CATS: Building a Unit Training Plan

By Ms. Sarah Schwennesen, CAC-T, TMD   April 16, 2018

[https://api.army.mil/e2/c/images/2018/04/13/513744/original.jpg]

In the fiscally-constrained environment facing the Army, planning and executing training, with limited time and resources, requires commanders use every tool available to focus their training efforts and maximize proficiency.

"The Combined Arms Training Strategies (CATS) tool is the best way to adhere to the Training Management (TM) framework doctrine provides to efficiently manage training," said COL Stephen York, Director of the Training Management Directorate. "While Field Manual 7-0 provides the 'what, why and how' of conducting TM, the CATS planning tool, in DTMS, is the number one tool the commander needs to use to accomplish effective TM."

"This tool was designed to support commanders by better facilitating the development of the Unit Training Plan (UTP), often the most time intensive aspect of Unit Training Management (UTM)," said Mr. Harold Sommerfeldt, CATS Program Manager. "The CATS planning tool has been around since 2001 and is a living program that has improved greatly over the years. It now supports every UTM step and process for planning, preparing, executing and assessing training, to include the ability to develop multiple training plans on a virtual white board."

In accordance with AR 350-1, Field Manual 7-0, and in support of the Army's Objective Assessment of Training Proficiency (Objective T), CATS provides proponent-approved strategies that enable commanders to produce METL-based UTPs that support top-down guidance, while providing users a vehicle for bottom-up feedback. These training strategies, with associated collective tasks, enable commanders to identify necessary resources associated with current and future training and readiness events.

CATS are developed in coordination with proponents, with input from the operational force. The training strategies are based on the unique organizational characteristics of units as identified in the unit's Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE). The strategies are constructed to address the specific missions units are expected to perform, and the capabilities they are designed to provide.

Using CATS, commanders create focused training plans by assessing operational and mission requirements, identifying the Mission Essential Tasks (METs) to be trained, and then by building plans with events that lead to increased

readiness.

Because units begin their training cycles at different levels of proficiency, their plans can be tailored to improve specific skills. CATS use the standard Mission Essential Task Lists (METL)-based training strategies to provide leaders the flexibility to modify training to reflect changing environments.

CATS generates task sets which logically group collective tasks that are best trained together. The task sets concentrate on the capabilities and functions the unit was designed to perform. The CATS tool then produces a menu of crawl, walk, and run-level training events from which the trainer can select to most effectively train the unit.

The automated CATS tool resides in the Digital Training Management System (DTMS), and a non-tailorable CATS viewer can be found on the Army Training Network (ATN) website. The ATN Webpage at https://atn.army.mil/ is the place to go, to facilitate your training management with the CATS and DTMS tools.

If you have more questions about how to use CATS, or would like a no-cost Mobile Training Team visit, please contact the CATS team or the TMD help desk at (913) 684-2700, DSN: 552-2700, or toll-free at (877) 241-0347.

Related Links:

Army Training Network [https://atn.army.mil/]

Readiness Reporting: TMD Supports Commanders Objective Assessments of Training Proficiency [https://www.army.mil/article/198905/]

Concerned with Readiness Reporting, Training Management Comes First! [https://www.army.mil/article/200301/]

When Conducting Training Management, Use the Right Tools! [https://www.army.mil/article/202253]