



The Smart Defence initiative touches the core of training methods at the NATO School as the school expands distributive learning and eLearning initiatives, while promoting knowledge-centric collaborative learning environments among nations.

Smart Defence was outlined in the November 2010 NATO Summit in Lisbon requiring Alliance nations to give priority to those capabilities which NATO needed most, specialise in what they did best, and look at multinational solutions to shared problems. The capabilities deemed critical included: ballistic missile defence (BMD); intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR); maintenance of readiness; training; and force protection.

These are ambitious targets that require a multinational and multiagency approach. A key element in achieving success is effective training, both to support the capabilities but also to engender the spirit of Smart Defence.

6 Decades of Educational Guidance

The NATO School Oberammergau (NSO) epitomises many aspects of Smart Defence. Since NATO courses commenced in 1953, NSO's mission has to been to support NATO Operations by providing operational-level individual training and education to service personnel and civilians. With the end of the Cold War, followed by NATO deployments to the Balkans and then Afghanistan, NATO School has adapted to these new realities by providing timely and bespoke training. From running the first nuclear policy course for Senior NATO Officers almost 60 years

ago, NATO School has grown with the Alliance to offer about 110 different courses across the areas of CBRN , ISTAR , Joint Operations, Policy, and NCO Development. A Military Cooperation Department delivers training to partner countries, and coordinates training of Iraqi and Afghan personnel. To demonstrate pooling of resources – an underlying concept of Smart Defence – NATO School is staffed by almost 200 military and civilian personnel from 24 countries, collectively delivering training to about 11,000 students from over 70 countries in 2011. To support the training programme, Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) are drawn both from the staff and from an extensive network of contacts from across and from outside the Alliance. Supporting speakers come from the NATO Command Structure, national military organisations, academia, think-tanks, media organisations and Non-Governmental organisations. Guidance on the educational content of courses is provided by ACT and SHAPE. NSO staff also provide guidance by visiting theatres along with the NATO Command Structure, providing 'ground truth' for the courses that NATO School conducts. To ensure that the training NATO School conducts remains relevant and cost-effective to NATO, a rigorous internal process of course reviews has been instituted.

Innovative Learning Methods

mission has to been to support NATO Operations by providing operational-level individual training and education

The NATO School has traditionally structured its courses with traditional classroom-style lectures and desk-top syndicate exercises. However, in today's fiscally austere mindset, a more cost-effective education platform can be achieved with mobile training teams. Although traditional residential courses are the mainstay of NATO School, the demand for mobile training teams has increased. Similarly, Advanced Distributive Learning (ADL), as part of eLearning initiatives, can deliver cost-effective training at a time and place of the student's choosing. At present, NATO School currently delivers over 30 ADL courses, with additional offerings being made available continuously, as well as providing pre-course ADL material. A 'Members Portal' is also provided, providing students the ability to reach-back to NATO School for updated course material for use as their career develops.

Smart Education

ACT has proposed a number of initiatives in the training and education environment that will see increased cooperation and coordination across Alliance and Partner training centres in an effort to reduce over-capacity and duplication – and therefore save resources.

The Individual Training and Education Programme (ITEP) and the Education and Training Opportunities Catalogue (ETOC) of courses available for personnel deploying to Afghanistan heralds wider coordination of training. At the recent NATO Training Synchronisation Conference held in Vilnius in February, an Education and Training Clearing House across Alliance and Partner nations was proposed to increase the visibility of both capabilities and training needs of military personnel.

eLearning developments allows vastly improved simulation of operational and tactical level environments that would be practically impossible to reproduce in the traditional classroom. Using distributive learning techniques, other players can participate simultaneously ('online gaming'), enhancing both the learning experience, but also contributing to corporate knowledge of training. ISAF Expeditionary Intelligence Training, conducted at NSO, allows student to use HUMINT tools, systems and data previously only available in theatre. Differing scenarios can be played out and allows the broad range of experience of students and staff to be incorporated in future training by iteration.

Although much of 'Smart Education', as we may wish to call it, is largely facilitated by technology, the value of face-to face interaction should not be marginalised, or in the case of on-line training, be effectively eliminated. Training in a multinational environment is invaluable and can build upon the high levels of operational experience that NATO and non-NATO personnel have acquired. Students attending NATO School courses frequently cite the benefits of working together in a multinational environment; often studying alongside personnel from other nations with whom they will work with in theatre.

NATO School Oberammergau Focuses on “Smart Education” - ACT

Written by Wing Commander Bryan Hunt, United Kingdom Air Force, Senior Analyst Officer NATO School



~~Copyright © 2014 by NATO School Oberammergau. All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the prior written permission of NATO School Oberammergau.~~