

The AT&L Performance Learning Model

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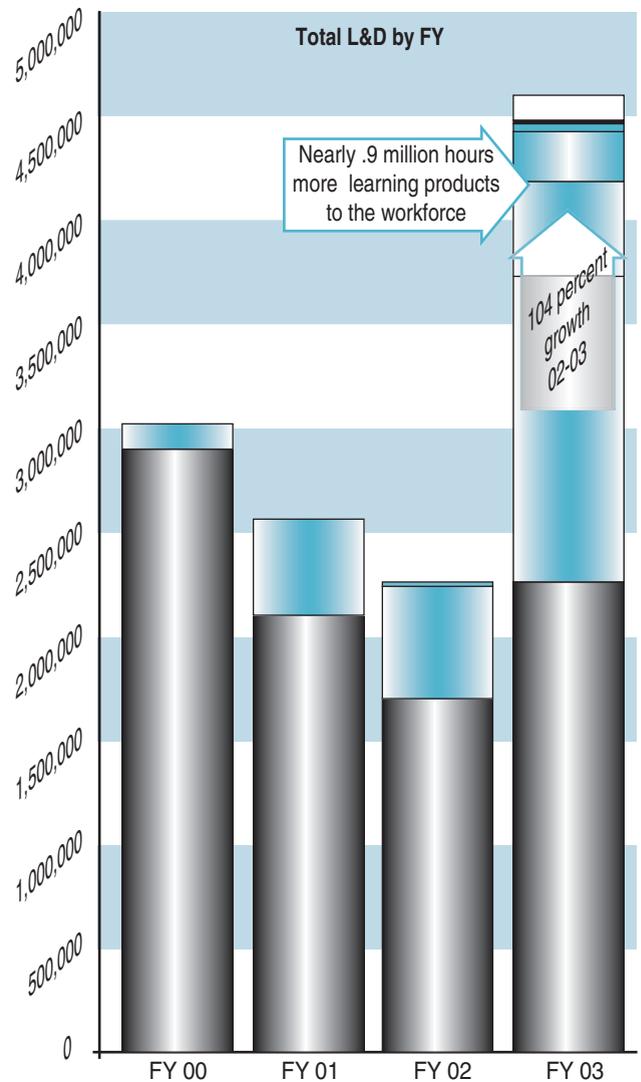
The mission of the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) is to provide practitioner training, career management, and services to enable the AT&L community to make smart business decisions and deliver timely and affordable capabilities to the warfighter. The most far reaching learning and development initiative we have undertaken since becoming a premier corporate university is the full deployment and refinement of our multidimensional learning construct—the AT&L Performance Learning Model (PLM).

A Flexible, Responsive, and Agile Learning Environment

As an overarching learning model, the PLM helps us focus on more than classroom training and provides us a broader mission to ensure we include all of our additional learning assets in the educational products and services we provide our customers in the Department of Defense (DoD) AT&L workforce. As DAU has evolved, so too has the PLM. Using this new paradigm, DAU will help provide a learning environment for all AT&L organizations where (in the words of learning organization guru Peter M Senge) they “cannot *not* learn,” balancing what we now provide—training courses, knowledge sharing, continuous learning, performance support, and rapid deployment training—with local learning resources and infrastructure by means of a learning network.

Transparent to the learner, the PLM will provide convenient and economical access to learning products 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—a learning network where members of the AT&L workforce can seamlessly access learning assets. With the PLM as a foundation, the 134,000 members of the DoD AT&L workforce will have a more flexible, responsive, and agile learning environment. Full deployment of the PLM as a network of learning assets will significantly expand the learning environment and will enable DAU to help focus and align all collective learning assets to the strategic business goals of our senior leadership. This customer-focused approach will signifi-

Power of the PLM



Total Learning & Development Hours

	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03
Classroom hours	2,900,000	2,100,000	1,700,000	2,260,000
eLearning hours	120,000	463,000	540,000	1,470,000
CL module hours*		331	20,382	456,423
AKSS site hours				240,000
ACC site hours				37,000
RDT hours				18,000
PS hours				118,800
Total Hours	3,020,000	2,563,331	2,260,382	4,600,223

*includes AWF hours in non-DAU hosted courses

As DAU's strategic planner, **Hardy** helps to set the direction for the university. He has a doctorate in adult and continuing education from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. **McMichael** is executive director of learning programs and technology for the DAU. His doctorate is from the University of Delaware, and he was a fellow in Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.

cantly contribute to AT&L Goal Number 7—a motivated, agile workforce—extending the concept of learning beyond the classroom into the workplace to support field organizations’ needs. DAU will now be able to facilitate learning organizations throughout the DoD AT&L community.

