THE CHALKBOARD

Educating and Developing our Army's Uniformed and Civilian Leaders

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The Army Instructor Badge (AIB) Lapel Pins for Army Civilian

MSG Jacob Woods

Army University

The Army Instructor Badge (AIB) Lapel Pins for Army Civilian Corps Instructors are here! The Faculty and Staff Development Division (FSDD) of ArmyU has purchased an initial batch to distribute out to personnel who have received the appropriate level of recognition. Instructions on how to request the lapel pins will be available on our Sharepoint and the FDRP MilSuite page. FSDD is only supplying the lapel pins for current ACC instructors. Once certified manufacturers start to produce the lapel pin and offer it for sale, then personnel who are not currently instructing can purchase them for wear. If there are any questions, please send us an email or post a question on our FDRP MilSuite page.

FSDD Learning Forum

Army University's Faculty and Staff Development Division team will be hosting a Faculty and Staff Development Learning Forum on June 24th through June 25th at the Lewis and Clark building Arnold Conference Room, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Various topics will be covered from Adapting New Doctrine to Envisioning Digital Modernization in Faculty and Staff Development, and much more. If you are a Faculty and Staff Development Office Chief and /or a Deputy/Director of Training, please follow the link below to register. Some lodging has been reserved on post at Fort Leavenworth IHG Holiday Inn Express. You can reserve a room under the FSD Learning Forum and they can be reached at 913-364-1301. Ensure you register before June 1st, 2020. For questions concerning the forum, please write us at usarmy.leavenworth.tradoc.mbx.armyu-fsdd-policy@mail.mil.

https://armyu.army.mil/FSDD/ForumRegistration

Academic Rigor and Relevance Across the Army Learning Enterprise

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If you ask ten people "What is academic rigor?" you will most likely get ten different answers. Institutions, administrators, accreditation agencies, instructors, and students have yet to come to a consensus. Rigor definitions encompass everything from time and schedule adherence, to the difficulty of coursework, to the amount of coursework required. Even though academia has yet to decide what would be an all-inclusive definition of academic rigor, key elements are now being talked about, agreed upon, and worked through. Faculty and Staff Development Offices at the Centers of Excellence must be able to clearly articulate what Academic Rigor and Relevance is, why it is important to Army training and education, and how it should be incorporated into the Development, Design, and Implementation phases of the ADDIE process, In terms of Army learning, academic rigor is generally accepted as strict adherence to standards—standards of conduct and learning objective standards—allowing very little flexibility. An institution establishes learning objectives and standards to be achieved, and a student must accept responsibility for and demonstrate discipline to achieve those objectives. Definitions may differ by perspective, but this characteristic implies a sense of personal accountability as a component of rigor—a contract between the institution and the student.

With respect to the fundamental subsets of adult learning—training and education—each has unique characteristics that contribute to incorporating rigor in the Army Learning Enterprise. In both the training and education domain, rigor is incorporated through the establishment of achievement levels: competence and mastery. Training primarily focuses on the psychomotor domain: task performance. Competence communicates achievement of a standard, but no more. Mastery communicates higher achievement: demonstration of exceeding the standard by some measure, or reaching a level whereby the learner not only achieves the standard but can train others. Education focuses on the cognitive domain. The education domain also demonstrates competency by only achieving a standard. Achievement of that standard may require effective communication of the knowledge and comprehension of a subject through the Application level of Bloom's Taxonomy. Mastery in the education domain, like in the training domain, is manifested in the ability of an individual to teach others. What sets building rigor into the education domain apart from training, is adding a need for

demonstration of critical thinking. Upon competency or mastery of a topic, the learner must be able to examine that topic in a critical and creative manner: from different perspectives, with different criteria, or at different learning levels in terms of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, and synthesis. Critical thinking requires deconstructing an accepted concept to examine its constituent parts more closely, and then reassembling that concept in a new or different way.

Within the Army Learning Concept, training and education share the component agile and adaptive decision making. The ArmyU IRAD is drafting an updated version of TR 525-8-2 that should be available later this fiscal year. However, academic rigor is achieved in very different ways. In training, agile and adaptive decision making is demonstrated primarily in the psychomotor domain like repetitive crew drills and leader reaction courses. In education, rigor is demonstrated through critical and creative thinking and ultimately through teaching or enabling learning in others.

Academia will continue to shape how academic rigor is measured and defined. It can be explored further through learning domains using Bloom's taxonomy, perspective comparisons, and post-education success rates. In order to sustain a World Class Faculty—one of the Army University Lines of Effort for 2020—curriculum developers must endeavor to incorporate academic rigor and relevance in both the development and revision of curriculum and instructors must endeavor to incorporate academic rigor and relevance in their teaching practice.

