to complete this phase would have been helpful.

The resident phase at Ft. McCoy was outstanding. The content, materials & practical exercises were relevant & to the point. The instructors were excellent, professional & extremely well versed in their subject.

The pre resident (Phase I) is a must. It gives a good overview of the resident course. If students complete phase I and pass the test it will greatly increase their chances for success. It helped me. The Battles Staff NCO course is the best and most rewarding school I have completed in my career. The biggest challenge is using the Battle Staff NCO's in the appropriate assignments. I am a 13R402S and have not been working in a battle staff NCO position since I graduated in July 99. I should be moving on to a targeting position in a Brigade or Division FSE. But there are no authorized positions for a 13R40. Our only progression is in on Target Processing Section that is attached to the Counterfine Headquarters. Our training, in my opinion, is being wasted. Thank you for the opportunity to give my opinions.

Currently assigned as a truckmaster in a heavy equipment transport company.

I took the test without any preparation. I used no books or notes to help me. I would like to know the results if at all possible.

All of the subjects taught are valuable to leaders. Coming out of the course I felt good knowing that what I learned is used in today's day to day business. I would consider going to more schools like Battle Staff. They should have more like this one for our NCOs.

Comments from the Mail Version (continued)

I think one of the biggest problems my classmates and I had were on the intelligence materials. In many cases during the class we found that the material were out dated or wrong. I do believe that areas needs a lot of work, and if we had received more PE's on that area we would have felt better. I passed that portion on the first try, but I felt that I did not know any more than I already knew and for the most part my classmates and I were just lost (VTT graduate).

More time should have been allocated to the practical exercise "battle" at the end of the course. Three days is just not enough time to replicate the desired environment. In addition twenty-four hour operations would have added realism.

I felt that the time devoted to the MARKS system was a waste. That could have been adequately covered in the pre-resident phase (VTT graduate).

Intelligence portion of the Battle Staff NCO Course was the most hardest portion of the course. I recommend that you can provide subject matter expert instructors on the Intel portion of the course. Most student on our class was confused the instructor let the student read the book word for word just like reading a newspaper with out explanation or sample situation on how to apply the four step of IPB.

It did not seem to matter about GPA. As long as one got over 70% the instructors were happy. It also seemed that there were personal preferences in choosing who exceeded course standards. GPA's should be stated on the 1059 during field exercise, some of the positions had minor involvement while others were swamped. The instructors need to prompt soldiers in doing their tasks.

I enjoyed the VTC. It was informative. It also seemed that at times the instructors "shot from the hip" before researching.

Overall it was a good course.

The course was adequate, insofar as it thoroughly explained the battle staff on a theoretical level. I was disappointed that the course did not address certain key aspects of TOC operations essential to the competent battle staff NCO. The course focused on neither the physical composition nor the dynamics that make up the TOC, and are of primary importance to the battle staff NCO.

Most of the instructors at the BSNCO course were very knowledgeable and cared. The instructor I had was not. He failed to satisfactorily answer questions and we would not use him for reviews. We did that on our own.

Comments from the Mail Version (continued)

It seems that the NCO's who attended the BNSCO were primarily concerned with their area of expertise so they could better their skills when they got back to their units. Most of the subject matter that didn't closely relate to their jobs was flushed from their brains after the exams/course.

There was a double standard for the test taking. There was one NCO who was allowed to retake a test several times. The standard was one re-take. I felt that when that NCO challenged the test the NCO shouldn't have been able to retake it. That NCO had the same opportunity as every one else to pass the test in the retake. I know that I would question that NCO's abilities when returned to the parent unit. Am I too hard? Do I not understand the whole situation? I think appearance says a lot and there were a lot of rumors floating around about the situation.

A lot of NCO's I attended with were not in Battle Staff Positions. I had to wait a long time to get the slot because of this. Paperwork was changed (i.e. ERB 2-1) to put them in a 2S slot temporarily, just to go to school. This has been, and still is being abused at all levels.

Other than that...the course was great, I thought my instructor was very knowledgeable and professional.

I enjoyed the course and feel that it is very beneficial to all NCO's. It taught me the total Army concept by allowing me to interact w/other senior NCO's about how to prepare for and conduct combat operations. I have found out that it is a perishable skill that needs to be worked constantly.

It was a very good course. It helped me very much because I was given the job as the Battalion Intel. Sergeant of a newly formed Battalion and I had to start, from the ground floor to build the S2 section into an integral part of the BN staff. I used much of what I learned many times during field training and OPORD prep.

My comments refer to the picking of the top 20% of the class. I think it should be relooked how this is done. I was not picked the top 20% of my small group of instruction, but I would have been in almost all other groups. My point is it should be conducted picking the entire class not just from your group. Example: Academic average of 98% doesn't get you in top 20% in my group, but in another group 93% got you top 20%.

Second topic - the course does not teach practical battle staff stuff. Sure you come out with more knowledge, but there is no understanding how to use it.

Note: **Names and inappropriate comments were deleted.**