Major components of the PLM are:

Training Courses

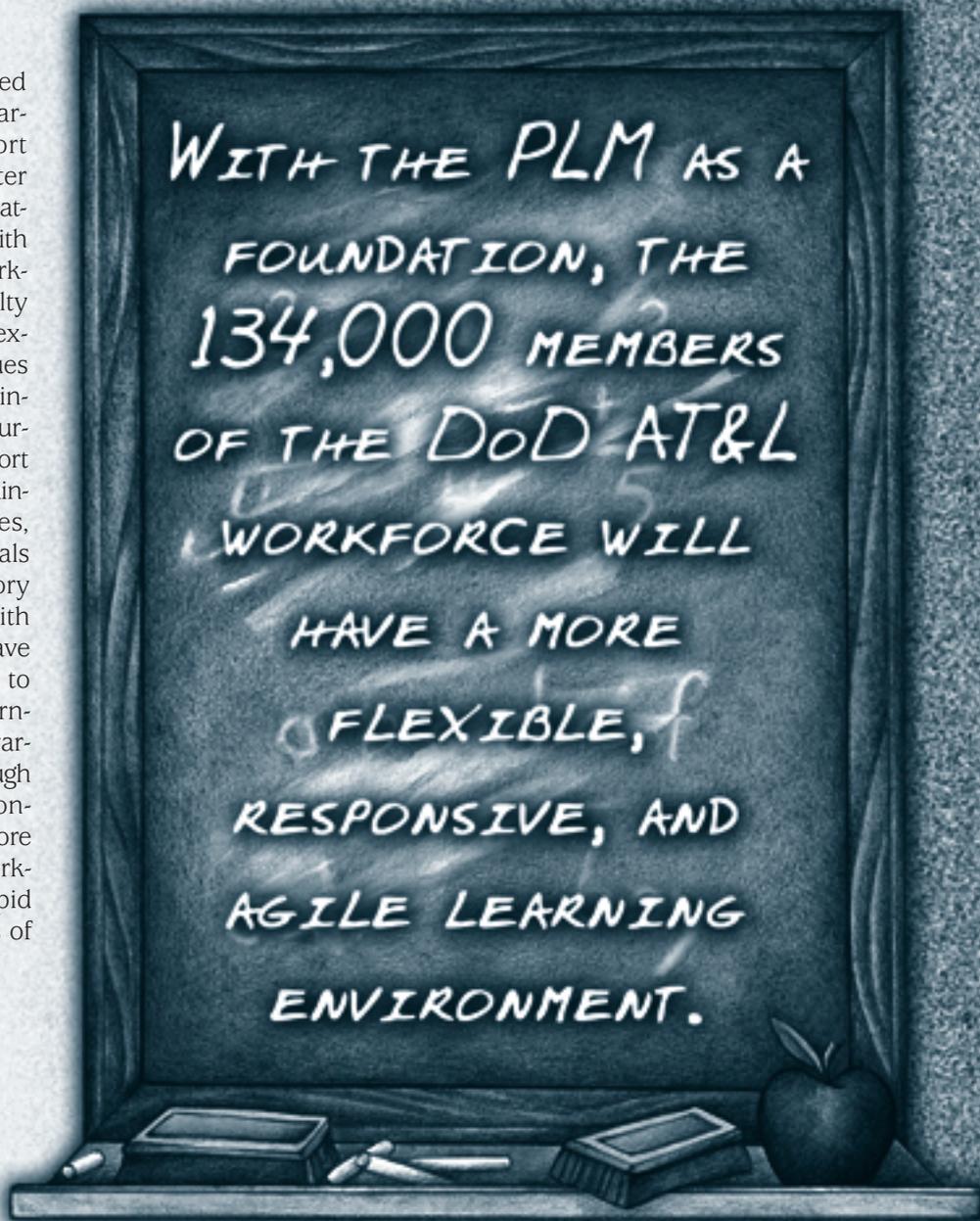
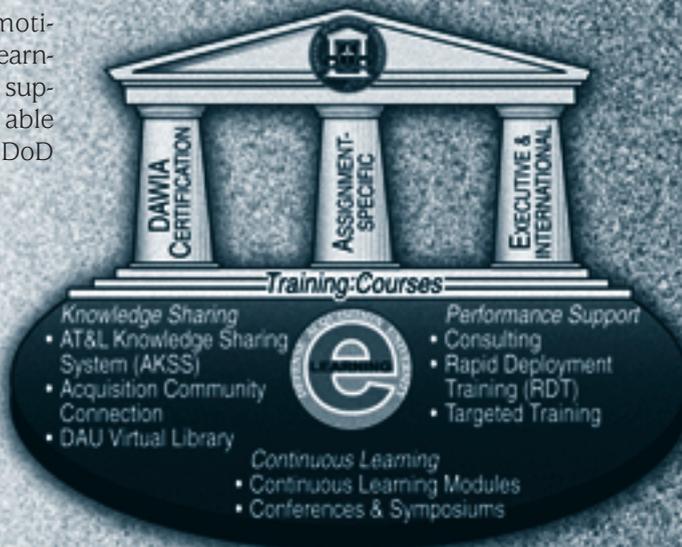
DAU offers over 90 mandatory certification, assignment-specific, executive, and international courses spanning 13 career fields. This year, DAU will deliver training to almost 60,000 graduates via 1,170 offerings through an appropriate mix of classroom, Web-based, and hybrid offerings.

