

Educational Support Cell(ESC)
TLDE
Tips & Strategies

ALM and the ARSOF Attributes: Do we select on or do we develop?

Great question, right? Two years ago, we were discussing if we educate or if we train at the SWCS. Thank goodness our discussions have evolved as our leaders recognize the value and place of both education and training. So let's look at *selecting* versus *developing* in context of the ARSOF attributes.

As a schoolhouse, we would definitely be on solid ground to argue that we select on attributes. After all, we seek men and women who possess a

ARSOF ATTRIBUTES

Integrity	Capability
Perseverance	Courage
Team Player	Adaptability
Personal Responsibility	
Professionalism	

variety of extraordinary and special characteristics. We could argue that we have Programs of Instruction (POIs) that lay out the knowledge, skills, and abilities we want to impart on these candidates. We **facilitate** the learning environment to enable learning to take place. So if we select the right candidates, our jobs are done, right? Well, if this is the case, where should **DEVELOPING** come in?

Tactical Pause: *The Army Learning Model (ALM) calls for the development of 21st Century Soldier Competencies in Soldiers of all ranks and experiences; however, we here at SWCS have discussed and considered competency-based learning since the ARSOF Attributes were developed back in 2009**

Do we want students to leave our tutelage simply smarter and more capable, or do we want to provide a positive and enduring influence on the future of SOF? Don't we want to imprint on our students what it truly means to be Army Special Operations Soldiers? Are we saying that our students possess all this entails at selection? Hmmmmmmm, maybe not.....

During our selection processes, we choose candidates "with potential" and have, in some cases, more than a year to develop them into ARSOF Soldiers. The best instructors among us develop attributes in our students

**If you are interested in the data and research behind the development of the attributes, contact geojones@soc.mil.*

The ESC provides support for the uniform application of SWCS educational processes across the Institution to include:

-Support to Curriculum & Instruction [Courses and Instructors];

-Support to Leadership & Professional Development Initiatives;

-Support to the development and implementation of program evaluation and assessment systems; and

-Support to the design and implementation of SOF Career Pathways.

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naturally. We deliver lessons that enable students to gain confidence in their problem-solving skills; we create situations where students have to demonstrate leadership, think critically, and work collaboratively to succeed. We use the content of the POI as the foundation through which to weave what I propose is truly important, the shaping of a deliberate and innovative, professional Soldier. Similarly, our advanced course instructors should not be immune to the idea of developing attributes in *their* students. We all have room to grow and to learn more about ourselves and the ideals for which we stand or fall; the ARSOF Attributes provide a wonderful framework for coaching and mentoring students (at any level) and to assist them to hone the essential traits that mark the differences between an ARSOF Soldier and all others.

Of course, not every module or class in a course will grow each and every attribute. Some learning activities or environments are more conducive for specific ones. However, over the span of an entire course (especially the longer ones) each attribute could be discussed and reinforced. For a shorter course, maybe only a few attributes will supplement the course's focus. In either case, the attribute(s) should be integrated with the desired outcome for the course to provide a deliberate, measured approach towards addressing them---much like we do with content and skills in existing POIs. When students enter a course, they should know what standards they will be measured against to include these intangible qualities. *(The ESC/TLDE has developed rubrics to assist with the identification of what an attribute "looks like": contact the POC at the bottom of the page for more information.)*

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Example: Let's use **Professionalism**. A student on Day 1 of a course may not be held to the same standard of professionalism as a student on graduation day more than a year later. Similarly, it would be fair to say that expectations for what professionalism looks like can be identified at different junctures in Soldiers' progressions through their careers. (We would expect a 35 yr. old MSG to carry himself differently than an 18 X-Ray.) However, an attribute like **Integrity** might be more constant as it isn't necessarily developed over time. But by using reflection and discussion with personal experiences and case studies, one's judgment can improve, and this can impact one's integrity (or lack thereof) in decision-making situations.

All and all, the ARSOF Attributes give us the framework of what the Force values in an ARSOF Soldier. ALM gives us the permission to deliberately design instruction to develop and grow these attributes in our students.

What are we waiting for?

For assistance with designing course outcomes with attributes in mind, or infusing attributes into existing learning activities, contact the ESC (geojones@soc.mil).