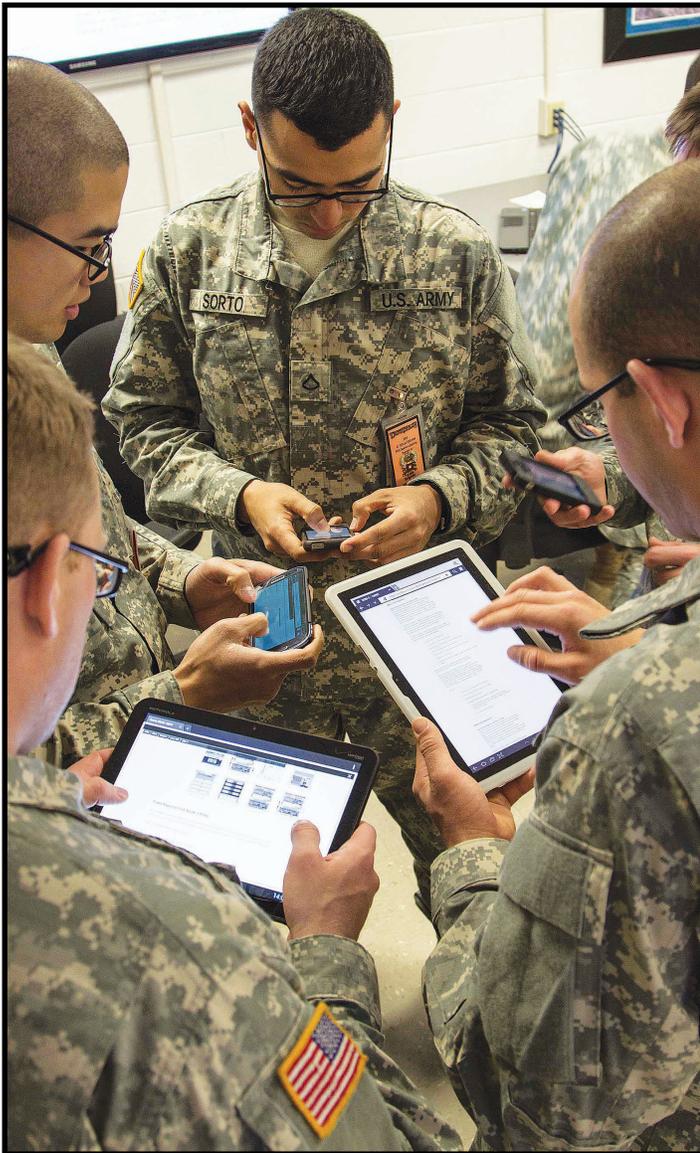


# Army Learning Model Proof of Concept radically changes school

By J. C. Mathews

In many ways, the Satellite Communication Systems Operator/Maintainer Course module that began on February 11, 2013 was like those that came before it. But the 12 privates and one



Students at the LandWarNet School collaborate on course material using their own mobile devices to access course material.



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- Tabitha Waldrop

corporal who entered the module broke ground on a new concept for instruction that may change the course for all who follow them.

Incorporating for the first time many Army Learning Model and Experiential Learning Model methodologies, the class was taught without slide presentations, with all course materials accessible via mobile devices when needed.

"This is 21st Century Training alive and well," said Tabitha Waldrop who supervises the training development section as part of the Signal Center of Excellence's LandWarNet School. "The students in this class showed us that the model works and that today's learner adapts quickly and welcomes the concepts of self-paced learning, critical thinking, and facilitated discussions."

The module lasted two weeks, and gave the course a new look and feel. For example, all of the course material was Web-based; making slides a relic of the past. Soldiers were able to navigate through mobile-friendly training content at their leisure, often becoming discussion leaders as well as participants. Facilitators were able to ask leading questions and draw concepts for discussion on a wall-sized white board.



**Mike Wilson, a satellite facilitator at the LandWarNet school assists students with the day's learning objectives.**

Waldrop said the new methods helped save a day of training that might otherwise have been lost to the weather. Rain prohibited the students from completing an initial equipment tour on the first day, but they were able to make use of virtual labs, including high-definition images of the vehicle mounted equipment with brief explanations for each component.

"Covering all defined objectives and all trained tasks, the interactive learning environment for the Soldiers was a fresh experience," Waldrop said. "The facilitator redirected questions to the class, helping them to figure out many answers for themselves, based on facts they already know."

The class also maintained a

"parking lot" on the white board for any questions they couldn't answer right away, but would eventually answer along the course of the class.

Waldrop added that students were able to take responsibility for their own learning, taking self-guided tours on the equipment, researching topics for discussion in the classroom, and utilizing read-ahead material. This class would bring their own mobile devices (BYOD - bring your own device) to access training content from the closed network. Tablets were provided for those who did not bring their own.

"The students in this class showed us that the model works and that today's learner adapts quickly and welcomes the concepts of self-paced

learning, critical thinking, and facilitated discussions under the Experiential Learning Model," Waldrop said.

Student comments indicated that they enjoyed how the course material was written and presented:

"It seemed like each topic was introduced through simple concepts building upon themselves, and then we were presented with the main learning material. This worked well," wrote one student.

"The way this class is taught and the way the instructor facilitated the classroom made me excited to get to class every day," said another.

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