Performance Support/Rapid Deployment Training

Through on-site consulting, targeted training, and online knowledge sharing tools, DAU continues to support students and their organizations after the classroom experience. Subject matter experts provide the workforce with solutions and best practices for workplace problems. In turn, DAU’s faculty members continuously maintain exposure to real-world field techniques and issues. They can immediately infuse lessons learned into the DAU curricula. Our performance support effort now includes a rapid deployment training initiative. When policy changes, teams create new learning materials and place them in a digital repository within five days of the change. With this initiative, the workforce will have almost near real-time access to changes that affect their jobs. Learning products are available through various electronic media as well as through mobile training teams providing on-site instruction. (As one example, more than 12 members of the AT&L workforce received 18,000 hours of rapid deployment training within weeks of a new policy release.)

Continuous Learning Modules

DoD policy calls for the DoD AT&L workforce to operate as a continuous learning community. Members of the workforce are required to have 80 hours of continuous learning every two years.



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In response to this, DAU formally launched the Continuous Learning Center (CLC) in July 2001. All modules in the CLC offer the workforce the opportunity to meet their continuous learning requirements while keeping abreast of current initiatives in acquisition. Since its launch, usage has increased tremendously. We now have 190,578 cumulative accesses; 166,887 registered users; 106,750 completions of Continuous Learning Center Modules; and 456,423 contact hours.

Knowledge Sharing

The AT&L Knowledge Sharing System (AKSS) provides a comprehensive on-line reference repository, connections to knowledge communities, an Ask-a-Professor support function to answer questions from the workforce, and access online to documents and information retrieval services through DAU's David D. Acker Library. AKSS is the AT&L single gateway to knowledge sharing. Over 18,000 people per week visit and use this learning asset. The Acquisition Community Connection (ACC) is the collaborative arm of AKSS. Its knowledge sharing communities include interest areas, private workspaces, and DAU course communities. The ACC, which is available to the AT&L workforce on a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week basis, is an important function that helps the AT&L workforce discuss and solve problems and issues encountered in the field. Conversely, the lessons-learned from the contributions that subject matter experts make to the AKSS Web site contribute to the body of knowledge DAU faculty can use in building lessons and in the classroom. (**Editor's note:** For an in-depth description of AKSS, see "Knowledge Sharing System and Communities of Practice," PM Magazine, Sept.-Dec. 2003, 14-20.)

Acclaim for the AT&L PLM

The AT&L community is defined by its people and organizations. People have jobs and careers; organizations have missions. DAU supports both, enhancing the value added to the employees and value added to the corporation. Our workforce receives value in terms of their job performance, their career development, and intangibles such as intellectual exchanges. However, what ultimately makes the difference is the value that accrues to the organizations.

The PLM has delivered significant results—nearly one million hours accounting for a 104 percent growth in additional learning products to the workforce (see "Power of the PLM," page 50). On September 23, 2003, the achievement of the PLM was publicly recognized when, in competition with 189 other applicants, DAU received the Brandon Hall Gold Medal Award for Excellence in e-Learning Best Practices for the AT&L Performance Learning Model.

Editor's note: The authors welcome comments and questions. Hardy can be reached at christopher.hardy@dau.mil and McMichael at james.mcmichael@dau.mil.