Photo by: Thomas Robbins

The Merits of using Learning Management Systems (LMS) in the Classroom

Ms. Maresa M. Serbanic

FCOE

In a rapid-paced, technology-driven world, adults are always looking for the easiest, most accessible ways to learn. Whether it be learning a new knowledge or skill in a traditional learning environment or distance education setting, Learning Management Systems (LMS) are rapidly becoming the most sought after environments for the adult learner. Some of the most common LMSs used are Blackboard, Canvas, or Google Classroom. Instructors may use the LMS software to assist in the creation and delivery of content, assess the learners' comprehension of the content throughout a course, or provide access to learning content for learners to "reach-back" and gain more information or access to resources. Ultimately, LMSs provide the luxury of tracking the information flow between students and the instructor.

In military learning environments, specific web-based systems and technological software are restricted for security reasons, making them not an option. However, in recent years Blackboard has been made available for military courses. At the Fires Center of Excellence (FCoE), instructors and curriculum developers utilize Blackboard in a number of different ways. In the Faculty and Staff Development Division (FSDD), the instructors use Blackboard every day to enhance the students' learning experiences, starting before the course even begins. When the letter of instruction (LOI) is sent out two (2) weeks prior to the course start date, students are advised to login to Blackboard and complete the pre-requisite requirements. This allows our instructors to track whether or not students have logged in, reviewed the information, and submitted the required work. In case students have not completed them, instructors can make adjustments to replace those students with others on a standby list who have already completed what is required.

Throughout the course, students use Blackboard to view homework assignments, reference course materials, submit assignments, and file-sharing. File-sharing is a useful tool that allows students to upload any files or documents prior to leaving class for the day. They are then able to continue working on the assignments

at home. It also allows students to share information with their peers. At the closure of class, instructors use Blackboard to administer end-of-course (EOC) close-out surveys. The surveys go through a simple trending process within Blackboard. From which, our curriculum developers pull the trended data and review with the course instructor for program evaluation purposes, which assists in the continuing analysis of the course. Students have access to the courses in Blackboard for one (1) year for reach-back of information taught within the course.

Essentially, LMS software is an extremely beneficial tool that can assist instructors in delivering the content within their courses, whether it be utilizing the selected LMS strictly for student assessments like some courses or fully integrating Blackboard capabilities into the everyday course functions like FCoE FSDD. It is worth conducting the necessary analysis to determine if and how an LMS can be implemented to support the needs of adult learners, instructors, and developers.

Photo by: Danielle ODonnell

SFC Ziacik becomes Fort Benning's first, Master Instructor

Mr. Byran Gatchell

Fort Benning

Sgt. 1st Class Louis Ziacik, chief of instructors for the Henry Caro Noncommissioned Officers Academy, formally received the Master Army Instructor Badge at a ceremony here, becoming the 41st recipient across the Army and the first at Fort Benning. The Master Army Instructor Badge (MAIB) is the final in a series of badges that instructors can earn through the Army's Faculty Development and Recognition Program.

For Ziacik, earning the badge has less to do with his personal achievement as an instructor than the accomplishments of the students he instructed. "It symbolizes the hard work, dedication and professionalism of the students I've taught over the years while earning the badge," he said.

Instructors must first earn the Basic Army Instructor Badge and Senior Army Instructor Badge. To earn the basic badge, the instructor must serve as a primary instructor for 80 hours. To earn the senior badge, the instructor must have served a minimum of 12 months after submitting the basic instructor packet and 200 more hours as a primary instructor. Becoming a master instructor requires a minimum of 24 months after submitting the senior instructor packet and 200 more hours as a primary instructor.

For this master instructor, the process has improved him professionally. "Not only is it the instructing part, it's the development piece too," said Ziacik. "I go to develop and rewrite lesson plans based off of observations and the needs of the Army, on what we need to be training our future leaders."

Ziacik reflects that earning the master instructor badge tests all facets of instructor competencies. "You have to evaluate other instructors and give them professional feedback and just be vested in the learning and education of the students," Ziacik continued. "Then you have to go before a board and test your knowledge on learning, learning domains, instructional methodologies, ways to present classes and your role and contribution to the Army's learning."

Both Ziacik's parents were in the Air Force, and joining the Army in 2006 for Ziacik was a matter of continuing a family legacy of military service. He attributes his success as an instructor to the mentorship he received early on in his career, something he hopes to pay forward.

"It was the leaders that I had early on in my career, especially the first three years of my career," he said. "They really pushed me to be better than I was. They saw a lot of potential in me. They continued to push me to go to schools, they pushed me to go to boards, they pushed me to become a sergeant. ... I wanted to make my Soldiers better than me and to see them rise through the ranks, become distinguished honor grads at schools."

Ziacik emphasizes that the badge is not an end in itself but rather a hallmark of organizational improvement. "I would love for every instructor to strive to become a master instructor," he said. "It's not just a badge; it's not just teaching. It's the development of lesson plans, it's finding out new ways to reach higher levels of understanding."

Photo by: Mr. Markeith Horace

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